

## Ongoing Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities: An Exploratory Study

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*Abstract: A study was conducted on the types of support services provided to persons in supported employment in Michigan and the issues affecting such services. Results revealed that insufficient funding for case management and job coaching and the lack of transportation services are among the most serious limitations of the program. Human service personnel were also found wanting with regard to their ability to provide employees with connections to sectors or people who can help them.*

### Introduction

Supported employment has been defined similarly in both the Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities Acts as "competitive work in integrated work settings . . . for persons for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent . . . and who because of their disability need ongoing support services to perform such work" (Public Law 100-146). The Rehabilitation Act further suggests that ongoing supports may include training, retraining, and other ongoing employment supports.

As indicated in these federal laws and definitions, in the supported employment initiative throughout the country ongoing employment support has been a major distinguishing characteristic of supported employment, as opposed to other methods of job placement. Advocates and program developers have indicated that in supported employment, ongoing support and assistance is provided to insure that the person is able to maintain employment. The supported employment model is intended to provide timely assistance to the person and employer to help deal with problems, provide retraining, develop job accommodations, assist with personal issues, etc. Rather than being left without assistance after placement, both employer and employee are able to count on help to solve job-related problems (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, and Albin, 1988; McLoughlin, Garner, and Callahan, 1987; Moon, Goodall, Barcus, and Brooke, 1987).

As we have increasingly implemented supported employment a range of issues related to the provision of on-going supports has become increasingly clear. On the one hand, the capacity of human service agencies to provide effective on-going supports is less than clear. Over time case loads of job coaches and case managers of community mental health agencies have grown and will continue to do so. This occurs at a time when funding for such programs is often being reduced rather than increased.

We are also finding, however, that our method of providing supported employment services is having some unintended negative results. While the availability of job coaching services is useful in obtaining agreements from employers to hire individuals with disabilities, employers and employees may become dependent upon the job coach on an ongoing basis. The individual with a disability may not develop relationships and interdependent working relationships with co-workers

and may not receive natural support and supervision typically provided by employers.

As these problems are becoming evident, an increasing number of individuals are engaging in efforts to address ongoing employment supports and the relationship between natural supports and supports and assistance provided by human service personnel (Bellamy, et al., 1988; DiLeo and Hagner, 1991; McLoughlin, et al., 1987; Moon, et al., 1987; Nisbet and Hagner, 1989).

Tremendous needs exist for demonstration, dissemination, and evaluation of ongoing employment supports that are associated with general community supports (Griswold, 1986; Peterson, 1987). Roles of rehabilitation, special education, mental health, and other agencies, as related to ongoing employment supports, need to be identified. A survey by Michigan State University validated this need. Berquist (1988) and the Supported Employment Technical Assistance Project staff at Michigan State University conducted a technical assistance needs assessment study of supported employment projects in the state. Follow-along support services were indicated by 63% of the respondents as among the 10 highest priorities, ranking number 6. This ranked higher than earlier and more traditional training and technical assistance issues of job development, worker matching, and training strategies. A reasonable conclusion is that, as programs are able to place and train more workers effectively, the concern of service providers shifts from training to providing meaningful assistance to help individuals maintain employment and participate effectively in the community.

### **Approaches to Ongoing Employment Support**

Approaches to ongoing employment support are in early stages of development. In general, we can divide these into a matrix as described below. On the one side of the matrix, we can consider program services that focus exclusively on employment issues. Alternatively, programs may see employment as one component of the total community support provided for the individual. On the left column of the matrix, we consider who provides such support - in this case, natural community supports and human service support systems.

Human service supports should provide necessary assistance and specifically be used to stimulate and assist friends, peers, coworkers, or other social groups to provide ongoing assistance to persons with disabilities in employment and in the total community. Most supports associated with supported employment, to date, exclusively focus on employment issues. However, for all people, work life, home life, and community life are related and interact in complex ways. As individuals have more wages and more time off from work, relationships with individuals, interaction in groups, leisure activities, and other aspects of a whole life become more important as part of both employment and community support.

