

The APSE Gazette

Supporting Employment Through Public Policy

Summer 2008

Nebraska APSE hosted their first annual Professional Development Day in Grand Island on April 14th. Bob Law head, National APSE Public Policy Chair of Colorado, presented on the importance of becoming a stakeholder in the design and implementation of public policies surrounding supported employment. The rates of people with disabilities involved in supported employment have remained relatively flat since the inception twenty years ago.

The current statistics revealed in the recently published "State of the States on Developmental Disabilities" shows a national decrease in supported employment from 26% in 2004 to only 24% in 2005. While Oklahoma is at the top of the nations supported employment rates at 77% the national statistics mirror the numbers that we are seeing here in Nebraska.

What we have learned from this information is that it takes considerable effort to convert the system to be supportive of the supported employment model. As professionals, we need to be comfortable becoming involved in issues of public policy. Policy design guides the direction for the services that are provided now and well into the future. We need to have an active presence in the policy design process.

Bob pointed out three main reasons policy makers should favor supported employment. First, it's the law! The ADA and the Olmstead Act estab-

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lished that services need to be provided in integrated settings that are least restrictive for the individual. Since these laws were created they have continually been violated by every state in the union. The second reason to favor supported employment is the preference of people receiving

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National APSE Mission Statement

APSE: The Network on Employment is
a membership organization
formed in 1988 as the Association for Persons in Supported Employment
to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities,
services, and outcomes
for persons experiencing disabilities.

supports, families and advocates. If people are allowed to make a truly informed choice about the services they receive, supported employment wins hands down compared to segregated services. The third reason for supporting employment is the significant savings compared to segregated services. The cost benefit analysis of each of these services reveals that the benefits of supported employment far outweigh the benefits of segregated alternatives.

Changes in the field of supported employment services need to continue. First, we continue to see far too many individuals being served in restrictive settings. Second, the reimbursement rates for supported employment services are extremely inadequate compared to the cost of the services being provided. So what can we do about it?

As professionals, we have the best knowledge of what is happening in our field. In the democracy in which we live, it is our responsibility to share this knowledge with policy makers at all levels. The truth is they want to hear from us! We need to establish an active presence with the policy makers of our state. We need to act now to establish ourselves as a resource for future policy design. If we wait until we have immediate problems that we need on the policy agenda, we have not established credibility for our cause. Service Providers, advocacy groups and families need to work together to form a united front to support employment.

In order to present accurate information to policy makers, we need to collect accurate data about the current state of employment among people with disabilities.

So, what you may ask is Nebraska APSE doing about it? First, Nebraska APSE has just distributed our survey to Nebraska service providers to gather information on employment among the people they support. Secondly, Nebraska APSE is going to begin working with other stakeholders to provide information on the current state of employment in Nebraska and how we can all work together to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities in our state. Lastly, Nebraska APSE is gathering information from other states that are experiencing better employment outcomes to determine ways to improve our system.

Nebraska APSE invites you to become part of this adventure by becoming a member of Nebraska APSE and helping us to fulfill our mission! We need everyone to become involved in order to make significant differences in our state.

National APSE Goals

Provides advocacy and education to customers of supported employment (SE), i.e. supported employment professionals, consumers and their family members, and supported employers.

Addresses issues and barriers which impede the growth and implementation of integrated employment services.

Improves supported employment (SE) practice so that individuals and communities experience SE as a quality service with meaningful outcomes.

Promotes national, state, and local policy development which enhances the social and economic inclusion and empowerment of all persons experiencing severe disabilities.

Educates the public and the business community on the value of including persons experiencing severe disabilities as fully participating community members.

3rd Annual Nebraska Youth First Conference

“Getting Ready for a Job”....Using Technology April 1, 2008 in Kearney NE

“Getting Ready for a Job” ... Using Technology were topics highlighted at the 3rd Annual Nebraska Youth First Conference in Kearney on April 1st. Over 250 participants including students, teachers, & parents from 26 central Nebraska schools gathered to “help students focus on getting ready for employment after high school.

I had the opportunity to spend the day with this enthusiastic crowd of kids, their optimism & expectations for the future. The keynote speaker, Laura Owens, a National APSE Public Policy Fellow helped them fan the flame of successful career expectations. She had suggestions on how to prepare, year by high school year for employment with career planning embedded in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). She had recommendations on to how look for needed supports after graduation. She gave criteria to look for when interviewing adult service providers.

