Disability Employment Task Force
Workgroup 2: Centralize reasonable accommodation funding and technical assistance
May 29, 2014

Two Overarching Theme:

1) What does “technical assistance” look like?

2) What are all of the questions the purchasing conversation created?

1) Technical Assistance
   a. Issue of employee “transfer” between agencies: Can this be done more easily? What would this look like? Can policies be uniform or do they need to be distinct to specific agencies?
   b. Interpreters and costs associated
   c. Lack of loop capacities in buildings
   d. Lack of closed captioning in video production
   e. “Reasonable accommodation”: What is reasonable? No definitions
   f. Why can’t there be overarching/blanket policies? Would these work? Or are agency needs too distinct/diverse?
   g. Accommodations not just for current employees, but prospective employees and events like open meetings, forums, etc.
   h. Technical assistance for small agencies (HR depts. do not have the capacity)
   i. Follow-up needed to ensure accommodation working
   j. Budgeting
      i. Differences in how agencies budget for disability accommodations: line item vs. none
         1. “Gatekeepers” of budget and the repercussions this has on purchasing and privacy issues
   k. FTE should be committed to this one issue, should not have expectations that personnel can take this on top of other portfolio
   l. “Best practices” conversation (Oregon, Massachusetts, Federal Govt)
   m. Centralized funding pool
      i. Could this slow the process down?
      ii. Centralized funding may take the burden of high costs off some agencies

2) Purchasing conversation
   a. Centralizing purchasing
      i. If we purchase, who owns it?
      ii. Where does it belong?
      iii. Who pays?
      iv. Who does analysis?
      v. Timing:
         1. Some agencies current turnaround ~ 5 days – if centralized would it take longer?
         2. For other agencies can take up to months = problematic
vi. Who can submit requests to funding pool? Individual employee, supervisors, centralized in agency?

vii. How will this work? Would agency purchase item and then see reimbursement from pool?

viii. Tracking mechanisms: How do you report back to agencies? How much more spending per employee/technology/furniture?

ix. What happens if item is purchased and doesn’t work? Can we return? How long will take?

x. Will there be loner items on hand? ESD has loner items in stock

xi. Would fund be available to purchase independent medical exams?

xii. Assistive technology upgrades … creating some issues

xiii. Privacy issues

b. Interpreters and cost to employ: May result in repercussions for permanent employment and/or advancement

c. IMEs (?) to be included? Employees beginning to be charged for reasonable accommodation requests (Dr. visits, etc.). Is this “reasonable”?

d. Timing as an issue – can take up to months to receive accommodation

e. Funding as an issue (Ex. Sit/stand desk runs $700-$800 from CI)
   i. Purchasing contracts – could we get exemptions?
   ii. One time purchases vs. ongoing costs. One-time purchases rather easy, ongoing make it much more difficult to accommodate (ex. Interpreters).

Bottom line: Shouldn’t try to fix something that is not broken (accommodation process) … if centralized, want to make sure process is reasonable, not cumbersome and ensures privacy

iii. **Sub-group should be formed** to discuss what happens in reasonable accommodation process and its connection with a potential centralized funding pool - how will this all work? Who will be a part of?