

# Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Needs Assessment



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## **PREFACE**

This needs assessment was conducted by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development. Its purpose is to assess the needs of people with disabilities and their potential employers. The results will be used to plan and inform the balance of the grant activities as it seeks to meek the goal of facilitating competitive employment of people with disabilities.

This project was supported by award number 11-P-93057/7/01, CFDA #93.779, Center for Medicaid Services, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official positions of the University of Missouri- Kansas City, Institute for Human Development.



# Executive Summary

The Institute for Human Development at the University of Missouri-Kansas City is administering the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). The MIG's main goal is to enhance the use of Medicaid resources in Missouri to more effectively support the competitive employment of people. This report is one of a series of reports on research and activities funded by this grant.

This report provides a brief review of relevant research and then provides the activities and findings related to an information gathering retreat held in Columbia, Missouri, December 2005 to assess needs of Missouri employers and people with disabilities. It also provides reporting and analysis of a follow-up survey of 153 agency providers and people with disabilities. Finally, some conclusions are drawn and suggestions made for future research.

## Summary of Consumer Group Retreat Activities:

- An information gathering retreat was conducted in Columbia, Missouri on December 12 and 13. There were 16 individuals representing nine consumer organizations throughout the State of Missouri.
- Barriers and challenges to employment were identified as: *challenges related to transportation and punctuality, stigma and employer perceptions, elimination or reduction of Medicaid benefits, networking, personal care attendants, and lack of job readiness training.*
- Training and educational needs for consumers included the following: *job readiness skills, self-determination skills, and benefits information.*

## Summary of Employment Group Retreat Activities:

- Eleven businesses were represented during the day long retreat of December 12, 2005.
- Participants rated available materials based on most valuable to business. *The Disability 101 handbook*, which provides a basic overview of disabilities, was ranked as the *most valuable*.
- Training most needed by businesses and business partnership initiatives is *disability employment practices; recruitment and outreach, suggestions for hiring, guidelines for interviewing, etc.*
- Other training needs included the following: *training on diversity and disability for all employees, employer marketing strategies, understanding disabilities as it applies to the workplace, and providing more resources for training and education.*
- Employer representatives discussed the ways in which people with disabilities could be made more competitive, including *having an empowering attitude.*

## Obtaining Employment

- People with disabilities want job-related training first and then training on computer skills.
- Accessibility/disability issues are important as well as career skills but less so than vocational and computer skills.
- Most people with disabilities know of resources to help them obtain employment.

## **Retaining Employment**

- People with disabilities continue to identify vocational and job-related training as critical to keeping their employments.
- Life skills and attitudinal issues also require attention for people with disabilities to retain employment.
- Job coaches and job skills are the top resource people need to retain employment. The second most important resource is societal support.

## **Use of Personal Care Services in Employment**

- Many people with disabilities do not know of the possibility of using a pca in the workplace nor do they see how these services might be of help in finding and retaining employment.
- For those that know about personal care services and their use at the job, the biggest barrier to using these services is the issue of funding and related income eligibility.

## **Overall**

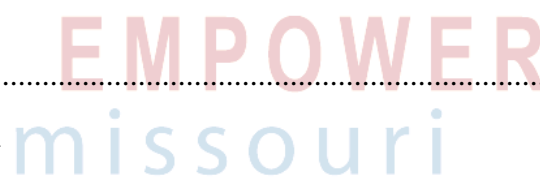
- People with disabilities have the same training and resources needs as people without disabilities.
- Education and related job-specific job training is the best path to employment. Computer skills are seen to be a critical skill for the marketplace.
- People with disabilities recognize their need to have a positive attitude and to pay attention to the “softer” employment skills such as communication and punctuality. They are also willing to take responsibility for their attitudes and willing to take measures to be and stay successful.
- People with disabilities have a realistic expectation of the market. They understand that to be employable they must have the requisite skills needed by the employer.
- People with disabilities recognize they have additional requirement to be successful such as accessibility, help with transportation and societal support.

## **Future Research**

- Understand the sheltered workshop environment—What employment options are available? --To what extent are sheltered workshops facilitating competitive employment? --What percentage of Missouri workers with disabilities employed by sheltered workshops?
- Enhance choices for people with disabilities to consider jobs matched to their interests and abilities—explore demonstration projects and technical assistance for providers.
- Foster training for workers with disabilities in their areas they identify as weaknesses: computer skills, life skills, and attitudinal issues.
- Evaluate the effectiveness on on-going disability awareness training provided to employers.
- Identify and disseminate “pathways to success” rather than barriers to employment.

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The logo for 'EMPOWER missouri' is centered on the page. 'EMPOWER' is written in a large, bold, pink, sans-serif font. Below it, 'missouri' is written in a smaller, blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is overlaid on a large, faint, pink circular graphic that resembles a stylized 'E' or a large letter 'O'.

## Section I- Background

The Institute for Human Development at the University of Missouri-Kansas City is administering the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). The Medicaid Infrastructure Grant's main goal is to enhance the use of Medicaid resources in Missouri to more effectively support the competitive employment of people with disabilities.

Prior to this date, the Institute has examined several potential barriers. In December, 2003 the Institute examined possible barriers to employment from the employers' perspective. Research included a review of the literature, employer focus groups, and employer surveys. Several possibilities were found not to be barriers in that employers believed that they had access to diversity training and that they offered flexible schedules. However, employers were able to identify key barriers.

- Over half of the employers were hesitant about hiring a person who needed job support services and were concerned about increased liability. This was especially true of small business employers.
- Barriers to hiring persons with disabilities include: 1) few individuals apply; 2) expenses of accommodation, and 3) the role of personal care attendants.
- Barriers to maintaining employment for people with disabilities include 1) safety issues; 2) accommodations; 3) training and supervision; 4) attitudes of supervisors and co-workers; 5) transportation; 6) financial barriers; 7) job fit; 8) absenteeism; 9) social factors; and 10) personal confidence.

In January 2004, the Institute published the results of a survey of people with a disability, service providers, family members and state agency staff. The findings were startling.

