



**Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
and
Maryland Works, Inc.**

Announce a Funding Opportunity

**To improve and expand the ways people with developmental disabilities
are supported to be employed and have meaningful days**

TIP Grants

Transforming & Improving Practices through Customized Technical Assistance

Purpose

The purpose of this initiative is to improve the employment outcomes of people with developmental disabilities by supporting community service providers (“providers”) licensed by the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration to build, expand and sustain effective skills, capacity and competencies. Funds may be used to obtain customized technical assistance to improve the way services are provided so that more people with developmental disabilities are supported to get and keep meaningful work they want in their communities making decent wages and to have meaningful days when not working. Providers will identify the specific assistance and support needed to reach specified goals. All grant recipients will be required to participate in a learning community to share their efforts to improve employment outcomes and receive mutual peer support.

13 jointly selected grant proposals, 5 of which focus on increasing opportunities for people with developmental disabilities living in rural areas, were awarded a TIP grant in 2016. As a result, they have all contracted with subject matter experts who are assisting them to implement new processes for increased employment outcomes and developing new policies, procedures, forms, and evaluation tools to determine the agency’s progress with discovery, employment, and increased community-based activities that support people to have meaningful days when not working. This grant opportunity will expand support to additional organizations seeking to make significant, lasting improvements.

Funding for this initiative is available through a partnership of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and Maryland Works, Inc.¹ Individual organizations may apply for up to \$10,000. Collaborative proposals submitted by two or more agencies are encouraged as stipulated below, but are not required.

Background

People with developmental disabilities in Maryland want jobs in the community, pay that provides a living wage with benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. This initiative addresses several of the components that are critical for this to happen, including:

- Community service provider capacity and needed resources

- Implementation of best and promising practices that will maximize the employment opportunities and career potential of people with developmental disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities
- Implementation of best and promising practices that lead to people with developmental disabilities having meaningful days when not working
- Peer-to-Peer mentoring

State and federal laws and policies are shifting toward requiring and supporting increased opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to work in their communities and to have meaningful days in the community when not working. In addition, the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), with support from the DD Council and many others, is implementing an Employment First framework to support more people with developmental disabilities to be successfully employed in the community in jobs of their choice.

State and federal requirements include:

- **HCBS Settings Rule:** The Home and Community Based Settings Rule requires all Medicaid – funded settings to provide people with developmental disabilities opportunities to engage in community life, have access to the community, control their personal resources, and seek jobs in competitive employment. The HCBS Settings Rule applies to all community services funded by the Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- **WIOA:** Requirements in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will help further advance employment of people with disabilities by requiring coordination with all partners in workforce development systems to provide high quality services and supports. As a result, it is expected that people with disabilities will be better prepared for meaningful employment.
- **Phase out of 14c certificates:** The Ken Capone Equal Employment Act phases out the use of 14c certificates which allow organizations, under certain circumstances, to pay people with disabilities sub-minimum wage. After a four-year phase out, this will no longer be possible. Extensive planning for each individual as well as statewide planning and reporting will now occur to ensure successful implementation and positive outcomes.

In addition, the Transforming & Improving Practices through Customized Technical Assistance (TIP) grants, funded by the DD Council and Maryland Works in 2016, support 14 community service providers licensed by DDA to obtain customized technical assistance and improve the way services are provided, so that more people with developmental disabilities are supported to get and keep meaningful work they want in their communities making decent wages and have meaningful days when not working.

Assistance available through this round of *TIP Grants* is intended to support more community service providers in concert with those state and federal laws and Maryland’s Employment First initiative. Through this technical assistance initiative, the partnership seeks to assist service providers who are strongly committed to improving the employment outcomes of people with developmental disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, and who need targeted, customized technical assistance to achieve this outcome. In addition to a focus on employment, the technical assistance may also assist with improving the way people are supported during the day when not working.

This opportunity is intended to support but not supplant other assistance provided by DDA, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), the Maryland Association Community Services (MACS) and others helping agencies to transform their practices. Because training and other assistance is being offered by other local and state organizations and agencies, this funding cannot be used for training purposes.

