

HireAbility Director Report

10-12-23

HireAbility Vermont continued to reap the benefits of our rebrand. Referrals are up. We identified a few areas of marketing focus for this past year. We developed materials to reach out to Vermonters with chronic health conditions. People who have a chronic health condition often do not consider themselves as having a disability yet they may be eligible for HireAbility services. We obtained the input of health care providers, our community partners and people with chronic health care conditions in our materials and outreach strategies. I am happy to share our video and print materials with anyone who asks.

We are competing in a very tight labor market for the very best VR counselors. We wanted to share what a great place Vermont is to live and that HireAbility is a great place to work. We created a video showcasing actual HA counselors talking about what Vermont has to offer and how much they love working for HireAbility. This video is being shared across many rehabilitation counseling master's programs in New England and beyond.

We are in the second year of our 5-year DIF grant, the Vermont Career Advancement Project (VCAP). This is a system's change grant with the goal of assisting Vermonters with disabilities to move out of poverty and have choice in their lives. Every HA participant can have a career pathway of their choice leading to credential attainment and higher wage jobs. Our counselors are becoming Career Pathways Navigators. The grant is in total alignment with our dashboard's lead indicators which in turn are slowly improving our Common Performance Measures.

VCAP has enrolled 239 participants in the grant to date, half of whom are actively engaging in education towards their career goal including registered apprenticeships with 52 completed degrees, certificates, or credentials. By the end of the grant, HireAbility will have developed a system of Earn-and-Learn opportunities and best practices for supporting participants and meeting the needs of the business customer. The results of this effort will lead to increased use of apprenticeship programs, credentials held by working Vermonters, and partnerships with business customers, education and training providers, and community partners.

HireAbility is entering year two of our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access. We have written an implementation plan with four main objectives:

1. Develop a workforce that reflects the diverse populations we serve.
2. Effectively reach all populations that are eligible for our services.
3. Ensure staff have access to the tools and knowledge and feel competent to serve all participants in a culturally appropriate way.
4. Strengthening our existing communication loops to ensure staff are informed and can contribute.

A stakeholder has been formed for each goal area to include HA staff and subject matter experts. Each group will complete an action plan with accountability measures and do the work.

HireAbility remains in a strong fiscal position drawing down significant reallocation funds for the third year. We have fully expended our award each year by investing in Vermonters with

disabilities in a variety of creative ways with our community partners. Allowing HireAbility to assist Vermonters with disabilities to advance in their chosen career pathway.

As always, I look forward to continuing our robust and productive partnership with the Vermont State Rehabilitation Council.

Diane P. Dalmasse, Director, HireAbility VT