- More than 86% of the respondents indicated that obtaining employment in the community other than a sheltered workshop was difficult. 42% thought that it was extremely difficult.
- When asked what types of jobs were most available, 70% answered "sheltered workshops" in contrast to 5% who answered "jobs that could lead to a career". Not surprising given the prevalence of sheltered workshop employment, people with disabilities are rarely invited to spend time with people without disabilities; 47% indicated that this almost never happens.
- Transportation continues to be a problem for people with disabilities; 60% identified it as a problem; 42% considered it a serious problem.
- Concerns emerged regarding maintaining affordable health insurance and the availability of personal care.
- Survey data also indicated a marked difference in the views of persons with disabilities and their families and the opinions of state agency staff and providers. For example, one question asked how often people with disabilities are included in the planning process in finding employment for themselves. Service providers and state agency personnel believe that individuals are involved in the planning process more often than the individuals and their family members believe they are actually involved. In almost every analysis of survey questions, significant differences were identified between the audiences surveyed.

## Section II- Retreat Activities

### Purpose of the December Retreat:

Identifying weaknesses and bringing awareness about employment related issues for people with disabilities is the major effort of this grant. As part of these activities, the Institute for Human Development (IHD) identified and contacted a number of representatives from disabilities consumer agencies and employer groups across the state of Missouri to discuss employment, training, and other issues related to employment for people with disabilities. Those identified were then invited to a retreat held on December 12 and 13, 2005, in Columbia, Missouri. There were several purposes for the retreat:

- To introduce the MIG grant project to related consumer organizations and employer groups;
- To disseminate information about the activities under the MIG grant to the participating organizations;
- To review the responsibilities of participating consumer organizations for the duration of the project;
- To gather both consumer organizations' perceptions of employment issues, barrier, and challenges, and employer group perceptions of issues related to hiring individuals with disabilities.

Information gathered from participants at the retreat will be used to develop consumer and employer products such as training workshops, curriculum, resource information, and other materials.

### Retreat Participants:

Self-advocates and representatives from consumer organizations and employer organizations were invited to attend the retreat. Participants were selected from one of four geographic areas in Missouri: Columbia, Kansas City, Springfield, and St. Louis. Those attending were reimbursed for travel, lodging, and meals during the two-day retreat. In attendance were 27 individuals representing employer and consumer groups and the University of Missouri Extension. See Table I for a detailed list of consumer and employer groups represented at the retreat. Also attending in a support role were representatives of the IHD, University of Missouri Extension and the Lazarus Group, a public relations firm.

**Table I: Consumer Groups Representatives**

Consumer Groups			Employer Groups		
Affiliation	Area	In attendance	Affiliate	City	In attendance
Independent Living Center	Columbia	Yes	ACT	Columbia	Yes
Independent Living Center	Springfield	Yes	Gov. Council (MOBLN)	St. Louis	Yes
Independent Living Center	St. Louis	Yes	Reuters	St. Louis	Yes
NAMI	Columbia	Yes	Brown Shoe Company	St. Louis	Yes
NAMI	Kansas City	Yes	US Bank	St. Louis	Conference call
NAMI	Springfield	Yes	Buffalo Wild Wings	Columbia	No
People First	Columbia	No	Reuters	St. Louis	Yes
People First	Kansas City	Yes	Ameren	St. Louis	Yes
People First	Springfield	Yes	MWSU (KCBP)	Kansas City	Yes
People First	St. Louis	Yes			

### **Retreat Activities:**

Following the introduction three Missouri Business Leadership Network Employers shared successful strategies used by their respective companies to recruit and retain persons with disabilities as an integral part of their inclusive workforce. These Business Leadership Network participants represented medium to large size utility, media and footwear companies. An employee with a disability from one of the companies represented at the retreat shared his success story as to how he secured his position with his employer. He further discussed the minimum amount of modification required in the workplace for him to perform his duties well on a daily basis

The attendees then divided into groups for focused discussions. One group was comprised of consumer groups and self-advocates and the other of employers and employer groups such as Business Leadership Network(s).

The consumer and self advocates' focus group concerned identifying barriers to employment and the attendees reported out as part of a People First chapter, a Missouri National Association for the Mentally Ill (MO-NAMI) Chapter, or an Independent Living Center. See Appendix A, "December Discussion of Barriers and Challenges" for discussion notes.

The employer focus group concerned identifying employment training and resource needs, sharing success stories and consulting with the public relations firm about effective communication strategies. Small group discussions revolved around the need for basic

awareness and specific training about an untapped workforce, people with disabilities, and the value they bring to the business community. See Appendix B “Top Training Needs Identified by Employers” for discussion notes.

Each consumer group was given a list of questions on the first day of the conference. Their answers were used to guide the discussion on the second day. These questions and responses appear as Appendix C, “Top Issues and Training Needs Identified by Consumer Groups”. After an open discussion of the issues surrounding barriers to employment and training/resource needs, each constituency group was asked to consult with their members and provide additional information. Each group was given a month for this consultation. A discussion of these group consultations appear as a separate report called “Medicaid Infrastructure Grant: Section II Consumer Surveys”.

Finally, each participant was asked to evaluate the conference. See Appendix D, “Participants’ Conference Satisfaction” for conference evaluation.

## **Findings:**

In reviewing the information provided by employers, employer groups, self-advocates and service providers several themes emerge.

### ***Barriers and challenges***

When asked about barriers and challenges people with disabilities experience in finding and keeping jobs, *self-advocates and service providers agreed that key barriers related to the logistics of their disability such as challenges related to transportation and punctuality. Stigma* also emerged as a significant barrier. (See Appendix A and C)

### **Summary of Consumer Group Retreat Activities:**

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- Training and educational needs for consumers included the following: *job readiness skills, self-determination skills, and benefits information.*

Common issues that self-advocates and agency providers identified also included:

- *Elimination of the MAWD program and reduced income eligibility limits for Medicaid* has resulted in a disincentive to work, for some people with disabilities;
- *Employer perceptions* of people with disabilities are often “people who can’t do” rather than “people who can do”;
- *School districts unwillingness* to work with transitioning programs;
- *Transportation*;
- *Networking*;
- *Personal care attendants* at work location; and
- *Lack of job readiness training*: such as interviewing techniques, professional demeanor, self-esteem, personal empowerment, stress management, and communication skills.

### ***Employers’ training needs***

Employer representatives view the creation of a basic resource manual, Disabilities 101, as of critical importance. (See Appendix B.) The materials should provide a basic overview of disabilities, dispelling the myths, communicating techniques, interaction, hiring, and other disabilities employment related issues. Other helpful topics include: overview of disabilities, dispelling the myths, general information; workplace accommodations: reasonable accommodations, universal design, resources, etc.; and Missouri specific resources: employment agencies, training/education, etc.

