

The Region VI CRP-RCEP e-News Bulletin is published monthly through a grant awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration to the Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work & Addictions at the University of North Texas.

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From the desk of: Martha Garber

The stage is set in the employment arena for powerful collaborations to take place. As we see greater numbers of employers unable to meet their labor needs, new doors are opening for people with disabilities. Diversity in the workplace has become more common and accepted. Employers are beginning to see people with disabilities as another aspect of a diversified workforce. Not only does this afford an opportunity for us to collaborate with employers, but it also creates a greater opportunity to work with each other. Successful employment happens when the right person, the right job and the right place intersect. No single CRP or VR agency will always have the right person for the job match. It is at this point that local collaborative efforts can serve to meet everyone's need: the customer, the employer and our own. Successful collaboration takes time. Building trust among the partners is key. In this issue, we share some ideas about building employment collaborations that work.

Opportunities for Employment Collaboration

By Carl McMillen, Executive Director, Panhandle Independent Living Center and a Region VI CRP-RCEP Advisory Committee member

A state VR counselor recently remarked that Centers for Independent Living (CILs) should be involved as an employment provider because "they do all that other stuff!" He was alluding to an array of programs CILs provide in addition to offering employment services.

Transportation assistance, health and hygiene, money management, benefits counseling, computer training, and assistive technology are just a few programs offered by CILs that are important to finding and maintaining a job.

Maintaining is the key word when discussing the added value of CILs as CRP vendors. A person may obtain a good job; keeping it often depends on whether independent living services are available on a continual basis.

The current lack of collaboration is puzzling since CILs and state agencies



Training Schedule

January 10, 2008: [Workforce Re-entry & the Ex-offender](#), New Orleans, Louisiana

January 15, 2008: [Job Coaching](#), Austin, Texas

January 29-31, 2008: [Certificate in Employment Services](#) (Session II: Feb 26-28), Houston, Texas

February 12-13, 2008: [Supported Employment: Basic Skills Clinic](#), San Antonio, Texas

Upcoming Conferences

[National ADA Symposium & Expo](#), May 12-14, 2008, St. Louis, Missouri

Have you heard the latest buzz on collaboration?



If not, check out the links below. Included are some great articles from the Institute for Community Inclusion, Work Support.com at Virginia Commonwealth University, and Disability

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share the same goal: promoting successful employment outcomes that enhance a person's ability to live a productive, independent life. Effective collaboration would require both CILs and state agencies to come to the table. CILs must be available to inform state VR counselors while making sure the center's employment specialists are qualified, satisfying the needs of the consumer and the VR counselor. State agencies would need to invite CILs into area offices to share information about IL services, cultivate viable CRP contracts, and promote training for vendors.

Some years ago, one state agency's area manager actually encouraged a center to apply for a CRP contract. Today, the two agencies are partners in their community's vocational rehabilitation mission. They participate in mutually beneficial training and outreach opportunities. They consistently refer people to each other for vocational rehabilitation services, independent living skills training, and of course — all that other stuff.

Using Local Planning Teams

In 2002, the State of Oregon developed a guide for providing employment services at the local level. The purpose of the guide was to help communities build capacity using local planning teams to increase the quantity and quality of employment providers in the area. We thought you might find their experience helpful so we provided a link to the guide below:

[Building Supported Employment Capacity Through Local Planning Teams](#)

Career Expo Outcome of Collaborative Effort

Speaking of collaboration, another of the Region VI CRP-RCEP emerging leader CRP/VR teams launched an incredibly successful project! What began as an idea between **Trisha Cantu**, the CRP provider, and **Anne Hoscheit**, the DARS VR counselor, mushroomed through collaborations to become the first annual Alamo Area Disability Career Expo, held October 17, 2007 in San Antonio , TX .

Over 300 job seekers attended with some 500 people participating in the event. Employers included representatives from *Hyatt* and *Marriott* hotels, *Washington Mutual*, *JP Morgan Chase*, *USAA*, *University of Texas Health Science Center*, *West Corporation*, *Methodist Healthcare System*, *Kinetic Concepts, Inc.*, *Bexar County Sheriff's office*, *Mooney Airplane Company*, *Eye Care Centers of America (Eyemasters)*, *The Wash Tub*, *World Technical Service, Inc.*, *HEB*, *Amigos Canning*, and *R & L Foods, Inc.* (*Pizza Hut*, *Taco Bell*, *KFC*).

Unique features of the event were a morning session with Assistant Commissioner for DBS, **Barbara Madrigal**, addressing employers about the

Info.gov:

[Increasing Placement Through Professional Networking](#)

[Developing Collaborative Community Partnerships Fact Sheet](#)

[Transportation](#)

What Would You Like to Hear About in Future Issues of e-News?

Send your comments and story ideas to e-News Bulletin [Project Director & Editor, Martha Garber](#).

Life Transitions . . .

James (Jim) Charles Hudson, 65, of Little Rock, AR passed away Saturday, November 24,



2007. Mr. Hudson was a tireless fighter for the rights of the blind and people with other disabilities. Mr. Hudson is survived by his wife of fifteen years, two daughters, and a son.

Total Source for
Hearing-loss and
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“Myths” of hiring people with disabilities, followed by a panel of employers discussing their successful experiences in hiring persons with a disability. DARS representative **Jonas Schwartz** hosted a networking lunch where employers were able to voice any concerns they had about hiring persons with disabilities. The Job Fair was held in the afternoon.

DARS in partnership with **Alamo WorkSource, San Antonio Lighthouse, Customized Assessment & Training LLC, San Antonio Public Library, the University of Texas at San Antonio** and **Goodwill Industries** sponsored the event. The collaborative effort between all partners emphasized the power of effective partnerships.

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