Scope of Work

Applicants for customized technical assistance under this initiative are required to:

1. Demonstrate a commitment to supporting people with developmental disabilities to get and keep jobs in their communities making decent wages and to have meaningful days when they are not working.
2. Set goals for increasing the number of people employed in community jobs of their choice, increasing the number of hours they work and/or increasing the number of people participating in meaningful community activities of their choice when they are not working.
3. Set goals for decreasing the number of people in facility-based employment and day services.
4. Identify and undertake specific activities to achieve the goals.
5. Participate in a learning community to engage in peer-to-peer support and share successes, challenges, strategies and best practices. Once applicants are selected, the funding partners (the DD Council and Maryland Works) will work with them to create one or more learning communities. The funding partners will also support the learning community by: facilitating activities the learning community finds beneficial; connecting the learning community to already existing peer networks; and sharing lessons learned.

Selected providers will receive technical assistance from subject matter experts and ongoing peer-to-peer mentoring to address the issues outlined in their proposals that lead to improved employment and community-based outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.

Funding can be used for a range of technical assistance activities. Funding cannot be used for training purposes. If requested, the project partners will provide assistance to help identify the sources of technical assistance that have been successful in achieving positive employment outcomes. Examples of activities supported through this initiative may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Developing or strengthening an agency's commitment to improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities, including working with boards, families, individuals and key stakeholders.
- Developing and/or implementing necessary organizational changes to achieve the transformation goals, including changes to budget and personnel.
- Developing and/or implementing a strategic plan to increase customized employment for people with developmental disabilities.
- Implementing sustainable practices to build the capacity of the agency that lead to more people with developmental disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, working in integrated settings and participating in more community activities of their choice.
- Downsizing or closing day services or sheltered workshops.
- Testing innovative approaches.

Collaboration between two or more community service providers is encouraged, but is not required. This could be based on shared needs, geographic location or for other identified reasons.

Expected Outcomes

1. An increase in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, who are employed in integrated community jobs that they choose.
2. For individuals already employed, a measurable improvement in their employment status, measured in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: increased hours, higher satisfaction with their job, and/or increased pay and benefits.
3. Improved employment supports and services, reflected in the mission, vision, policies, and, most importantly, practices of provider agencies.
4. An increase in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities who meaningfully participate in their communities when not working.
5. New ideas and approaches tried and evaluated that can be replicated.

What Proposals Must Include

To request funding, providers must submit a proposal that includes the following information:

I. General Information

1. Organization's name, address and contact information.
2. Number of people currently supported in part-time and full-time work.
3. Number of people currently supported during the day who are not working.

II. Understanding the Commitment of the Agency

In order to better understand your agency's needs, provide the following information about where your agency is in the process of supporting people with developmental disabilities to have the jobs and lives they want.

1. Rate each of the following key stakeholder groups in your organization regarding how ready they are for change: board of directors, executive director/CEO, middle management, direct support staff; individuals supported by your agency, families of individuals supported by your agency.

Rating scale: 1: ready and willing; 2: potentially open to change; 3: resistant; 4: highly opposed

Briefly explain your rating for each group. Since there may be variance within each stakeholder group, choose the rating that best describes the majority of the stakeholders in each group.

Note: Ratings are for the purpose of learning where your agency is in the process and will not negatively affect consideration of your application.

2. What steps, if any, has your agency taken to increase the employment outcomes for the individuals you support? (And decrease the number of people who are in facility-based employment, if applicable).
3. What steps, if any, has your agency taken to increase the number of people who are supported to have meaningful days of their choice in their communities? (And decrease the number of people who are in facility-based day services or the amount of time spent there, if applicable).
4. What are the biggest barriers and challenges your agency faces relative to supporting people to work in the community and meaningfully participate in community activities when not working?