### ***Other employer training needs***

Employer group representatives had several other suggestions to improve training and education related to issues of disability and diversity for potential employers, employers, and staff working with people with disabilities. All employers and staff should be included in training on diversity. Employers need training and resources on marketing to a more diverse group. Discussion of suggested training and education is provided below in detail.

*Train all employees:* The participants in the employer group emphasized the importance of *basic disability awareness training for all employees*. Training should not just be for

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- Other training needs included the following: *training on diversity and disability for all employees, employer marketing strategies, understanding disabilities as it applies to the workplace, and providing more resources for training and education.*
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current employees. It should also include training for incoming employees. As one participant commented, *new employee orientation should include a module on disability awareness.*

*Employer marketing:* Employers may be open to hiring individuals with disabilities but do not know how to effectively market to this group. The participants in the employer group discussion discussed the need for more training on effective market strategies, and also provided some suggestions for strategies and ways to “get the word out” to people with disabilities. These suggestions included the following:

- *Partner with church communities with the identification of qualified employees with disabilities;*
- *Market vacancies at sports events in the vicinity where people purchase tickets;*
- *Promote and market vacancies through community service organizations that conduct fund drives and programs for persons with disabilities (Elks, Kiwanis).*

*Understanding disabilities in the workplace:* More understanding of disabilities in the workplace is needed. Employers would like to develop an *understanding of non-visible disabilities and how they frequently go unnoticed and unattended. They are often confused with behavioral issues that are non-productive in the workplace.* Knowledge of how to recognize the difference, and how to address this issue would be beneficial. Another business representative suggested more training on how to accommodate people with disabilities in the workplace. *The different disabilities will often require flexible work schedules for therapy or medication* employers need to understand this, and develop strategies.

*Provide more resources:* Employers need to know what resources are available for assistance, and where to find these resources. One activity suggested was to complete a *thorough inventory of what training material currently exists in each region, and compile the resources for distribution throughout the state.* One resource employer groups want more of is speaker’s bureaus. *Develop speaker’s panels to share resources and expertise.* Another helpful resource would be a *listing of websites for businesses to gain current information on disability awareness.*

### ***How people with disabilities could be more competitive***

Employer representatives discussed the ways individuals with disabilities could be more competitive in the workplace. The general consensus was that both employers and potential employees needed an *empowering attitude*, and an understanding and ability to communicate needs. For example, *employers need an understanding of what levels of disabilities could perform well within job requirements and functions.* On the part of potential employees and current employees with disabilities, *it is important to know and recommend what accommodations they need. Don’t let the employer try to come up with ideas.*

### *Consumer training needs*

Several common themes also surfaced when consumer groups were asked about training needs. (See Appendix C.) Specifically:

- Disability awareness for employers;
- PCA training on life-safety skills such as safety, CPR, emotional support, etc. for PCA attendants;
- Practical skills such as use of public transportation, budgeting, personal hygiene, benefits, and use and expectations of PCAs for people with disabilities;
- Vocational skills for people with disabilities such as networking, computer literacy, and general job readiness; and
- Self-determination skills such as self-esteem, self-advocacy, and stress management for people with disabilities.



## Section III-Follow-up Surveys

At the conclusion of the retreat, participating consumer groups and employers were asked to distribute surveys to their constituents regarding their perceptions of employment and other related issues. This report summarizes the results of these consumer surveys. It differs from the previous report in that this report draws upon a broader representation of consumer groups and employers and responses were provided independently as opposed to the focus-group format.

### Methodology:

The consumer organizations present at the retreat were from four geographic areas: Columbia, Kansas City, Springfield and St. Louis. Consumer organizations included People First Chapters, Independent Living Centers and their affiliated organizations, and chapters of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).

Several options to complete and return surveys were given including on-line, email, fax, and/or traditional mail. Eight consumer organizations distributed the surveys to their constituents. There were 153 constituent responses. For a detailed breakdown of the organizations, their location, and the number of surveys each returned review Table 1: Consumer Surveys Returned.

Table 1: Consumer Surveys Returned

Organization:	Location	Number of Surveys Returned
Independent Living Center	Columbia	15
Independent Living Center	Springfield	10
Independent Living Center	St. Louis	10
Independent Living Center	Kansas City	20
NAMI	Kansas City	54
NAMI	Springfield	12
People First	Columbia	11
People First	Kansas City	10
People First	Springfield	11

### Issues and Barriers:

Consumers were asked to list what they considered to be the top issues in employment. Consumers perceive that there are issues related to *education, training, and accessibility*. Several others mentioned issues related to *discrimination*. Detailed comments about consumer's perceived employment issues are provided below.

*Accessibility and accommodations:* Several respondents indicated that *accommodations and the lack of accessibility* were top employment related issues. Employers don't often have a good sense of how to make jobs more accessible, or how to accommodate people

with disabilities. *Employers need more detailed awareness of disabilities accessibility, and the different forms of that. They also need information about assistive technology.*

*Providing jobs that are flexible:* Some people with disabilities require a more flexible work environment to succeed on the job. One survey respondent gave an example, *I know a person who has a headache 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. She has some days when the pain is not as bad. She needs to be able to work on her good days and not worry [about working] on bad days.* Another might need a flexible schedule to attend Dr.'s appointments. *The times we have to go either to the psychiatrist, or the therapist or other appointments conflict with work schedules. Additionally, most medications have a slight to high rate of drowsiness, and it can affect jobs and safety.*

*Employer discrimination:* Attitudes and discrimination towards people with disabilities from employers was an issue of concern for many of the survey respondents. One respondent stated that there was *discrimination based on lack of understanding, we are unable to present ourselves as viable candidates, and retain the position.* Another respondent echoed this commented that there is *discrimination, mostly due to the stigma in society. Employers are afraid to hire individuals with disabilities for fear of higher training costs, poor production, loss of work time, risk of accidents and increased insurance costs.*

*Finding a job:* For many individuals with a disability, *finding a suitable job* that is a good fit is an issue. Illustrative of this is the following respondent comment: *Finding a job that they are capable of doing, one in which the work environment is tailored to their abilities.* Sometimes, people with disabilities don't have the skills to get or find a job, for one *finding a job would be the first issue. I was in the construction business. I have no degree, so I am going to college, so I can get a job that allows me to get off Medicaid.*

