

Its Your Life: Building Connections Through Work

BACKGROUND:

Public Law, Chapter 101 mandated the creation of a statewide plan to facilitate the implementation of a new Maine Care waiver promoting the expansion of supported employment. As a result, all state contracted funding for sheltered workshops will be reduced over an 18 month period beginning January, 2008. This change will affect 220 individuals in 7 sheltered workshops. These individuals will be able to receive funding for services under the new support waiver which will allow them to access community supports and supported employment services.

DHHS, Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities (OACPD) developed a comprehensive work plan identifying the support available for these organizations. This pilot project, which is included in this plan, would focus on three identified agencies that are scheduled to convert as of June 30, 2008.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT:

Its Your Life: Building Connections Through Work, creates a partnership between USM Muskie School, DHHS, Maine Developmental Disabilities Council, Speaking Up for Us (SUFU) and individuals with disabilities that are employed to develop and present a series of informational sessions to people who participate in the sheltered workshops which are converting to supported employment services. "Its Your Life" trainers will provide practical assistance and reassurance from their own experiences of being employed. The project demonstrates a relevant and replicable model of peer support for consumers who may find these impending changes stressful. These trainers can provide accurate information, encouragement and motivation during a time of change.

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GOALS:

1. Design and deliver modules in partnership with DHHS, SUFU, Maine Developmental Disabilities Council and “Its Your Life” trainers in the following areas: the sharing of personal stories regarding obtaining and maintaining employment; overview of supported employment services, and the development of personal networks in order to explore jobs/careers in the community.
2. Provide support to “Its Your Life” trainers for presentations and mentoring provided to workshop participants at three organizations identified.
3. Evaluation and documentation of the effectiveness of this initiative.

OUTCOMES:

1. Enhance “Its Your Life” presenter’s ability to provide training in the area of employment and network building statewide.
2. Enable current workshop participants to be able to make informed decisions in their life in the areas of supported employment and building community connections.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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