Forrest (1987) and Perske (1988) describe support "circles of friends" that are intentional groups designed to provide intensive assistance, based on relationships of mutual respect, to persons with severe disabilities. The Community Support initiative of the National Institute of Mental Health has provided a range of community support models and approaches for persons with mental illness over the last 10 years. All of these, and other models, have features that may be used to provide substantial employment and community support for people with disabilities. Below, we provide a brief review of major models of ongoing employment support currently described in the literature.

uman Service Employment Support Models.

**Job Coach.** Support services in this model are delivered primarily, and in some cases exclusively, by job coaches or employment specialists who work with employers to facilitate hiring, providing on-the-job training, fading, follow-up, and retraining or other support as needed (Bellamy, et al., 1988; McLoughlin, et al., 1987; Moon, et al., 1987; Nisbet and Hagner, 1988).

Though some efforts are usually made to facilitate employer and co-worker support, most of the published training materials focus on the role of the job coach in providing direct assistance.

**Job Coach/Case Manager.** In this model, job coaches typically provide most of the intensive assistance and services, with case managers having ongoing responsibility for follow-up. While this approach is used in many states, virtually no literature describing the role of the case manager, training needs, or other issues is available.

### **Employment-Based Natural Support Models: Employers and Co-Workers**

Additional models and approaches have been developed that involve utilization of employers and co-workers. Nisbet and Hagner (1988) have provided the most comprehensive review of ongoing employment supports in the work environment.

They suggested the following approaches, which are based on variations of employer and co-worker supports. They further categorized support to include informal support in work settings, formal support in businesses available for all workers to include training and employee assistance programs, and external assistance by human service programs. Specific models described by Nisbet and Hagner are described briefly below.

**Mentoring in Employment.** In this model, a job coach may provide initial training. However, when adequate performance is met, a co-worker assumes assistance as a mentor to provide periodic assistance in solving problems, acting as a resource when questions arise, and serving as a liaison between employment and the home setting (Shafer, 1986). The co-worker could be paid for this assistance though this is not necessary.

**Training Consultant.** In this model, a co-worker(s) provides both intensive training and ongoing support for the employee, with training and consultation by human service agency personnel. This requires a much greater commitment of time on the part of the co-worker. The model suggested by Nisbet and Hagner (1988) recommends reimbursement of this portion of the co-worker's time by the human service agency.

**Job Sharing.** As the name indicates, in this option a person with disabilities may share a job with another worker who may or may not have disabilities.

Wages could be adjusted based on productivity (Nisbet and Hagner, 1988).

**Attendant.** For persons with physical disabilities, attendants may be effective in providing on-the-job supports. The attendant is hired by the worker with a disability.

## **Community-Based Natural Support Models**

Other models that use natural community supports in the total life of the individual may have possibilities for providing more extensive and holistic community support and integration. These may be further developed in the future based on community support literature and approaches. The strength of such approaches lies in the fact that the individual is treated as a whole person, and all aspects of the life of the person are considered.

**Community Employment Support.** Gemmel and Peterson (1989) described a pilot project in Mississippi in a very poor, rural area. In this project, job coaches performed some functions related to job matching, job training, fading, and retraining. An organized group of community advocates assisted in job development, transportation, training related to employment (budgeting, etc.), and provision of ongoing follow-up and support. In this model, the advocate provided a first level of monitoring and intervention. However, human service assistance was available. Additionally, training and ongoing support was provided for advocates.

**Circle of Friends.** Forrest (1987) and Perske (1988) have described how intentional support groups may form around an individual needing ongoing intensive assistance in a range of life areas. Such a group may agree on roles in monitoring, counseling, problem-solving, training, job development and other roles. Professional and human service support of such groups could be especially helpful. Such groups could operate out of the context of larger community groups, such as social clubs, churches and synagogues, etc.

**Peer Support.** Peer support processes may also be established via a variety of mechanisms that may include drop-in centers, job support clubs, and individual peer support. In this approach, an individual with a disability would provide assistance to another person with a disability.

**Life Partner/Buddy.** Similar to circles of friends, in this option an individual(s) agrees to provide an ongoing life mentoring and assistance role to the individual. Professionals may provide training and assistance to such individuals.