*Fear will lose benefits:* A few survey respondents fear losing benefits that the Medicaid system currently provides if they go back to work. *It's, insurance-enough to cover benefits.* Another respondent stated *I can't risk working and losing Medicaid due to high spend-down* commented one respondent. Another fears working because *I have health benefits that would be terminated.*

*Medicaid system penalizes workers:* The respondent believe that Medicaid and Medicare systems perpetuate the cycle of unemployment for many people with disabilities *I believe also that "learned helplessness" and the disability system encourages unemployment.* Another respondent provided an example of how the system perpetuates unemployment. *Income: several individuals have the desire to work, yet due to the Medicaid/Medicare issues they are unable or have very few hours they are able to work.* Others echoed this example *I believe it is the changes to the Medicaid MAWD program cancellation. It penalizes individuals who try to work part-time.*

*Lack of transportation:* The survey respondent had issues about transportation. *It is mainly getting around, back and forward* to a job for one survey respondent. There is a

*lack of transportation according to some of the respondents. For one it is the lack of transportation that is accessible.*

## Obtaining Employment:

### *Training needs to obtain employment*

When asked if additional training was needed a majority of the respondents (63%) indicated “yes, additional training was needed”. There was no statistical difference in the answers given among the three consumer groups.

Of the 153 respondents, 94 specified training needs. To understand these needs the responses were recoded into broad categories:

- Accessibility/disability issues including such things as knowing about adaptation technology and employer training;
- Career skills which includes resume writing, networking, interview skills;
- Computer skills including typing and use of miscellaneous equipment such as a scanner;
- Life skills includes self-advocacy training, effective communication, and assistance in navigating paperwork; and
- Vocational skills which includes job coaching and traditional or non-traditional methods of learning the specific requirements of a job.

### **Key Finding: Obtaining Employment**

- People with disabilities want job-related training first and then training on computer skills.
- Accessibility/disability issues are important as well as career skills but less so than vocational and computer skills.
- Most people with disabilities know of resources to help them obtain employment.

Table 2. Training Needs to Obtain Employment returns the results of this analysis.

**Table 2. Training Needs to Obtain Employment\***

Type of Training	Independent Living Center	NAMI	People First	Overall
Accessibility/disability issues	22%	12%	15%	17%
Career skills	17%	18%	15%	17%
Computer skills	32%	18%	0%	20%
Life skills	7%	12%	5%	9%
Vocational training	37%	42%	65%	44%

*\*Percentages do not total 100% because several respondents identified more than one type of training.*

The consumer groups identified the need for vocational training as an overwhelming need (37%, 42%, 65% and 44% by Independent Living Centers, NAMI, People First and overall respondents, respectively). There was a moderate need for computer skills (32% and 20% by Independent Living Centers and overall respondents, respectively) and mild need of accessibility/disability training (22% Independent Living Centers).

Within those indicating a need for vocational skills, respondents included job training in specific skills such as painting and janitorial work, access to general education ranging from reading and mathematics to college-level topics. Several responses indicated that effective training support should be customized to the individual and the desired employment.

***Knowledge of existing resources***

When asked if they knew of existing resources, 70 % of the respondents indicated that “yes, they knew of existing resources.” There is no statistical difference among the three responding consumer groups. Specific resources named were Vocational Rehabilitation (50%). Other responses were indicative of the geographic area: Columbia (Advent), Kansas City (The Whole Person<sup>1</sup>), Springfield (Lake Country Resource Center), and St. Louis (MERS<sup>2</sup>).

**Retaining Employment:**

***Training needs to retain employment***

When asked what training is needed to assist people with disabilities in retaining employment, the most commonly identified areas concerned life skills/attitudinal issues and vocational training/education. See Table 3. Training Needs to Retain Employment for additional information.

**Table 3. Training Needs to Retain Employment\***

Type of Training	Independent Living Center	NAMI	People First	Overall
Accessibility/disability issues	16%	16%	24%	17%
Life skills/attitudinal issues	27%	47%	24%	36%
Miscellaneous	16%	4%	5%	8%
Vocational	43%	35%	48%	40%

*\*Percentages do not total 100% because several respondents identified more than one type of training.*

*Accessibility/disability issues are an important training need for all three of the consumer groups but are generally a third priority in comparison to other issues. Examples of comments are “there is always so much, it's hard to pin down. We need respect, utmost of all were not lazy. We will work; we just sometimes need education or assistance with time. Or “the supervisors treat people with disabilities differently. This keeps (people with disabilities) from getting promotions.” Finally, “not have other people be impatient with the people that are slow or slow learners.”*

<sup>1</sup> All respondents specifying The Whole Person were representative of that agency. There was no common thread among NAMI or People First consumers living in Kansas City.

<sup>2</sup> All respondents specifying MERS were representatives of the Independent Living Center. There was no common thread among NAMI or People First consumers living in St. Louis.

*Life skills/attitudinal issues* are generally the second priority of the consumer groups. The notable exception is for those with mental illness. In that instance, life skills and attitudinal issues are the top priority for training. Within this category, the most often mentioned are social skills (personal hygiene, appropriate dress, communication with others); work-ready attitudes (punctuality, stress management, positive attitude); and practical skills (time management, budgeting, balancing a checkbook).

*Miscellaneous* refer to concerns about Medicaid and other benefits and the logistics of managing their disability medically.

Finally, *vocational* is the top priority for training needs. Several consumers responded with very specific training needs such as using a digital camera or computer skills. However, the more typical response of all three consumer groups was individualized instruction tailored to the needs of the person with a disability and employment situation. This concept was typically referred to as job coach or job mentor.

### Key Finding: Retaining Employment

- People with disabilities continue to identify vocational and job-related training as critical to keeping their employments.
- Life skills and attitudinal issues also require attention for people with disabilities to retain employment.
- Job coaches and job skills are the top resource people need to retain employment. The second most important resource is societal support.

### Resources Needed to Retain Employment

Resources are needed to assist individuals with disabilities in keeping employment. The most important of these, in order, are job coaching/job skills, societal support and transportation. See Table 4. Resources Needed to Retain Employment for the distribution among consumer groups.

