

Florida Provider Network



University of South Florida, Division of Applied Research and Education Support
Funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

Employment as Public Policy

Research Shows Large Supported Employment Cost Advantage

A recent study by Robert Cimera in *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* compares the cost-effectiveness of participants receiving sheltered work versus supported employment services. Unlike other studies, this one reviewed complete costs associated with both services throughout the entire time individuals receive those services. This is important because supported employment typically has higher upfront costs during career planning and job development phases, and then costs decrease as supports decrease over time.

The results of the study showed that the cumulative costs of supported employment (\$6,619) were about two thirds cheaper than sheltered work (\$19,338). Stated another way, **for every person funded in sheltered work, 2.82 supported employees could have been funded in the community.** The study did not even take into account the wages and cost-efficiency advantages of supported employment found in other research.

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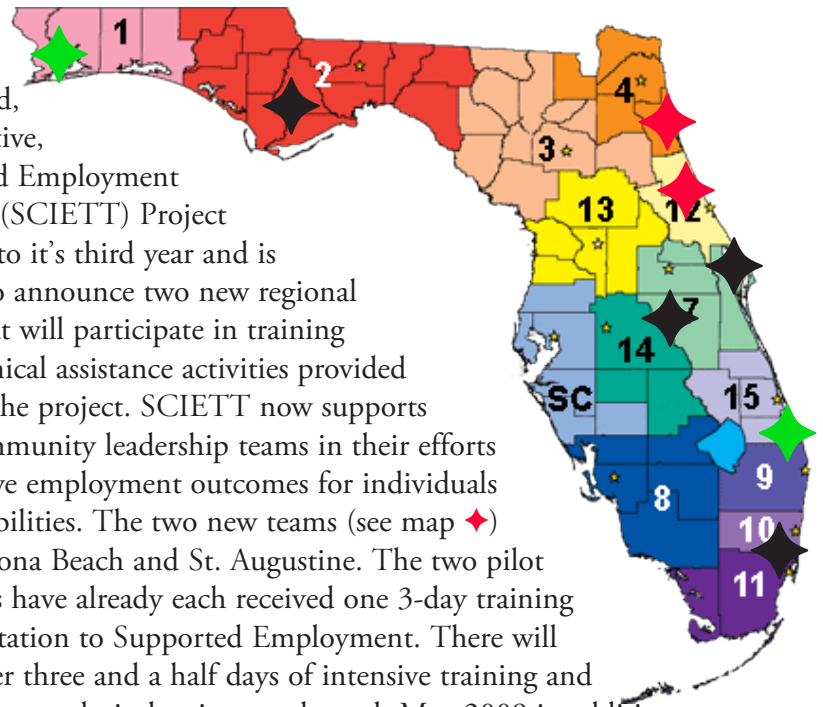
Building New Leadership in Florida for Employment and Transition

Two New Pilot Sites Begin Employment Training Activities

The Supported, Competitive, Integrated Employment Training (SCIETT) Project is now into its third year and is pleased to announce two new regional teams that will participate in training and technical assistance activities provided through the project. SCIETT now supports eight community leadership teams in their efforts to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The two new teams (see map ♦) are: Daytona Beach and St. Augustine. The two pilot site teams have already each received one 3-day training on Orientation to Supported Employment. There will be another three and a half days of intensive training and follow-along technical assistance through May 2009 in addition to being included as members of SCIETT Florida Provider Network.

The purpose of Project is to provide technical assistance to community stakeholders to consolidate current initiatives that encourage and assist supported employment efforts and build an infrastructure which will sustain a high level of training and technical assistance on an ongoing basis.

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Florida Provider Network Update...

The six previous teams are:

<u>Year 1 Pilot Sites</u> ♦	<u>Lead Agency</u>
Pensacola	APD
West Palm Beach	Arc of Palm Beach County
<u>Year 2 Pilot Sites</u> ♦	<u>Lead Agency</u>
Panama City	APD
Osceola County	Arc of Osceola County
Broward County	Children's Services County of Broward County
Brevard County	APD

SCIETT continues to lay the groundwork for a system to develop statewide capacity for supported employment. This is necessary to not only implement more services for the many individuals who want to work, but to develop a system of quality that utilizes best and cutting edge practices.

All training events are free and will be announced and posted for registration on the FPN website at <http://www.flse.net/FLProviderNetwork/fpn.asp>

Supported employment stakeholders who may not be associated with a pilot site are welcome to sign up on the FPN web page to receive email alerts on news, information and events related to employment of people with disabilities and participate on the discussion board!

The University of South Florida, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC), a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), directs SCIETT, which sponsored by United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. For additional information concerning SCIETT FPN please contact Brenda Clark at bclark@fmhi.usf.edu or 813-974-2581

Florida Observes Disability Employment Awareness Month

As part of Florida's observance of Disability Employment Awareness Month, APD joined Florida Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) in presenting the Florida Exceptional Employer Awards. The October 8 event in the Tallahassee City Commission recognized businesses from across the state that are committed to hiring people with disabilities. The Exceptional Employer Award was presented to representatives of the following businesses: Baptist Hospital of Pensacola; Kmart; Martin Electronics of Perry; Micro Systems of Fort Walton Beach; SunTrust Banks; TJ Maxx.

Governor Crist also took the opportunity to present APD customer and Area 2 employee **Katie Bowman** with the Supported Employee of the Year award on behalf of the Florida Association for Persons in Supported Employment.



Photo: The Champion Stakeholder Newsletter, Nov. 2008

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This is particularly important due to the large amount of funding that has been allocated to vocational services, estimated to be over a half billion dollars annually. Yet, despite all this spending, most people with significant disabilities remain unemployed, while those that work receive very low wages.