Ongoing employment supports for persons in supported employment must be understood and developed more systematically if we are to assist persons with disabilities maintain employment. While some initial models have been developed, many questions need to be answered. These include the following:

1. What types of ongoing employment supports are being provided?
2. What innovative models of ongoing employment and community supports may be developed? What are the roles of various community members and professionals in these approaches? What type of assistance and support do community members need in providing assistance to people with disabilities?
3. What is the role of self-advocacy and peer support in ongoing employment and community supports? How can professionals empower and encourage self-advocacy?

4. What training, funding, and other incentives are needed to maintain ongoing employment supports to various individuals involved in the process?
5. What is the anticipated growth in caseloads for ongoing employment supports over time?
6. What variations in ongoing employment supports are needed based on the disability and life needs of particular individuals?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was intended to develop an initial picture of ongoing support services being provided in supported employment in Michigan and to identify major issues related to the provision of ongoing support. Michigan has long been a leader in providing vocational services to persons with disabilities and was in the first set of states to obtain a systems change grant to expand supported employment. Therefore, the status of on-going support may be relevant to other states as well.

Specific objectives included the following:

1. Identify types of ongoing supports being provided by supported employment projects in Michigan.
2. Identify funding sources for intensive and ongoing support phases of supported employment in Michigan.
3. Identify types of personnel providing various types of ongoing supports in Michigan.
4. Identify types of ongoing supports particularly important for various disability groups, if applicable, in Michigan.
5. Identify major issues related to ongoing support in employment of persons with disabilities in Michigan.
6. Identify incentives for providing ongoing employment support.

This article reports on the first question only and provides an overview of issues identified in the total study. Limitations of the study should be noted. The study has no methods for evaluating the quality of ongoing supports provided or the impact of types and quality of supports on the employment of people with disabilities. These are, of course, important limitations that may be addressed in subsequent research.

### **Methods of the Study**

The study was developed in association with the Supported Employment Evaluation Project at Western Michigan University. The Developmental Disabilities Institute at Wayne State University designed and implemented the study.

## Survey Design

The survey was designed via a systematic process. The literature concerning ongoing employment supports was reviewed. This step also involved discussion with key individuals in Michigan and in other states (Maine, Mississippi, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Oregon, Illinois, Indiana) regarding the status in their states of ongoing employment supports, models being used, and related issues. A meeting was held with the Management Team for Supported Employment in Michigan. The study was discussed with the Team and input obtained regarding survey design. A draft of the survey was developed with assistance by a rehabilitation counselor involved in supported employment and transition in Maine, who served as consultant for the project. The author and another university researcher worked together to revise and develop a finalized draft of the survey. A final review was provided for input by the management team regarding survey structure and items. A final revision of the survey was completed. Two surveys were developed for the study that had overlapping items. One survey was designed to be sent to the program manager for supported employment in an area and requested information about ongoing supports used (Program Survey). A second survey was designed to request similar information regarding ongoing supports used with a particular worker employed via a supported employment project (Individual Worker Survey). The goal was to provide two "pictures" of ongoing support that could be compared.

**Figure 1. Types of supported employment model reported. (Question 1)**

Type	Individual		Program Survey	
	N	%	N	%
Individual	13	54%	24	100%
Placement				
Enclave	6	25%	13	54%
Mobile Work	2	8%	11	46%
Crew				
Other	1	4%	3	12.5%

## Survey Sample

A random sample of 28 supported employment programs was taken from the mailing lists of the Supported Employment Evaluation Project in Michigan. For each Program Survey, an individual employed worker was identified from the cohort of 100 workers being followed intensively by the

**Evaluation Project.** Both surveys were sent to each site with requests that appropriate personnel complete each survey.

## **Survey Procedures**

The surveys were mailed in November of 1989. Approximately 3 weeks later, a follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents. Subsequently, 2 follow-up calls were made to each nonrespondent after 2-3 weeks lead time.

## **Data Analysis**

Survey responses were entered into a data file at Wayne State University and print-outs obtained using the SPSS-X data analysis program. Simple frequencies only were obtained. More complex data analysis and hypothesis testing were not considered appropriate due to the small size of the sample.