**Table 4. Resources Needed to Retain Employment\***

Type of Resource	Independent Living Center	NAMI	People First	Overall
Job coach/job skills	48%	33%	46%	41%
Life skills	10%	10%	8%	10%
Miscellaneous	3%	9%	4%	5%
Societal support	35%	29%	39%	33%
Transportation	23%	35%	12%	25%

\*Percentages do not total 100% because several respondents identified more than one type of resource.

*Job coaches/job skills* are the top priority for consumer groups overall. (For NAMI, these skills were marginally in second place after transportation.) Responses fell into two groups: on-the-job training and job support. “*Ongoing follow up and case management would be important so an individual has somewhere to turn when a problem might arise 3 to 6 months down the road.*”

*Life skills* mirror training needed to retain jobs. *Being on time responsible, considerate and respect; clean attire; and independent attitude* are typical comments.

Only a few provided a *miscellaneous* answer such as “*lunch*” or “*appropriate medications*”.

*Societal support* was important to all consumer groups but generally a second priority to job coaches/job skills. In this group, there were generally three different types of support identified: job accommodation, peer and family supports, and personal care assistance.

Finally, issues around *transportation* were a concern to all of the consumer groups.

### **Personal Care Assistance:**

The final section of the survey addressed issues related to personal care services. Constituents were asked a series of questions: 1) would personal care assistance be a resource that you would need to gain employment? and 2) do you know about the use and or availability of personal care assistance services (through Medicaid) in the workplace? and 3) would you like training on PCA usage? Lastly, the barriers to using personal care assistance services were addressed by the survey respondents. The section below provides details.

#### ***Use of a personal care assistant***

One survey question was “is personal care assistance a resource you need to gain employment?” A majority of the respondents (54%) said *no*, they did not need personal care services to gain employment. In response to another question, a majority (61%) of the survey respondents are not aware of that Medicaid would provide personal care assistants (pca) in the workplace. Finally, respondents were asked if they wished to receive training on using personal care assistants in the workplace. A majority of the responses were in the affirmative (55%). See Table 5.

#### **Key Finding: Use of Personal Care Services in Employment**

- Many people with disabilities do not know of the possibility of using a pca in the workplace nor do they see how these services might be of help in finding and retaining employment.
- For those that know about personal care services and their use at the job, the biggest barrier to using these services is the issue of funding and related income eligibility.

**Table 5. Use of a personal care assistant**

Question	A majority of the respondents answered ...	Independent Living Center	NAMI	People First	Overall
Would pca be a resource that you would need to gain employment?	No	52%	47%	70%	54%
Do you know about the use/availability of pca services (through Medicaid) in the workplace?	No	57%	63%	67%	61%
Would you like training on PCA use in the workplace?	Yes	48%	64%	50%	55%

***Barriers to using a personal care assistant***

In response to the question, “*What would you say are the barriers to receiving personal care assistance services?*” consumer groups’ answers reflect the general lack of knowledge and awareness of personal care assistant services previously discussed.

**Table 6. Barriers to using a Personal Care Assistant\***

Type of Barrier	Independent Living Center	NAMI	People First	Overall
Attitudinal	9%	7%	7%	8%
Bureaucracy	19%	3%	6%	9%
Funding/income eligibility	72%	7%	50%	38%
Knowledge of availability	0%	39%	0%	18%
Miscellaneous	3%	37%	25%	23%
PCA employment	3%	15%	19%	11%

*\*Percentages do not total 100% because several respondents identified more than one type of barrier.*

*Attitudinal* responses include remarks related to apathy and pride. This was overall the issue least likely to create a barrier to using a personal care attendant. “*You don't want to look like you can't do the job,*” was a typical response.

*Bureaucracy* such as too much paperwork (*A lot of government paperwork*), scheduling and related issues were identified by another 9% of the responding consumer groups.

*Funding and rules on income eligibility* is the issue most commonly identified by consumer groups. These limitations often prevent people from obtaining services (such as personal assistance) that they might need. Illustrative of this is a comment made by a respondent: *There is a cap on Medicaid income and resources*. Other respondents merely commented that *Medicaid income guidelines* were a barrier. Others echoed this statement *I need more income due to high spend down*.

*Knowledge regarding the availability* of personal care services on the part of would be consumers, and on the part of employers is one of the barriers for people with mental illness. There is a *lack of knowledge about how to get assistance* on the part of potential consumers. Others echoed this statement: *I am not sure, but I would assume that knowledge that the resource is available is important*. One respondent stated *I don't know how PCA services might help me in getting a better job*.

*Miscellaneous* include such remarks as “my doctor”, or “getting stoned and not wanting too”. NAMI consumers were more likely to answer in this vein than other consumers which is not surprising given their general lack of knowledge and use of personal care assistants.

The last group of responses includes those related to *PCA employment*, namely: availability of workers, low pay of workers, and training of workers. “*There is a large demand and too few well trained personal care assistants. There is a high rate of turn over in the field*” and “*not enough workers to assist the disabled person.*”

The logo for EMPOWER missouri is centered on the page. It features the word "EMPOWER" in a bold, pink, sans-serif font, with "missouri" in a smaller, blue, lowercase sans-serif font below it. The text is enclosed within a large, light pink circular graphic that has a thick, slightly irregular border. To the left of the circle, there are several overlapping, curved shapes in shades of pink, blue, and yellow, resembling a stylized swirl or a graphic element of a logo.

# Section IV- Conclusions

## Summary of Findings

The 153 respondents to this survey concerning the training and resource needs of people with disabilities in their efforts to obtain and retain employment work to contradict some misconceptions, namely the workers with disabilities are lazy or looking for a handout. The training and resources needs identified by people with disabilities are typical of those without disabilities, that is education and related job-specific job training is the best path to employment. Computer skills are seen to be a critical skill for the marketplace. People with disabilities need training on career skills (networking, resume writing) to obtain their job, but this is no different than anyone else entering the job market. People with disabilities recognize their need to have a positive attitude and to pay attention to the “softer” employment skills such as communication and punctuality. People with disabilities recognize they have additional requirement to be successful such as accessibility, help with transportation and societal support, but generally these factors are seen as supportive, not the driver for successful employment.