The author notes that the study was conducted only in one state (Ohio) and did not make any effort to factor for individual levels of functioning, hours employed, level of service satisfaction, or other types of factors. However, from a cost perspective alone, the study should cause policy makers to examine much more closely the wisdom of spending limited tax dollars on segregated, facility-based options that can cost much more than integrated, community-based ones in employment services.

Source: Cimera, R. (2007). Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities. Vol. 22, No. 4, p. 247



Helping to Correct Supported Employee Performance Errors on-the-Job

By Dale DiLeo

Job coaches frequently ask, “*What should I do when the supported employee makes an error on the job?*”

All employees make some mistakes during the course of learning any job. This is true of new people and veterans and is not just associated with workers with disabilities. With the recent emphasis in SE on the social aspect of employment, many job coaches can lose sight of their role as work skills training consultants for both the employer and the supported employee. And one of the most overlooked facets of training is that of correcting mistakes the trainee will make.

All Learning Has a Social Context

Why should an SE professional be aware of a supported employee's errors when in training?

Understanding the kinds of errors people are likely to make can speed the training process. And the quicker and more accurate an employee can do the job, the more likely he or she is to succeed on the job.

Also, the kinds of errors a worker makes can interfere with how the employee relates to co-workers and supervisors. In addition to social skills, becoming part of a work team usually also corresponds to how productive and efficient the worker is. Social status on the job is often connected to work performance.

Ensure a Reasonable Time to Learn

Most employers allow some time for an employee to learn how something should be done. Whether it's a veteran worker who must relearn a new set of skills or a new worker starting a job, an orientation period is usually built into the process.

This time frame may be formal, as in reaching a production criteria within two weeks. Or it may be informal, with an “expectation” that the worker will be able to do certain numbers or kinds of tasks as soon as possible. The challenge for employees with disabilities may be in reaching mastery within that time frame.

Usually, these allotments of time to learn a job are based on prior experience with other workers. When the expectation is vague, the risk of disappointment, both for employer and employee, is great.

Once a learning time frame has past, workers are expected to perform. If workers have not had sufficient time to learn, or have not been trained properly, they will experience undue pressure and their jobs will be at risk. For people who have disabilities with learning, sensory, physical or other related areas, extra time or assistance may be a reasonable accommodation within the Americans with Disabilities Act. This should be negotiated with the employer at the start of any new job.

Determine Types of Task Errors in Work Performance

There are an incredible number of ways people can err on the job. It's amazing that workers are as accurate as they are, considering Murphy's Law (If anything can go wrong, it will!)

“Doing it wrong” can mean many things. When an employer is concerned about work performance, the employment consultant should determine which kinds of errors are occurring.

Some of the most important ones are listed on the next page:

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Performance Errors on the Job

- **Inaccurate**
The work has been done wrong.
Example: The papers are misfiled.
- **Poor quality**
The work, although basically correct, does not meet a pre-defined level of acceptance.
Example: The room has been cleaned, but it is not clean enough.
- **Incorrect Step**
The work is being performed out of sequence or with steps missing.
Example: The worker should label merchandise before placing it on the shelves of the store.
- **Inefficient**
The work is not being done as productively as possible.
Example: It is taking the worker two hours when he could do it in one if he would have all his supplies available first.
- **Unsafe**
Work performance risks injury to self or others
Example: When she uses the power forklift, she doesn't watch very closely for others.
- **Incorrect Pace**
The speed of work performance is not at expected levels.
Example: The worker is slowing down before lunch, just when we need to have all the tables ready.
- **Incomplete**
The work is unfinished.
Example: The worker does not take out all the videos from the return box, causing the store to lose possible rentals.

Ten Questions to Analyze Training

If a trainee is making one or more of the errors above, the employment specialist first should analyze the training provided so far. Some considerations would be:

1. Has any training been provided for the problem performance?
2. Has the trainee's learning style been considered when training was given?
3. Who is doing the training and is that a factor?
4. Were adequate learning cues provided?
5. Did the trainee receive reinforcement for successful performance?
6. Was there sufficient time for the trainee to learn?

7. Were strategies used for helping the employee generalize the skill to other settings and situations?
8. Has the task changed?
9. Are there other factors unrelated to the skill to influence the trainee's performance, such as relationships or difficulties at home?
10. Are there built-in reminders for successful performance for the employee?

Strategies for Error Correction

- *Allow for challenge, minimize frustration.*
Once you have come to better understand the situation, decide on a strategy to help the trainee correct the error. This requires good judgement. A trainer must allow for challenge, risk and growth within a learning opportunity. Also try to minimize frustration and incorrect behaviors that may interfere with effective learning.
- *Gently interrupt immediately; repeat correctly with minimum assistance necessary.*
When a supported employee has made a mistake, it is usually best for the trainer to gently interrupt immediately in order to repeat the step correctly. Provide the least amount of assistance necessary.
- *Be sensitive to the setting and the person.*
A natural environmental interruption is preferable. The trainer should be sensitive to the setting and the person and try not to be intrusive.
- *Help the person to make self-corrections.*
Sometimes the behavior of correcting an individual acts as a reinforcer because of the interaction that occurs. When assistance is actually interfering with learning, it is best to consider alternative strategies for learning. One idea is to develop ways for individuals able to review their own work and make self-corrections. When training includes a self-check of expected work, trainees can reduce dependency on others.
- *Anticipate likely mistakes.*
A good learning facilitator will anticipate likely mistakes. You can then give assistance before the error occurs.
- *Ensure that the training correction comes from the natural environment.*
The best source for any of these strategies will be other employees of the business who are competent in the task. Consult with them so they can analyze the training situation and learn effective training skills.