## **Results of the Study**

### **Survey Respondents**

Twenty-four (24) responses were received from the 28 surveyed supported employment programs who were mailed instruments. Each respondent completed a survey regarding a specific, identified worker in a supported employment site who was being provided ongoing employment supports (Individual Worker Survey) and a survey regarding general ongoing employment supports available in the (Program Survey).

Figure 1, above, illustrates the type of supported employment models used in the programs represented by the respondents. The responses from the Individual Worker Survey illustrate models in which specific individuals were placed, while the Program Survey illustrates types of models available in the supported employment project as a whole. These figures are similar to those reported in supported employment programs throughout the state. Slightly more than half of the individual workers were employed in individual placement models of supported employment.

Figure 2 illustrates the disabilities of the individuals represented in the Individual Worker Survey and the supported employment models in which these individuals were working. As is typical throughout the state, the vast majority of workers were identified as having mental retardation (23 out of 24). Many individuals had additional disabilities. Disabilities not represented in the sample included the following: autism, brain injury, cerebral palsy, and persons designated as legally blind.

### **Types of Ongoing Supports Provided**

We were especially interested in the range of ongoing employment supports provided for persons with disabilities in Michigan. Both surveys asked respondents to identify ongoing employment supports provided in the program as well as for specific, individual workers. Additional space was provided to record comments regarding each type of ongoing support. We have reported this information in several ways:

1. Listing of ongoing supports provided as indicated by respondents on the Program Survey and the Individual Worker Survey.
2. Ongoing supports provided in various types of supported employment models for each of the surveys.

## Summary of Types of Supports

A careful analysis of Figure 3 indicates that ongoing supports used and available most frequently are those directly associated with follow-up and problem solving on the job by the job coach or case manager. Employers and co-workers are used much less frequently. Additionally, virtually no use is made of job sharing or attendants. Similarly, peer support, networks of friends, and community, church, and civic organizations are little used. However, multiple supports are available in programs in the state; local programs are utilizing some creative options. Additional room for the expansion of options that use natural community supports, employers, and co-workers appears to exist. Figure 3 illustrates the number of respondents for each survey who indicated utilization of each type of ongoing employment support listed on the survey. Below, we will discuss the results obtained from the survey and the comments that were often included.

Support a: Provide ongoing support planning to focus on satisfaction of employers, the person, family; complete training; and show evidence of productivity. Nearly all programs and individual services included this component (79% and 83% respectively). In comments, job coaches and case managers [TABULAR DATA FOR FIGURE 3 OMITTED] often coordinated meetings with a variety of individuals to plan ongoing supports.

Support b: Monitor employment via periodic contacts with employer and worker. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the individuals studied were provided this ongoing employment support, while 88% of the programs reported its availability. Although this percentage is very high, a range of 12-17% of programs and/or individuals did not report the provision of ongoing monitoring of success on the job. Given the expectations of supported employment programs, this is a somewhat surprising result. On both surveys, comments indicated that job coaches and case managers provided such ongoing monitoring and follow-up. Additionally, phone calls, questionnaires, employer and employee interviews, observations, and employee satisfaction report forms were used to obtain feedback and develop plans for ongoing employment support. One program reported utilization of a holistic quality of life index developed by Shalock and colleagues to obtain information for monitoring and planning. Many respondents had very specific plans for frequency of follow-up contacts.

Support c: Monitor employment via periodic contacts with family and worker. Three-quarters of the families of individuals were being contacted to assist in monitoring employment. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the programs engaged in family contacts. Job coaches and case managers were primarily responsible. Several respondents described contacts being made by phone and by questionnaire. Some engaged in these contacts on a regularly scheduled basis while others appeared to engage in contacts based on immediate needs. Contacts were made with family members and with group home or other residential staff.

Support d: Provide family support and consultation to deal with needs and issues related to employment. Similarly, many programs respondents stated that they provide family support and consultation (63% of individual workers and 79% of program respondents). Case managers provided most of the more intensive family support and consultation. Respondents commented on issues that required special consultation with families, including: changes in work schedules; dealing with SSI issues and concerns; general sharing of information; transportation and scheduling concerns; and other issues. One respondent indicated that in "some cases we are crossing into . . . family therapy" in which case referrals may be made. Interactions may often occur in the home though phone contacts appear frequently used as well.