People with disabilities have a realistic expectation of the market. They understand that to be employable they must have the requisite skills needed by the employer. They are also willing to take responsibility for their attitudes and willing to take measures to be and stay successful. They also understand that they need support to become the type of employees that are able to add value to an organization. As stated before, this presents no difference from the general population although in some cases, the support should be customized to the employee.

### *Obtaining Employment*

- People with disabilities want job-related training first and then training on computer skills.
- Accessibility/disability issues are important as well as career skills but less so than vocational and computer skills.
- Most people with disabilities know of resources to help them obtain employment.

### *Retaining Employment*

- People with disabilities continue to identify vocational and job-related training as critical to keeping their employments.
- Life skills and attitudinal issues also require attention for people with disabilities to retain employment.
- Job coaches and job skills are the top resource people need to retain employment. The second most important resource is societal support.

### *Use of personal care services in employment*

- Many people with disabilities do not know of the possibility of using a pca in the workplace nor do they see how these services might be of help in finding and retaining employment.
- For those that know about personal care services and their use at the job, the biggest barrier to using these services is the issue of funding and related income eligibility.

### *Overall*

- People with disabilities have the same training and resources needs as people without disabilities.
- Education and related job-specific job training is the best path to employment. Computer skills are seen to be a critical skill for the marketplace.
- People with disabilities recognize their need to have a positive attitude and to pay attention to the “softer” employment skills such as communication and punctuality. They are also willing to take responsibility for their attitudes and willing to take measures to be and stay successful.
- People with disabilities have a realistic expectation of the market. They understand that to be employable they must have the requisite skills needed by the employer.
- People with disabilities recognize they have additional requirement to be successful such as accessibility, help with transportation and societal support.

### **Next Steps**

This study found that people with disabilities have the same needs and expectations related to employment as people without disabilities. The only difference is that an individual person with a disability might need some support customized to support them in a specific job or employment situation. However, there is deep research that proves that the typical cost for accommodations is minor.

What seems to be lacking, however, is choice. People with disabilities want to work but say that finding a job is difficult. Employers say people with disabilities don't apply. Workers and their families perceive that they have limited opportunity to participate in planning and making employment choices outside of a sheltered workshop.

There are several opportunities to broaden the understanding of employment barriers for people with disabilities in Missouri.

- Understand the sheltered workshop environment—What employment options are available? --To what extent are sheltered workshops facilitating competitive employment? --What percentage of Missouri workers with disabilities employed by sheltered workshops?
- Enhance choices for people with disabilities to consider jobs matched to their interests and abilities—explore demonstration projects and technical assistance for providers.
- Foster training for workers with disabilities in their areas they identify as weaknesses: computer skills, life skills, and attitudinal issues.

- Evaluate the effectiveness on on-going disability awareness training provided to employers.
- Identify and disseminate “pathways to success” rather than barriers to employment.



## Section V. – Appendixes

### A: December Discussion of Barriers and Challenges

Representatives from NAMI, People First, and the Independent Living Centers discussed the barriers and challenges individuals with disabilities experience in finding and keeping jobs.

Barriers Overall:

#### **Stigma:**

- The stigma associated with mental illness is a barrier in all aspects of getting and keeping jobs.
- Mental illness is not always visible or tangible, making it difficult for employers/public to understand.

#### **\*Transportation:**

- City bus takes too long there are sometimes issues with anxiety because of this.
- Some type of adjustments need to be made to available transportation to fit the needs of individuals with mental illness.

Barriers and Challenges in Preparation for Work and a Career:

- Stigma
- Lack of computer skills
- General life skills-sometimes individuals with mental illness do not know how to interact. Isolation of individuals and distrust/fear is often a part of mental illness, and may be a factor in the lack of general life skills.
- Many NAMI clients do not have basic job preparation fundamentals i.e. resume development.
- May never have had a job-makes resume development difficult.
- Financial (personal care attendants-health benefits).
- Hidden disabilities (mental illness, deaf or hard of hearing).
- Transportation and accessibility education.
- Prepare employers
- Prepare employee for stress of working.
- Fear of failure, fear of unknown
- Financial
- Employers need awareness of disability and training
- Transportation-bus, call-a-ride, modified vehicles
- Accessibility-wheelchair, parking
- Training for disabled-VR, MERS, Vocational Agencies
- Mental/physical able to work.

Barriers and Challenges to Finding a Job:

- Stigma-sometimes appearance might hinder the job finding process i.e. an employer might be concerned because appearance is different than what is expected.

- Awareness-communities are closed-it is hard to make the connections to get awareness out.
- Lack of confidence-clients may feel they can't get a job. They may also expect the worse.
- Transportation
- Stigma
- Networks/resume preparation/clothing, etc. cost of going into workforce
- Resume preparation
- Transportation
- Stigma
- Assistive Tech.-software, teachers, + the future innovations
- Job fairs
- Education re. Consumers-what is possible
- Absence of networking
- Physical/mental work
- VR
- Job Fairs
- ILC
- Missouri Career Centers
- Fear of losing benefits

Some individuals listed solutions that they see to finding a job:

- Job fairs can help employers see adaptive equipment

Barriers and Challenges of Support for a Job:

- Stigma
- Education for the employer is key. Education should not be limited to diversity specialists or HR Reps. Education on culture, expectations, should be for supervisors, and others that will be working side by side with individual.
- 9-5 type work environments, or environments that are very structured are difficult for individuals with mental illness to adhere to. They have trouble getting up in the morning because of medication (this is just one example).
- Accommodations-employers need to be more flexible about the work environment.
  - Individuals may not be able to work a full shift, it might need to be broken up differently;
  - Individuals might need breaks.
- Employers need to market themselves as more disability friendly.
- Assistive Technology/lack of knowledge
- Educating employer re abilities
- Providing accommodation-The solution is: job coaching, emotional support.
- Education employer and assistive technology
- Accommodations and disabilities + the true expense
- Job coaching
- Accessibility
- Grants re money

- Peer counseling
- Assistive technology (training for employees)
- Job coaching/mentor/peer
- Grants
- Positive Reinforcement

Barriers and Challenges to Keeping a Job:

- Medications and their side effects make it difficult in keeping a job.
- Job history might look bad because it looks as though the individual has “job hopped” or is somehow unreliable because of the way job history is perceived by employers.
- Stressors related to work are a trigger for many.
- Flexibility is a barrier for people with mental illness. Employers need to be more educated.
- **Punctuality** (see comments in above)
- Attitude
- Financial Considerations-like personal care
- Educating the employers
- Transportation
- Establishing a routine
- Reliable PCA
- Attitudes
- Preparing for workday/PCA availability

The logo for EMPOWER missouri features a large, light pink circle. Inside the circle, the word "EMPOWER" is written in a bold, pink, sans-serif font, and the word "missouri" is written below it in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. To the left of the circle, there are several overlapping, curved shapes in shades of pink, yellow, and blue, creating a dynamic, abstract design.