III. Transforming and Improving Practices to Improve Outcomes

1. What are you seeking to change or improve as a result of the technical assistance? Be specific.
2. How many people with developmental disabilities will potentially have measureable improvements in their employment status, i.e. an increase in the number of people employed and/or an increase in the amount of hours working? Within what timeframe?
3. What specific types and amounts (hours or days) of technical assistance are you requesting?
4. Who will provide the technical assistance, if known? What are their related credentials and experience? (Indicate if you do not know and the funding partners will assist in identifying the source of technical assistance).
5. How will the changes or improvements you make as a result of this technical assistance be sustained?
6. In order to evaluate this initiative: How will you determine that the goals and the objectives have been met? How will you determine the impact or affect the project has upon the individuals served?
7. Are you committed to participating in the learning community related to this work? Who will participate? The learning community members will define for themselves how frequently they meet.

IV. Supporting Documentation

1. A letter of commitment from the Executive Director/CEO and President/Chairperson of the agency's Board of Directors. If the proposal is a collaborative effort, letters of commitment from all partnering organizations' directors and boards must be included.
2. Resume of the lead staff person responsible for this initiative and an explanation as to why this person was selected.
3. Resume and signed letter of intent from the consultant(s) who will be involved in this initiative, if identified.

4. Budget to include the following information:
 - (a) subject matter expert fees
 - (b) transportation/travel costs
5. A brief explanation and justification for each expense, including how you arrived at the total.

V. Proposal

1. Proposals may not exceed 10 pages, not including the supporting documents in Section IV.
2. Number pages, double space and use only one side of the page.
3. Use font point size 12 or larger.
4. Do not submit cover letters, descriptive material, or any other attachment, except as listed above. They will not be reviewed.

Deliverables

All grant recipients must provide the Maryland DD Council and Maryland Works with copies of materials developed as a result of this project, e.g., policies, procedures, and lessons learned.

Funds Available

Funds will be available beginning September 1, 2017 and should be expended within one year. Each agency submitting an application may apply for a maximum of \$10,000. Collaborative proposals submitted by two or more providers who want to work together to address similar issues are encouraged and should reflect a lower cost per agency.

Matching Funds

A non-federal match is required for this initiative. Twenty-five (25%) percent of the total cost of the project (not of grant funds requested) is required unless the agency is located in Baltimore City or Somerset County and then only ten percent (10%) is required. Matching funds may include in-kind supports or other non-federal sources of funds. Any in-kind support used as match must have a value directly related to the grant.

Who Can Submit Proposals

Community service providers licensed by the Developmental Disabilities Administration to provide employment services for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland are eligible to submit proposals.

****Community service providers who were awarded a TIP grant in 2016 are not eligible to apply.****

Applicants from rural areas are encouraged to apply and will be given special consideration if their proposal meets the requirements of this solicitation. For this initiative, rural areas include: Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties in Western Maryland; Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties in Southern Maryland; and, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties in Eastern Maryland.

Pre-Proposal Information Sessions

Two pre-proposal information sessions will be held. The purpose and topics of the pre-proposal information sessions will be the same. The pre-proposal information sessions will be the only opportunity to ask questions. Attendance, however, is not mandatory.

- In-person Information Session: **In-person Information Session will be held on July 21, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at Maryland Works, 10270 Old Columbia Road, Suite 100, Columbia, MD 20146.**

If you require an accommodation at the Information Session, notify Jay Stewart at MD Works by July 14, 2017 via email at JayS@mdworks.com or 410-381-8660.

- Conference call Information Session: **July 24, 2017 at 11:00 a.m.**
- Email or call Faye Bell-Boulware at the DD Council to register and get call-in information: FayeB@md-council.org 410-767-6249 or 800-305-6441 ext. 1

Proposal Deadline

To be considered, proposals MUST be received by **August 16, 2017 at 12:00pm (noon).**

Email your application to Jay Stewart: JayS@mdworks.com

Important Note: Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by email or phone. If you do not receive confirmation by 2pm on August 16, 2017, contact Jay Stewart at 410-551-3130.

ⁱ This initiative is supported in part with funds from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, authorized by Public Law 106-402, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (CFDA 93.639) and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (CFDA 93.768) awarded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Maryland Works, Inc.