Staff Development and Support

determining staffing needs; attracting, developing and supporting field-based staff, cultivating teams and team building

Connecticut Employment First Provider Conference Session I

May 12, 2019

Genni Sasnett and Tom Wilds National SMEs
“If you thought you were nothing without your staff before, you haven’t seen anything yet”
Reframing Staff as Change Agents

We are involved in a civil rights movement for people with disabilities.

Civil rights laws, like ADA, often precede cultural change.

Cultural change occurs slowly and begins with changes in entrenched perceptions.

Changes in perception occur with changes in experience or observation.

Staff are in a great position to effect those changes in perception through their behavior and advocacy.
Determining Staffing Needs

- **Piloting**: trying things out to determine staffing ratios and types
- **Scaling**: planning for growing the service
- **Forecasting**: estimating need based on experience
- **Deploying**: distributing manpower
Staff Recruitment That Works!

- Job descriptions - reflect new roles and responsibilities
- Recruitment strategies focus on the qualities and characteristics
- Interview process accurately identifies the correct staff for the job
- New staff provided with effective training and mentoring
Deciding What You Need in Staff

Skills and Competencies

- APSE/CESP  https://vimeo.com/226478025
- ACRE  http://www.acreducators.org/competencies
- ODEP Customized Employment  

Qualities and Characteristics

Critically important in community work. Should be woven into everything – starting with job descriptions
Identifying Staff Qualities and Characteristics

• Community connected
• Great communication skills, especially listening
• Professional appearance and presentation
• Self-directed and organized
• Good decision making skills
• Self starter
• Problem solver

• Negotiator
• Crisis management skills
• Innovative
• Strong personal work ethic
• Committed advocate
• Use of “teachable moments”
• Understanding of how to provide support from “behind the scenes”
• Include mission and values

• Write job summary — using words that reflect duties & values

• Highlight work in the community

• Stipulate need for good teamwork & flexibility
Sample from Job Description

Job Summary

Works with assigned individuals, staff and circles of support to identify the job seekers' interests, skills, talents and possible support needs to facilitate community integrated employment.

Works with community employers to gain an understanding of the overall functioning and personnel needs of their businesses.

Makes sound matches between the work aspirations and skills of people supported and the personnel needs of employers, which result in satisfactory outcomes for both parties.
Recruitment

Writing a job posting that attracts the right people

Values are key in our work – express the agency’s values in the recruitment process by:

- Thoughtful language describing the position in person-centered terms
- Imbue ads with the qualities and characteristics desired in staff
- Focus ads on what the applicant will be doing and expected outcomes of the work.
Sample Recruitment Advertisement

Motivated self-starter with a strong work ethic, good self-direction and organizational skills and a professional appearance who likes problem solving, enjoys people and develops relationships easily, to assist job seekers with an array of interests and abilities to find suitable employment. The candidate will develop relationships with employers to address workforce needs and with job seekers to identify work interests, preferences, and skills. Preferred candidates will have experience working in the business community and with job seekers with diverse skills, abilities, and barriers to community employment.
Marketing and Messaging

How are you marketing the job and your agency to prospective employees?
- Are you highlighting attributes of the job?
- The benefits of working for your agency?
- Creating a sense of excitement?

What messages are you communicating to specific markets?
- Millennials/Gen Z
- Retired people
- Parents with school-aged children
- People from particular communities
- Diverse language speakers
- Specialty staff
Modes and Methods

Social Media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Craigslist, website

Internet recruitment sites – Indeed, Monster, Ziprecruiter

Job Boards – universities, training centers

Co-worker Referral – hiring bonuses

Networking (friends, families, schools, religious institutions, civic associations)

Out of the box! (identifying great customer service & hiring)

Cultivating a new work force – partnerships w/ higher ed
Sample Interview Questions:

1. ) Tell me about yourself. How do you spend your time when you aren’t working?

2.) How are you connected with your community? Do you participate in any civic organizations or activities? How could you use your personal connections on behalf of the people you may support?

3.) Do you enjoy meeting people? How comfortable are you speaking in public or to people you don’t know well? How would you describe your personality?

4.) Would you say you prefer to work more independently or with close supervision? Have you ever worked in a team? Did you enjoy it?