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## **B: Top Training Needs Identified by Employers**

The data gathered from the employers surveyed indicates that employers' top priority for training resources to be included in an employer resource guide is:

**Disability 101—A basic overview of disabilities, dispelling the myths, communication, interactions, hiring, etc.**

Additional topics listed in ranking order by employers for inclusion in a training manual are:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – interviewing and hiring;
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – facilities & accessibility;
- Reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities;
- Increasing your customer base-strategies to better serve, and market to new customers with disabilities;
- Mental health & the workplace-strategies to identify symptoms, support and return to work strategies.;
- Creative ways to streamline positions. Many times employees are doing jobs and tasks that take them away from their essential functions and hinder productivity. Carving out certain duties to create a position to handle these can increase productivity and company's bottom line.;
- Worker's compensation and return to work strategies;
- What is supportive employment?;
- What are hidden disabilities?;
- What are minimum impairments and cutoffs with disabilities;
- Job analysis, roles and functionality;
- Code compliance – as a new business person what does one need to know and where doe one go the find the information; and
- Assistive technology in the workplace.

This same group of business leaders ranked the following topics as being most valuable to their business and the organizations which they represented:

- Universal design, resources, etc.;
- Missouri specifics resources: employment agencies, training/education, etc.;
- Disability legislation: ADA, workplace laws, etc.;
- Documents on best practices;
- Development of websites specifically designed for Missouri; and
- Resources specific for certain regions in the state.

The business leadership group further recommended that the training manual be written in laymen terminology to benefit novice employers and also seasoned employers on the recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities.

## C: Top Issues and Training Needs Identified by Consumer Groups

*Based on your conversations this afternoon, what would members of your organization say are the top issues in employment for individuals with disabilities? Please list them and give detail below.*

### People First

- Across the state, lack of reliable transportation continues to be a barrier.
- Education in the way of awareness. Don't make visual or audible assumptions.
- **Elimination of the MAWD program and reduced income eligibility limits for Medicaid has resulted in a disincentive to work, for some people with disabilities.**
- **Employer perceptions of people with disabilities are often "people who can't do" rather than "people who can do."**
- Medicaid coverage of certain types of necessary equipment-wheel chair batteries and accessories for example-poses obvious barriers to employment for people who use wheel chairs.
- Lack of Job-Readiness Training: Many of the individuals we support have not had the same expectations as their peers who do not have a disability. Some of these individuals have a difficult time with adjusting to accepting criticism, respecting authority, and completing quality work.
- **School Districts unwilling to work with transitioning programs:** Some school districts in the area have done very well with working on individualized transition programs. Other school districts have a "cookie-cutter" mold that every student must follow. Many students who do not fit this model slip through the cracks without a transition plan. Some of the school districts require an aide to accompany the individual to any transitional programs that are off site. In employment, this is not feasible, as the individual then must have 2 people with him, the aide & the job coach. Suggestions have been to re-route funding from the aide position to other options, however, this has been denied by some school districts.
- Inappropriate Social Interactions: This is especially true of many individuals we support who have a developmental disability. Many of these individuals have been catered to and have not been taught appropriate social etiquette, i.e. chewing with mouth closed, covering mouth when coughing, wiping face after eating, appropriate comments to members of the opposite sex, etc.
- Unrealistic Job Expectations: Many individuals, parents, guardians, or staff have unrealistic employment expectations for their current skill level and are not open to trying positions which do match their skills.

### NAMI

- Preparation and basic skills and support
- Having support for interviewer
- Developing a core of jobs to fit the needs of each community, rural & city
- Money management

**Bold face** denotes repeated theme.

- Ongoing job support (job, coach)
- Lack of awareness/employer education
  - Employers & supervisors don't know enough about mental illness
  - Need sensitivity training
- Transportation-lack of it
  - Public transportation is difficult to maneuver through.
  - Inadequate routes and times of service.
- STIGMA
  - Need to change media focus on mental illness.
- Losing medical coverage (i.e. Medicaid)
- Lack of employer flexibility

#### Independent Living:

- Medical benefits
- **Transportation**
- **Networking for job location**
- **Personal Care Attendants at work site.**
- Adaptive equipment
- **Training workshops:** How to interview, dressing for office/work environment, positive self image development, personal empowerment, communication skills training.
- Accessibility: Alerting the consumer of his/her rights under the ADA
- Social skills: especially those that have been out of work a lengthy amount of time.
- Assistive technology + adaptive equipment.
- Vocational training +/- college preparation
- Motivation i.e. what is possible for people with similar disabilities
- Educating employers that people with disabilities can make a contribution
- Fear (loss of benefits, fear of failure, fear of change)
- Attitudinal barriers
- Scheduling

*What training is needed for people with disabilities?*

#### People First

- Self-determination
  - Self-esteem; consequences and responsibility; stress management; advocacy training
- Vocational
  - Job-readiness
- Practical
  - Social security and Medicaid benefits; personal hygiene, use and expectations of PCAs

Focus on youth with disabilities

**Bold face** denotes repeated theme.

NAMI

- Self-determination
  - Self-esteem; stress management; advocacy training
- Vocational
  - Job-readiness; computer literacy
- Practical
  - Use of bus pass; funding sources; money management,

Independent Living Centers

- Vocational
  - Computer literacy; work adaptations

*What training is needed for personal care attendants?*

People First

- Listening skills

NAMI

- Job expectations

Independent Living Centers

- Job skills
  - Life saving skills
  - Developing emotional support

*What training is needed for employers?*

People First

- Disability awareness; reasonable accommodations; ADA; accessibility needs; financial & intrinsic benefits
- Refute myths

NAMI

- Disability awareness
- Reasonable accommodations; ADA; accessibility needs;
- Marketing their company's policy on accommodations