Support e: Consult with employers to identify and resolve work-related problems. Respectively, 83% and 88% of respondents for the Individual Worker and Program Survey Stated that this service is being provided. Again, comments revealed that job coaches provided follow-up with employers. However, respondents stated that employers were encouraged to contact job coaches or case managers if problems or special needs occurred. One respondent invites employers to an advisory board meeting to share information and deal with issues.

Support f: Provide training, support, and/or extra money to a co-worker or employer to provide ongoing support. Only 50% of the individual workers received this support service; 64% of the programs stated that this service was available. Comments revealed a range of efforts to involve co-workers and employers in provision of ongoing support. Training has been provided to the employer and co-workers regarding how to supervise an individual and understanding of the needs and disability of the worker. In one program, employers with workers who are hearing impaired are invited to attend an agency sign language class, and in-service training is provided to co-workers. Another respondent described arrangements in which a co-worker provided transportation for \$1 per day. No respondents indicated that funding incentives have been provided for co-workers or employers to provide additional support. Neither was funding for extra assistance by employers reported in comments.

Support g: Structure job sharing between a disabled and non-disabled worker where the non-disabled worker provides support with funding provided by the agency. This innovative strategy suggested by Nisbet and Hagner (1988) is virtually unused within Michigan. However, 1 respondent on the Individual Worker Survey and 2 on the Program Survey indicated the use of an adapted version of this option. Three respondents on the Program Survey indicated that this option has been discussed with employers but has not yet been used.

Support h: Use attendants for persons with physical disabilities. No respondents to the Individual Worker Survey reported use of this option. However, 3 programs reported availability of this support service. Respondents commented that this has not yet been needed. This result is consistent with the very small numbers of individuals with physical disabilities reported to be participating in supported employment programs in Michigan.

Support i: Provide job skills retraining and upgrading as needed. Most individuals receive and most programs provide this ongoing support service via availability of job coaches - 83% for the Individual Worker Survey and 83% for the Program Survey. Employers assist with job retraining in some instances. Several respondents commented that the need for skill upgrading is an important issue in ongoing follow-up and support.

Support j: Assist in job-related needs such as transportation to work. Transportation is a problem and an important issue in facilitating supported employment, and most programs attempt to deal with this issue (71% in the Individual Worker Survey and 83% of Programs). A range of approaches have been used to provide assistance with transportation and other related needs. Some respondents report provision of training for use of public transportation, if available. Few respondents discussed providing driver's training. A number of respondents indicated that they assist in arranging car pools, arrangements with coworkers, or utilization of special transportation services for persons with disabilities. Several respondents reported providing transportation to workers via vans or personal cars, though this option was reported to be less than desirable. One organization stated that they operate 11 vans each day. Another agency stated that they were considering eliminating transportation assistance due to the cost. One program indicated that "transportation is the #1

eligibility factor - the person must have own transportation or skills and access to public transit." Transportation is a major issue for employment and ongoing support of people with disabilities.

Support k: Aid in developing interpersonal skills in the work setting. Most programs also provide specific assistance in developing interpersonal skills to individuals (83% of respondents in the Individual Worker Survey) and to other programs (88% of respondents in the Program Survey). Job coaches, case managers, and employers generally attempt to provide assistance on the job in developing interpersonal skills. Several respondents commented that day and activity program curricula are providing opportunities for social skill development. Other respondents discussed specific assistance by job coaches that include careful observation, role plays to teach appropriate social skills, and modeling. Co-workers and employers "interact and monitor responses and seek job coach assistance when needed." One program uses a worker support group for workers with mental illness in addition to individual assistance.

Support l: Assist to develop a network of friends and natural community supports that will help provide ongoing support on the job. A relatively small effort was reported in developing a network of friends and community supports that could assist in job support. Only 7 (29%) respondents on the Individual Worker Survey and 13 (54%) on the Program Survey indicated that this support is being used. Despite the relatively small effort, however, several creative approaches were reported that include the following:

- \* some respondents stated that workers have developed their own networks (i.e. "she is a naturally social individual and easily gets offers or rides, etc., from co-workers, bank staff, church, etc.");
- \* use of socialization and learning programs that include a "Voluntary Action Center", YMCA, People's First group, ARC, leisure and recreation programs;
- \* an independent living program "attempts to develop a network of friends and peers that will provide moral support."