5.) Describe your experience working with job seekers? Who were they and what did you do to help them?
Recruitment Data and Trends

Data:
• Demographics of staff
• How did we attract them?
• Longevity
• Termination

Methods:
• Robust HR database
• Application with key questions
• Exit interviews

Satisfaction Surveys
Staff Training & Development

• Determine what competencies staff need before working alone in the community

• Give heavy emphasis to their role in changing the perceptions society has of people with I/DD (civil rights)

• Focus on CIE and the impact of work on a person’s life and position in society

• Ensure staff understand their role in facilitating relationships and natural supports
Training Availability

- National Conferences – APSE, TASH, ARC, ANCOR
- State or regional training & conferences – Connecticut Employment First Conference
- Grant based funding for state-wide training
- DD Council Initiatives – funding for targeted state-wide training
- Collaborative training – agencies come together to fund trainers and training
- On-line training options (better with experienced person to guide)
Staff Training

• All staff – best practices, agency philosophy, E1st, meaningful community integration, our role as change agents

• Employment staff – Specifics of CIE, CE and MCI overview and connection to employment

• MCI staff – Specifics of MCI, overview of CIE and CE and the connection to MCI

• Cross training – as schedules become more individualized staff may shift roles to accommodate the individual

• Assure coaching/mentorship to achieve competence
Building Capacity for Internal Staff Training
• Training available “on demand” for new employees
• Establish “experts” within agency
• Staff learn from future mentors
• Agency can infuse training with agency philosophy and expectations
• Possibly provide training to other agencies (increase revenue)
• Support and reward staff for becoming trainers and providing training
Studies show connection between feeling competent and longevity on the job

Often staff are away from direct supervision for long periods - must be competent – must be able to have confidence in skill

Values and concepts must be repeatedly reinforced so everyone stays in sync
Supporting Staff

Managers skilled in the tasks staff are performing

Field-based mentoring an essential part of the job

Staff meetings – imperative to get the staff together

Cultivating a sense of belonging
Maximizing Staff Meetings

- Field-based – modeling inclusion
- Problem solving, training, agency relationship reinforcement - a place to talk, get help, feel a part of a common cause and valued
- Acknowledging success
Linking Performance to Competencies

- Job Descriptions that reflect true competency needed
- Performance evaluations based on competencies and real outcomes
- Reviewing and setting new goals
- Training to the job and the person
- Reviewing and rewarding for skills and outcomes
# Accessing Training Effectiveness Through Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tie</th>
<th>Observation to skills taught in training and competencies in job description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>punitive feel. Associate observation to assessment of effectiveness of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>training effectiveness and ability of staff. Does staff demonstrate necessary competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>strategies to support acquisition of necessary skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teamwork

Cooperative or coordinated effort on the part of a group of persons acting together as a team or in the interests of a common cause

• Work Environment - *dynamic* unanticipated opportunities arise, schedules change, everything is in motion

• Response – Teams form around common set of outcomes, conduct group problem-solving, share responsibility
Team Member Characteristics

- Flexible and cooperative
- Customer service oriented
- Cooperates w/others to ensure appropriate support provided
Supporting Teams

- Train staff in group facilitation and teamwork

- Encourage independent thinking – reward good work and good ideas

- Be clear on parameters for team decision-making – independent vs in consultation with management

- Develop some tolerance for mistakes – that’s how we grow
Group Discussion 1

What are the some important qualities & characteristics and skills & abilities needed in community-based staff?

Have job descriptions changed to reflect those?
Group Discussion 2

What techniques and strategies do you currently use to recruit quality community-based staff?

Are those strategies successful?

What could you change that may help?
Group Discussion 3

How does your agency get needed training for your staff currently?

Is the training sufficient?

How could you work together with other agencies or entities to get better access to quality training?
Group Discussion 4

How do you provide support to staff in the field?

Are your managers trained in the techniques staff are expected to use in their work?

Have manager’s job descriptions changed to include responsibility to provide support field based staff?
Group Discussion 4

Have you begun decentralization of your staff? Tell us about how you have done that. Do you have a specific system or method?

What is important in the deployment of community based staff?