Independent Living Centers

- Disability awareness
- Reasonable accommodations; ADA; accessibility needs; financial & intrinsic benefits

*What training is needed for employment resource professionals?*

People First

- Developing natural supports
- Listening skills and understanding of employment options

NAMI

- Mental Illness as it pertains to employment

Independent Living Centers

- Building networks

**Bold face** denotes repeated theme.

*What training is needed for service providers?*

People First

- Listening
- Creativity

NAMI

- Employment networks

Independent Living Centers

- Esteem-building
- Job coaching

*What training is needed for community members?*

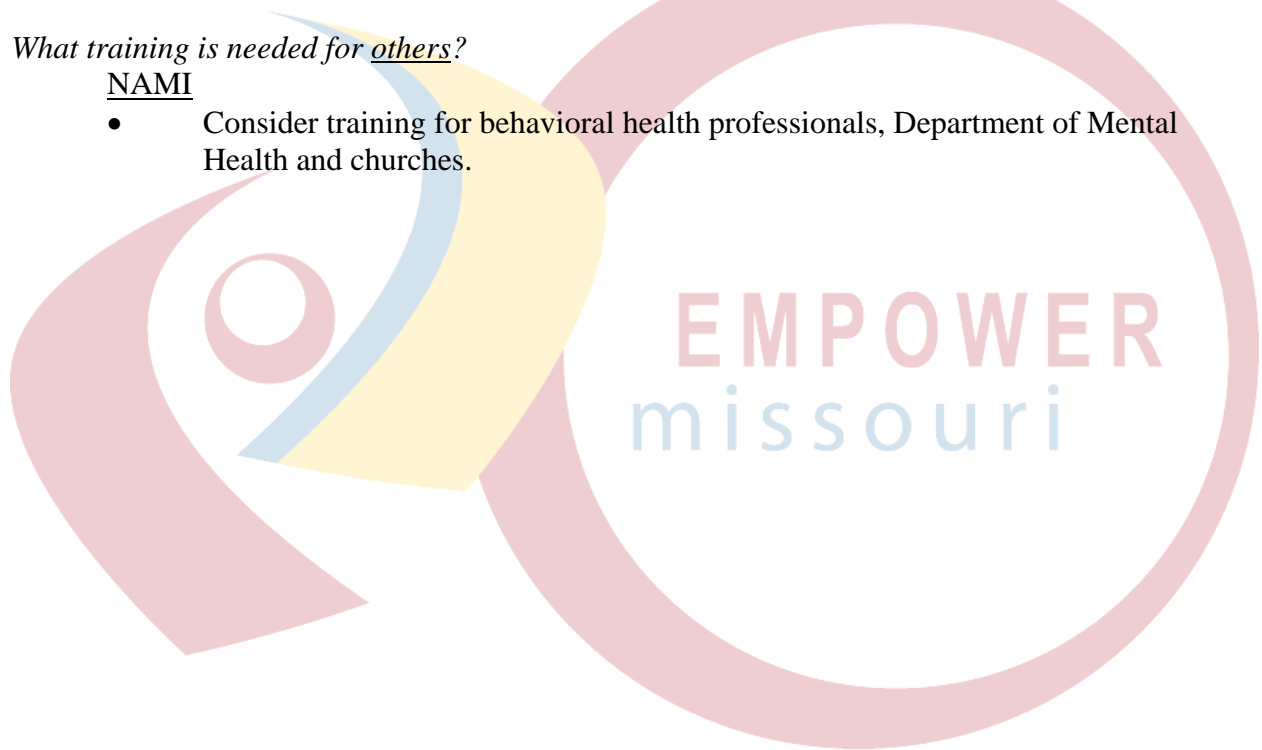
NAMI

- Disability awareness

*What training is needed for others?*

NAMI

- Consider training for behavioral health professionals, Department of Mental Health and churches.



**Bold face** denotes repeated theme.

## D: Participants' Conference Satisfaction

Participants were asked to evaluate the conference. Their responses were group according to their affiliation as an employer or consumer.

Question #	Question	Business Responses -- 8 respondents	Consumer Responses -- 14 respondents	Combine Responses	Illustrative Comments
1	How effective were the employer testimonials in reaching the other groups present? 1 not at all effective 2 somewhat effective 3 effective 4 very effective	2.6 mean out of 4.0	3.3 mean out of 4.0	3.1 mean out of 4.0	Not many employer groups present
2	Were the discussions valuable in helping to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding employment for individuals with disabilities?	Yes (87%) No (13%)	Yes (100%)	Yes (95%) No (5%)	
3	Do you think the public relations campaign will be effective in reaching the public?	Yes (87%) n/a (13%)	Yes (100%)	Yes (95%) n/a (5%)	
4	If not, what else should be done on the public relations front?	Need to develop further  Concerned about emphasis on web site	Need more of it		
5	Rate the usefulness of the retreat overall: <b>content</b> ? 1 not at all effective 2 somewhat effective 3 effective 4 very effective	3.3 mean out of 4.0	3.6 mean out of 4.0	3.5 mean out of 4.0	
6	Rate the usefulness of the retreat overall: <b>opportunity for involvement</b> ? 1 not at all effective 2 somewhat effective 3 effective 4 very effective	3.4 mean out of 4.0	3.8 mean out of 4.0	3.7 mean out of 4.0	
7	Rate the usefulness of the retreat overall: <b>overall organization of the retreat</b> ? 1 not at all effective 2 somewhat effective 3 effective 4 very effective	3.4 mean out of 4.0	3.7 mean out of 4.0	3.6 mean out of 4.0	

Question #	Question	Business Responses -- 8 respondents	Consumer Responses -- 14 respondents	Combine Responses	Illustrative Comments
8	What did you like best about the retreat?	Networking  Group discussions  Idea of employer resource book	Networking  Group discussions  Lazarus group (PR presentation)  Brainstorming  Friendliness  Ease of participation		Consensus re:  Networking  Group discussions
9	What could be improved?		More business representatives  More ideas about PR initiatives  More variety of disability groups  Better communication re: the agenda  Include VR and other agencies such as Goodwill  Time management  Climate control		Consensus re:  More business representation  More diversity of agencies and people with disabilities  Time management
10	What did you learn from the retreat?		Similarities and differences facing other agencies  How to approach PR issues  How much work needs to happen		Similarities and differences facing other agencies