

# **Inaugural Webcast of The Minnesota Employment Training and Technical Assistance Center (MNTAT)**

Bob Niemiec and Cary Griffin (MNTAT)

Jon Alexander, Don Lavin and Carol Rydell  
(The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative - MEPI)

Mary Alice Mowry (Pathways to Employment)



- *The mission of Pathways to Employment (PTE) is to increase competitive employment of people with disabilities and meet Minnesota's workforce needs by bringing together people with disabilities, employers, businesses, government and providers.*
- PTE is a comprehensive employment Medicaid infrastructure grant funded through the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-170). It is a partnership of three Minnesota agencies (MN Dept. of Human Services, MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development, MN State Council on Disability.)



- **Desired outcomes of PTE include:**

- The employment rate and earnings of people with disabilities will increase.
- The number of employers hiring people with disabilities will increase.
- Services and supports will better prepare people with disabilities to enter the competitive workforce and achieve their employment goals
- Coordination across the system will improve.
- Attitudes and barriers regarding employment of people with disabilities will improve.
- Youth and young adults with disabilities will increase their early work experience and find jobs upon graduation.
- The quality of life of competitively employed people with disabilities will improve.
- Data collection and analysis will be coordinated in order to better track employment outcomes and to measure the effectiveness of programs, supports and services.



- *The purpose of Minnesota's Pathways to Employment (PTE) is to increase the employment rate and earnings of people with disabilities, and meet the needs of Minnesota employers through full use of the state's workforce.*
- *"We need everyone in the workforce for business to thrive and communities to prosper."* *The Minnesota value proposition (NTAR)*

# The Minnesota Employment Training and Technical Assistance Center (MNTAT)

- Established through a grant from Pathways to Employment (PTE), the Minnesota Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, in April of 2009.
- Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC is the contractor for the grant.
- The grant provides funding through March 31, 2011.

# The Minnesota Employment Training and Technical Assistance Center (MNTAT)

- The mission of MNTAT is:

*To design and broker state of the art person-centered employment training and technical assistance to increase the participation of all Minnesotans, especially people with disabilities, in the workforce.*

# MNTAT Background

- A need for technical assistance was identified by the participants of three Minnesota Employment First Summits.
- A T&TA entity was needed to eliminate fragmentation and introduce a model of organizational change and staff development practices.
- There was an expressed willingness to advance competitive employment but a lack of skills.

# MNTAT Background

- A T&TA entity would need to use a variety of strategies including:
  - Web-based training
  - State and regional training workshops
  - Peer-to-peer mentoring
  - Forums on employment issues
  - Dissemination of promising policies and practices in workforce development and employment practices
  - Identification of funding and other resources
  - Individual case consultations



# MNTAT Background

- MNTAT and its parent company, Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC, will accomplish its mission by using proven, inventive and evidence-based methods to meld the needs of our customers.
- MNTAT will be cross-disability in focus and geographically diverse in its reach.

# MNTAT Background



## Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC

- A full service consultancy specializing in developing communities of economic cooperation.
  - High quality training and technical consultation
  - Project development and management services
  - Inventive service delivery.
  - Six offices throughout the United States (Montana, Ohio, Virginia, Washington State, Florida and now Minnesota)
  - Senior Partners are Cary Griffin and David Hammis
  - Bob Niemiec, Senior Consultant with GHA is the Director of MNTAT

# MNTAT Background

- MNTAT will provide critical training and technical support to a variety of customers including:
  - The Minnesota business community
  - Minnesota educators
  - Employment providers
  - Job seekers with disabilities
  - Local, county and state government
  - Families and advocates
  - Policy makers
  - Workforce development professionals

# MNTAT Background

- MNTAT will utilize a variety of strategies that include:
  - Web-based training
  - Local and regional training events with the support of Minnesota APSE
  - The presentation of an annual statewide disability and employment conference in partnership with MEPI and MN APSE
  - The establishment of 5 Community Action Teams (CATs) statewide

# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- Community Action Teams (CATs) will be organized and trained to utilize flexible strategies and tactics to increase individualized employment outcomes for people with disabilities in their local communities.
- 5 CATs statewide (2 year one, 3 year two)
- Made up of a broad representation from the community (i.e. schools, businesses, providers, community organizations)

# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- The CAT approach emphasizes that through collaborative efforts of a variety of interested stakeholders resources and strategies are better leveraged to support individual job seekers achieve their employment goals.
- The initial goal of each Community Action Team is to support five (5) individuals with varying disabilities to become employed.
- The first sites will serve as living demonstrations of the CAT approach in Minnesota.

# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- For the purposes of this project employment will be defined as: “Regular or customized employment in the workforce on the payroll of a company (unless self-employed) at minimum or prevailing wages. Employment where integration and interaction with co-workers without disabilities and customers is assured.” (taken from *The Minnesota Employment First Summit Consensus Report, June 12, 2007*)
- Income targets for people becoming employed should be at or above SGA (Substantial Gainful Activity), which is \$980 per month or \$1,640 for people who are blind.

# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- CATs will receive \$5000 in start-up funds
  - Aid in leveraging other local resources
  - Underwrite tools and equipment
  - Purchase permits, training or other resources
- CATs will be chosen to represent the diverse demographics of Minnesota
  - At least one urban, one rural and one tribal-based
- CATs will receive monthly training and technical assistance from MNTAT consultants that include online, phone and in-person strategies.



# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- MNTAT consultants will conduct classroom training in the ACRE approved Customized Employment Training Curriculum.
- MNTAT Consultants will provide field-based technical assistance:
  - Work directly with job seekers and their families
  - Help coordinate collaborations
  - Strategies to blend funding
  - Help develop additional resources
  - Do outreach to the local employment community
  - Help with benefits analysis and planning

# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- **Training and technical assistance will result in the creation of successful wage or self-employment for no fewer than 5 job seekers (representing a cross-section of disabilities)**
- **Each employment outcome will demonstrate the use of replicable, evidence-based practices including:**
  - Discovery
  - Interest-based negotiation
  - Strengths-based customized employment
  - Blended funding
  - Typical workplace supports

# MNTAT Community Action Teams

- Each CAT will maintain a blog that will host a running dialog and include updates, learning, and reports on effective practices
- Community Action Teams will agree to be mentors to other developing CATs
- CATs will develop a sustainability plan

# MNTAT Training

- MNTAT will maintain a calendar of training events being held in Minnesota (both MNTAT sponsored and others)
- MNTAT will conduct a series of 10 web-casts between September 2009 and June 2010.
- Will follow the ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) certified customized employment training.
- Held at approximately 25 sites throughout MN
- Utilizing iVocalize
- MNTAT website ([www.mntat.org](http://www.mntat.org)) for information on dates, topics, locations and registration
- First session will be held on September 28, 2009  
***An Introduction to Customized Employment for Adults and Transition Age Youth***, presented by Cary Griffin

# MNTAT Website

- [www.mntat.org](http://www.mntat.org)
- Training
- Resources
- Annual Employment Conference
- MNTAT Community Action Teams
- News (including the MNTAT Blog)
- Success Stories

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)

Pathways to Employment will contract with APSE in conjunction with Minnesota APSE, the state chapter, to develop leadership and dialogue facilitation around employment policy that will result in the increased employment of Minnesotans with disabilities.

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)



***APSE leads in the advancement of equitable employment for people with disabilities.***

- **To accomplish this mission, APSE:**
  - Provides advocacy and education concerning the value of integrated employment
  - Addresses issues to expand the growth and implementation of integrated employment services
  - Improves employment practice so that individuals and communities experience quality employment services with meaningful outcomes
  - Promotes national, state, and local policy development which enhances the social and economic inclusion and empowerment of individuals with disabilities.

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)



- **APSE is an international organization originally founded as “The Association for Persons in Supported Employment” in 1989.**
- **APSE is a membership organization whose members come from all over the United States and U.S. Territories and from other countries that include Australia, Canada, China, England, Germany, Ireland, Japan, The Netherlands, Taiwan and New Zealand.**
- **APSE has 37 state chapters, including Minnesota APSE which was one of the first state chapters founded in 1992.**



# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)

- The purpose of the Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI) is to develop leadership and dialogue facilitation around disability and employment policy that will result in the increased employment of Minnesotans with disabilities in the competitive labor force and promote Minnesota's value proposition: "We need everyone in the workforce for businesses to thrive and communities to prosper."
- Employment is fundamental to adulthood, quality of life issues and earning the means to exercise basic freedoms and choices as citizens.
- MEPI will be funded through March 31, 2011

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)

- **The Initiative** will work with numerous stakeholder partners to align policies, services and practices to increase competitive employment of people with disabilities and meet Minnesota's workforce needs.
- Stakeholder partners will include business, government, education, disability advocacy organizations, employment service providers, community support agencies, self-advocates and their families.
- **MEPI** will also work in close collaboration with the Minnesota Employment Training and Technical Assistance Center (**MNTAT**) to maximize the impact of employment policy and practice across Minnesota.

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)

## **MEPI Activities Include:**

- Develop a joint website in conjunction with MNTAT
- Develop a policy component for an annual employment conference with MNTAT
- Develop policy briefs and issue papers based on 15 topical policy listening sessions (including five sessions in conjunction with MNTAT Development Sites) designed to gather input and build consensus from stakeholder groups on policy changes needed to shape improved employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities
- Support four mini-summits hosted by business leaders to champion increased integrated employment opportunities
- Develop and update a scorecard highlighting progress in advancing employment policies and practices in Minnesota

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)

- Make recommendations toward the development of a uniform definition of employment and uniform data management practices across state agencies
- Collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota State Council on Disability (MSCOD) and other state agencies to provide information on developing employment policies and practices that increase opportunities and pathways into the workforce by all Minnesotans who want to work
- Strengthen and build new alliances to enlarge the circle of employment champions
- Integrate systems change policy initiatives across federal, state and local agencies

# The Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)

- **Key MEPI Personnel:**
  - Carol Rydell: MEPI Project Manager
  - Don Lavin: MEPI Co-Director
  - Jon Alexander: MEPI Co-Director
  - Laura Owens: APSE Executive Director
- More information about MEPI can be found on the MNTAT website by clicking on the “News” tab.

# The Annual Disability and Employment Conference

- MNTAT and MEPI along with the support of Minnesota APSE, PTE and other statewide partners will plan and host the first annual statewide Disability and Employment Conference.
- December 1-2, 2009.
- The location will be announced in August.
- The conference will be a blend of policy issues, training and community conversations.
- Information will be updated regularly on the MNTAT website.
- Online registration will be available.

# MNTAT - MEPI

*Thank you for being part of the first MNTAT Webcast. We look forward to your continued participation and hope to see you on September 28<sup>th</sup>.*