OREGON’S UNIVERSAL RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

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Objectives from this Session

- Understand the need for a Universal Release of Information
- Learn how Oregon developed and rolled out a statewide tool
- Review lessons learned & next steps
Understanding the need for a Universal ROI

- Reduce paperwork for individuals and families
- Identify eligibility for long term supports early and up front
Understanding the need for a Universal Referral Tool

– Able to better track referrals and avoid individuals getting “lost” in the system Identify already existing information so person doesn’t have to repeat information (or worse, repeat services!)
– Document who is on the employment team
– Service coordinators, counselors, educators spend less time following up to gather information
Understanding the need for both the Universal ROI and Referral

- Ensure employment services are complementary and not duplicative.

- Allow existing information to be shared between multiple agencies (and their contractors/agents)

- Track and improve timeline from referral to work
Sharing Information when Multiple Agencies Sequencing Services for the Same Purpose

- Education or ODDS Discovery or Employment Path
- VR Job Development
- VR Job Coaching through Stabilization
- ODDS Long Term Job Coaching

Note: No one service is required or a prerequisite
Innovation from a Community

- Recognized a need made apparent by seamless transition teams

- Team of Education, VR, DD, and Employment Providers came together and developed a Universal Release of Information

- Allows a person to agree to allow the entire employment team to share information (back and forth) within one release.
And the home of the hit movie....
Reaching out to NTACT for support
NTACT Technical Assistance

• Support for Development of Goal and Plan
• Mapping Processes
• Focus Groups
  – Feedback on tools
  – What needed to implement?
• Communication Plan (including communication to leadership as well as actual people implementing tool)
• Measuring Success
  – Able to measure time from referral to services more effectively going forward
  – Goal to, over time, decrease time from referral to service
  – Better evaluate capacity need
Our timing was perfect...

- Oregon legislation (2017):
  - Requiring statewide ROI for social service agencies (including DD, VR, Education) to develop broader statewide ROI in order to meet similar objectives
  - People are better served when multidisciplinary/multi agency teams able to seamlessly share information and coordinate services
Development of Tools

- Research existing documents & guidance
- Research privacy laws/policies impacting all agencies
- Multi-agency stakeholder group
- Mapping process
- Test tools: Pilot teams throughout state
- Joint training & guidance
Introducing the Oregon’s Release form

Key Features Include:

- Allows interagency release of information (back and forth sharing for agencies and contractors/agents)
- Identifies all members of the employment team within one document
Introducing Oregon’s Referral Tool

Key Features Include:

- Allows simultaneous referral to both VR and ODDS.
- Better able to track timeline from referral to service delivery.
- Ensure individuals don’t get “lost” in system.
- Identifies all the documents within each Employment First agency. Serves a training function so people know what documents to ask for.
ODDS Worker Guide

- Provides information and support regarding the ROI
- Helps as a training tool for teams
- Can be a reference for new employees
Lessons Learned

Prioritize mapping at same time (or before) tool development

• As an opportunity to gather feedback
• Intent of tools not necessarily to change the process, but to develop a commonly agreed to form. Mapping still needed to:
  – Ensure tools support the process.
  – Develop common understanding regarding how the process flow might work.
    • Might still be different flows depending on individual circumstances.
    • Tools intended to be flexible based on circumstances and local practice.
Lessons Learned

Be prepared to provide assurance that tools address requirements for laws and policies governing access to client information

- Develop tools and guidance with input from agency counsel, privacy officers, etc.
- Have a conversation about elements required in a release.
- Allow time and encourage communities to review tools with their counsel and provide feedback.
- Be prepared for people to express hesitancy and concern that tools do not meet requirements for laws governing access to client information. Include those stakeholders in the conversation.
- Know it will take time to review & incorporate into existing practice.
Lessons Learned

Questions about whether an ROI is even required??

• State workgroup approach:
  – Not issuing guidance on whether ROI required. However, if an ROI is required, it is expected that state agencies (and their contractors/agents) use the state ROI.
  – Only applies to state social service agencies (including DD, VR, Education). Does not apply to outside entities (e.g. doctors offices, etc), although they may choose to use the state ROI.

• Employment First:
  – Multiple agencies with different laws and regulations governing requirements related to sharing client information (HIPAA, FERPA, VR regulations).
  – Confusion caused in absence of one agreed to ROI.

• Federal and State efforts to:
  – Increase discussion and understanding regarding when an ROI is not needed (see HHS RFI and Oregon SB 397). Still, many other federal/state laws and regulations require ROI.
Lessons Learned

Identify where tools will live

• Currently on DHS website- soon to be on ODE website
• In future, likely need to identify where else should live
• Finding the most accessible site for all LEAs and Agencies
Lessons Learned

Questions about whether referral constituted an application for VR, triggering timelines.

• Not yet an application.
• While tools identify what information exists, the actual documents and underlying needed is not necessarily with referral and ROI itself (documents to follow once referral and ROI received).
Lessons Learned

Utilize Focus Groups:

• To review tools.
• Engage local teams throughout state in process.
• More importantly, to gather information on what local teams need to implement and use tools.
Rollout and Next Steps

• Soft rollout for first year. Expected will be required within year of statewide rollout.
• Able to gather additional statewide feedback during year of rollout & refine tool. Ensure local teams able to test tool and map its incorporation into existing processes.
• Evaluate whether (and how) to incorporate into:
  – Pre-ETS processes
  – Workforce one stop centers
  – Streamline referrals during VR subminimum wage counseling
  – As a VR referral during DD intake processes.
Questions