I had visions of young graduates & their families visiting service providers across Nebraska asking questions like:

- If I need job accommodations or assistive

technology, do you provide these services?

- How long does it take to assist someone in getting a job?
- How does your agency determine what a good job is for a client?
- Does your agency look at advancement in jobs beyond entry-level work?
- Can I talk with some individuals with disabilities who have used your services?

A student named Destiny, used a power point presentation to outline her IEP. She & her IEP team had obviously done some serious career planning. From her wheel chair, outfitted with various support devices, Destiny laid out a well defined game plan for what she expected from her school & service providers in her future.

By mid afternoon, I was...antsy...anxious!! These kids, their dreams, & their belief in bright employment futures are coming ...in our directions. Are we ready? What will we say to Destiny & her counterparts when we are interviewed about our capacity to meet expectation of quality employment supports?

Linda Kallhoff
NE APSE President

Upcoming Training

August 27-28 – Employment Services

Kansas City, MO

Presenter - Darla Wilkerson

Registration Fee - \$99

Registration Deadline: August 12, 2008

[Event Details](#)

[Register online at www.regonline.com/622505](http://www.regonline.com/622505)

September 24-25 – 5th National Organizational Change Forum

Early Bird Registration Fee - \$150.00 (Before August 25th)

Late Registration Fee - \$180.00 (After August 25th)

Registration Deadline: September 17, 2008

[Forum Program & Announcement \(PDF\)](#)

[Word version of Forum Program](#)

[Event Details](#)

Register online at www.regonline.com/628912

ACP Conference October 30 and 31

Grand Island Nebraska

APSE has many benefits. Here are a few!

The Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation

APSE members now have electronic access to the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (JVR) as part of membership! The JVR offers cutting edge information on supporting people in the workplace. Free to APSE members, JVR has a regular subscription rate of \$453, making this a significant deal for APSE members. You can go on-line now and download issues. Or if you prefer a print copy, you can sign up to receive one at the substantially discounted rate of \$48.

InfoLines Partnership

APSE members get discounts on InfoLines, an electronic newsletter published 10 times per year, that provides practical, easy-to-read information on supporting people with disabilities in the workplace. InfoLines is published by Training Resource Network and their team of Dale DiLeo, publisher, and Dawn Langton, Editor.

APSE WebSite and On-Line Membership System

APSE's website carries updated information on a myriad of issues relative to SE; provides electronic communication with our members for rapid distribution of e-news and information updates; includes a new membership system that allows members to renew or join on-line, register for the conference and training sessions on-line; and has a members only section which allows access to JVR, updating your member record, and more.

theAdvance

APSE members receive four copies of theAdvance, the APSE newsletter, each year. Topics discussed in theAdvance include: Public Policy affecting People with Disabilities; Empowerment of SE Workers; Management of SE Programs; Personnel Competencies and Training; Alternative Funding Sources; Ethical Standards for Service Providers; The Americans with Disabilities Act; Best Practices in SE; SE in The Rehabilitation Act; SE Worker and Employer Satisfaction; Transition From School to Work; Natural Supports; SSA Work Incentives, PASS, IRWE, etc.; and a myriad of other issues.

Annual Conference

APSE sponsors an annual national conference to provide a forum for sharing and collectively improving SE practice and opportunities for persons experiencing severe disabilities. APSE members have access to conference activities at reduced rates.

State Chapters

APSE members involved in the development and implementation of supported employment are tied into a national network of others involved in supported employment. State and local Chapters are forming to facilitate the continued expansion of quality SE in their states and localities. APSE currently has fully-chartered 36 State Chapters and State Chapters in Development. Many other groups are working to develop chapters in their states.

Legislative Action and Policy Change Activity

APSE monitors issues including funding support for SE and community integration, rights for people experiencing disabilities, technical assistance, eligibility and entitlement, special education, rehabilitation, social security, and so on. In addition, APSE staff provide a voice for SE as policies are established and funding decisions are made that may have an impact on the services you are able to provide. We will bring SE issues to the table in this year's Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. In Washington, D.C., APSE works with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) to make recommendations on the legislative language and regulations on all issues which impact the national implementation of supported employment services. APSE members are updated on national policy relevant to the continued growth and development of SE through theAdvance and periodic member service documents and policy updates.

Voting Privileges

Members have voting privileges in board elections and other questions brought before the members. Each Individual Member has one vote. Each Organizational member (as a group) has one vote.

For more information on APSE membership please visit www.apse.org