

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?