Another respondent indicated that the program is trying to provide this support through parent/advocate involvement. However, the respondent stated that they are "not sure how to proceed."

Support m: Use members of civic groups, churches, or other community organizations to provide ongoing employment support assistance. A very small number of programs utilize natural community support groups. Three individuals were being provided assistance through such groups; only 6 programs (25%) reported use of this ongoing employment and community support. By and large, comments regarding this support focussed on using of a few of such groups to assist in identifying jobs or hiring of individuals. One respondent indicated that this support "sounds like it has possibilities!"

Support n: Use peer support networks in social clubs, group meetings, or individual supportive relationships to provide ongoing employment support. Moderate use of peer support networks was reported. Nine individuals (38%) were receiving assistance through this mechanism; 15 (63%) reported utilization of peer support networks. Support groups are being used that meet periodically

to discuss issues, needs, and provide mutual assistance. Social events with peers are scheduled and supported by agencies. Support of friends in residential settings is of assistance to a number of

persons.

Support o: Help maintain emotional health and personal adjustment through counseling and assistance related to employment. Most programs provide assistance in dealing with personal and emotional adjustment issues. Sixteen (67%) of the respondents on the Individual Worker Survey indicated that assistance was being provided in this area. Nineteen (79%) of the programs indicated provision of assistance in this area. Case managers and job coaches provide most assistance in this area, though other resources are used as well. These include: support groups, management of stress of job tasks, meetings with group home staff, networking with psychologist, and other professionals, and arrangements for counseling through the Community Mental Health center.

Support p: Help to budget, plan finances, and pay bills. Budgeting assistance, while not a direct job support, was included as a type of related ongoing employment support. Less than half (46%) of the respondents reported providing this support to specific individuals; slightly more than half (58%) of the programs indicated that this type assistance is available. A number of respondents provided comments regarding specific examples of assistance in this category. Four respondents indicated that families or group home staff dealt with these issues. Others provided assistance through Independent Living Programs or with the assistance of a caseworker. In at least one case, very specific guidelines and monitoring of expenses by the worker occurred by the human service staff.

Support q: Provide home management skills training and support. Relatively small numbers of respondents reported provision of home management skills training and support. Only 7 (29%) of the individual workers surveyed were receiving this service; 9 (38%) of the programs made this support available. Group home staff, foster care programs, family, and Independent Living Programs were reported to assist in this area.

Support r: Assist to participate in community activities and in solving problems in living in the community. Again, somewhat small numbers of individuals are being provided assistance in community participation. Eight (33%) respondents to the Individual Worker Survey and 14 (58%) respondents to the Program Survey indicated use and availability of this support. One respondent indicated that a "supported employment club" meets and monthly community outings are planned. Another respondent indicated that "we take our workers to the bank to cash their checks and then shopping. We help them to look for big items like TV, radios, and help them set up a savings account." Other commenters said that they provide similar assistance as well as assistance in accessing leisure activities. One respondent indicated that "CMH provides case management, supervised apartment housing; DSS provides homemaker, parent, and cooking training."

Support s: Provide help and mediation in solving work and home conflicts and problems as needed. A substantial number of the respondents indicated that this service is provided. Sixteen (67%) of the individual workers surveyed were receiving this service. Seventy-five percent of the programs provide this service. Several respondents described efforts to coordinate activities between work and home settings. Special meetings are held between various parties to develop ideas for solving problems. As one respondent said, "we communicate with all parties to keep updated as needed on issues" and hold "occasional joint meetings to brainstorm, always coordinated with the case manager." Several respondents stated that the case manager is contacted to resolve conflicts related to work/home problems; others indicated that the job coach provides primary assistance in this area.

