

Bridge to Success Stakeholder Input

List of Stakeholders:

- Local supported employment service providers (Contra Costa ARC and Futures Explored).
- The Bay Area Regional Office of the State Council of Developmental Disabilities (Gabriel Rogin, director)
- The Contra Costa DD Council (Josh Sullivan, staff)
- Bill Sorrel, CC Public Health Department; operated the Miller Centers for the County for at least a decade before they were transferred to a nonprofit
- Alameda County Step Up program (Bridge to Success is modeled after Step Up)
- Lawrence Berkeley National Lab "Project Search" employment program (similar)
- SF Mayor's Office of Disabilities (SF City/County has a similar program)

Kate Rauch presented the Bridge to a Success program to the Contra Costa DD Council at its March 23 meeting. Many of the stakeholders above were there. She has also received email feedback from others, and is still doing outreach.

We have an elist of people wanting to stay updated on the program.

Feedback:

1. Getting the word out about openings

Many people are concerned about fine-tuning or expanding the process for posting or spreading the word about job openings, and having a proactive plan in place for recruiting. Job opening announcements should be routinely distributed to the State Office of Rehabilitation (SOR); the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB), which funds supported employment providers and provides case management to individuals with developmental disabilities; School District workability or Transition (18 - 22 year olds) programs; and area supported living and employment providers.

A master list of contacts could be created to make this easy.

Some people with developmental disabilities aren't clients of the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), so having the DOR serve as the main entry door to Bridge to Success won't reach many eligible candidates. Recruitment should be broad.

The application process should be set up as clear & simple: For example: CCC HR or Risk Management should serve as initial recipient of all applications, and inquires.

Applicants who aren't certified with DOR will be immediately referred to DOR for

certification; certification is returned to CCC HR, and kept on file for future jobs, as needed. People who are already certified by the DOR can request for their certification to be sent to CCC, or CCC can make this request for the candidate.

HR can screen applicants, verifying DOR certification, and then contact hiring managers.

Prospected employees who aren't certified by DOR should be advised to get help with the process from their supported living or supported employment staff, parents or Regional Center case manager. This is par for the course, but HR or Risk Management should advise candidates to get the assistance they need.

In practice, most or many applicants for Bridge to Success jobs will be coming from Supported Employment providers, who walk them through all the steps from getting the DOR certification to the interview, to job coaching if they are hired.

2. Consensus that requiring Certification by DOR (of meeting the Fair Employment and Housing Act definition of disability) for eligibility to participate is a good thing, appropriate. But, stakeholders think this certificate should be automatically sent to CCC (HR or Risk Management), and kept on file, so prospective employees don't have to repeat the process. CCC can refer people to the DOR for certification, and then the certification is sent to and filed with CCC, as stated above.

There was some desire that Bridge to Success positions be open to people with developmental disabilities who don't qualify by the DOR. Milder disabilities. Others understood the need for certification to set a measure for eligibility.

3. Stakeholder consensus that allowing candidates to review job interview questions 30 minutes before the interview isn't enough time. Suggestion that this be increased to two hours before an interview, or even sent to the job coach the day before. The concern is that it can take time for some people with developmental disabilities to fully grasp questions whether expressed on paper or verbally. A good job coach, who wants the candidate to be successful and be a good match in a job, won't use this preview time to help the candidate "cheat." But to be well prepared. Language processing problems are common with people with developmental disabilities, and preparation can be immensely helpful. One parent gave the example of when her son was asked "What's your life dream," in an interview and he talked about his literal dream the night before.
4. Many people asked about the possibility of highly qualified potential candidates selected for interview taking a walk-through of the job site, before the interview.

Providing this “visual” of the position could be very helpful to some candidates, and also help job coaches better understand if it’s a good fit.

5. In general, people are excited and thrilled at the prospect of Bridge to Success! There will likely be a strong response. It’s important to work closely with the Supported Employment providers early in the process (CCC ARC and Futures Explored), as their knowledge will be extremely helpful.

Stay tuned for more feedback, including from Lawrence Berkeley National Lab and the City of San Francisco.