Support t: Help to participate in community leisure and recreational activities. Only 7 (29%) of the

respondents for the Individual Worker Survey indicated that assistance in leisure/recreational participation was being provided. However, 15 (63%) of the programs indicated that this service is part of their program. This is a meaningful discrepancy between potential services and those being provided for the selected specific individuals. A number of approaches to providing assistance in accessing leisure activities were mentioned in survey comments. These included:

- \* agency sponsored golf, bowling, skating, and other activities;
- \* encouragement and assistance to access general community recreational activities;
- \* participation in activities with family, school, or churches; and
- \* participation in special events such as workshops, activity centers, and Special Olympics.

Additional supports: Other types of ongoing supports being provided in programs.

Comments included the following:

- \* assisting in arranging services that cannot be provided by the agency due to the work hours of the person;
- \* dealing with issues related to SSI, facilitating PASS options;
- \* providing opportunities for advancement and job changes;
- \* assisting employers with tax credits, time studies, and deviated wage certificates;
- \* assistance by a school social worker to provide ongoing support assistance for students; and
- \* consultation to and coordination with group home staff.

One respondent noted that the "supported employment program should provide funded positions for client case managers and clinical supported service persons for more effective meeting of client needs."

## **Ongoing Employment Supports and Models of Supported Employment**

### **Issues in Providing Ongoing Employment Supports**

Respondents were asked to identify in a short narrative question the major issues regarding the provision of ongoing employment supports. Two issues emerged as strongly stated concerns by virtually every respondent to this question: (1) funding of ongoing employment supports; and (2) transportation assistance to workers. Respondents were concerned about the rising costs of maintaining caseloads for employment supports over time and saw this as a critical issue in ensuring the success of their programs.

Comments included the following:

- \* The major issue is who pays for ongoing employment support.
- \* Present and ongoing funding contracts for supported employment services does not nearly cover the actual costs for facilities providing this service.
- \* One commenter indicated that due to lack of increase in available funds, they must "divert existing monies from existing programs."
- \* One commenter stated that "CMH resources for ongoing employment support have reached their limit. Potential supported employment enrollees are, therefore, being placed on waiting lists." Numerous others responded similarly.
- \* "Although we are committed to community-based services, the ability to maintain an ever-growing caseload will reach its peak and services will be limited."
- \* "If a person does not meet the state's developmental disability definition, no long-term funding source has been identified."
- \* "No assistance in re-targeting existing program funds to these needs. Agencies who have aggressively established Medicaid-approved programs are in danger."

Comments revealed a strong interest and commitment on the part of respondents to provide supported employment and ongoing employment support, but a sense of urgency and high concern about their ability to do so.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The study has highlighted a number of issues related to provision of effective employment supports for persons with disabilities. On the one hand, the limitations of human service agencies to provide ongoing employment supports was clear. Funding for case management and ongoing job coaching is problematic. Transportation services in communities for all people is clearly a problem. A range of human service and community agencies are involved in providing some degree of funding for ongoing employment supports. However, the amount of funding is insufficient.

For the long-term effectiveness of supported employment, funding and policy issues must be addressed. In part, the commitment of states and communities to providing effective community supports must be carefully weighed and resources provided to support such a commitment.

However, the role of human service agencies and their personnel must also be carefully examined. Knoll (1991) has described a major shift in paradigms that is presently in process in human services to persons with disabilities. As we move from a focus on deinstitutionalization to a more clear focus on community membership of persons with disabilities, the roles of human service personnel change dramatically. Rather than focussing exclusively on services to the person with a disability, human service personnel also provides supports and assistance to co-workers and other natural supports, facilitate connections among people in the community, and broker services and supports available through generic community services (Dileo, 1991).

From this perspective, this study provides a focus on the degree to which such partnerships are presently occurring and describes some of the needs in the field for facilitating and supporting such

a shift in roles. In the study, natural supports were used in limited fashion. The most typical supports were provided by job coaches and case managers with infrequent use of approaches that engage a range of natural supports on the job and in the community.

Examining effective approaches for providing ongoing employment and community supports for persons with disabilities provides exciting opportunities for improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and for improving work life for all persons. Our challenge in the coming years will be to further understand the changing roles of human service professionals in relationship to businesses and community supports.

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