



2011

PARTNERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

THE MIG EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT DENVER, COLORADO



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BACKGROUND

The Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) was approved by Congress in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. Since its inception in 2001, 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands have received over \$150 million (\$46.81 million in 2011) in funding. For nearly 11 years, the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) program has provided financial support to state grantees to develop and manage initiatives that build stronger employment networks to help people with disabilities overcome employment barriers, and aims to ensure disabled people have healthcare and other benefit options.

The MIG assists states with implementing Medicaid supportive services¹ that help people with disabilities overcome challenges and obtain employment. Some of these services include:

1. **The Medicaid Buy-In:** Enables employed people with disabilities and deemed ineligible for Medicaid, to “buy-in” to the program to obtain affordable medical coverage.
2. **Personal Assistance Services (PAS):** Gives support to individuals with disabilities who need help performing daily activities.
3. **Supported Employment:** Helps people with disabilities obtain and retain employment.
4. **Peer Support Services:** Provides support groups, counseling, and other services.
5. **Other Medicaid Services:** Extends medical services (clinic services, rehabilitation, pharmaceutical, and other medical benefits) deemed critical to treating the condition or illness, hindering disabled individuals from working.

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Community Service and Long Term Supports (Employment), www.cms.gov/CommunityServices/45_Employment.asp

SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION



For the fifth consecutive year, Ascellon hosted the MIG Employment Summit on behalf of CMS, May 10 - 12, 2011. Approximately 147 participants attended the 2011 MIG/DMIE Employment Summit in Denver, Colorado. Among the attendees were Project Directors and stakeholders, who discussed lessons learned and winning strategies that encourage consistent progress and concepts for maintaining effective initiatives devised by the MIG state grantees.

The purpose of this year’s MIG Employment Summit was to discuss winning strategies for sustaining policies that meet the needs of disabled people, invest in cost-effective policies that spur greater employment opportunities, eliminate institutional and personal employment policies that result in discrimination, and encourage employers to consider disabled workers who want to remain in the work force.

The CMS MIG team together with representatives from Mathematica Policy Research (MPR), The Center for Workers with Disabilities (CWD), and The National Consortium for Health Systems Development (NCHSD) gathered information from the MIG Grantees prior to the summit to ensure the overall agenda focused on critical issues and key initiatives that program sustainability. MIG

Directors were encouraged to share their views on methods for strengthening disability employment systems, sustaining MIG achievements in infrastructure building, providing state policy leadership, and identifying other challenges MIGs will endure once the grant program has ended.

Participants from the States were encouraged to attend the Employment Summit with their respective State Medicaid and Vocational Rehabilitation representatives, to promote sustainability of the MIG activity further, especially when the funding concludes on December 31, 2011.

They also expressed their ideas and suggestions for CMS to provide ongoing policy leadership and support for states to continue improving systems that create better employment outcomes for people with disabilities. State MIG leaders provided an array of ideas for future sustainability and collaboration, examples of best practices, and shared their achievements in policy development, service enhancements, system integration, outreach, education, and employer engagement.



During the session, CMS Director, Barbara Edwards, kicked off the Employment Summit with a CMS Town Hall Meeting structured in an informal Q&A format. MIG Grantees also posed questions to guest speakers and program facilitators throughout the Summit and provided input on various aspects of the MIG including funding, sustainability, plans for success, and future

collaborative initiatives with other CMS programs like the Money Follows the Person Initiative (MFP).

Summit Feedback

The Summit consisted of six Plenary Sessions held throughout the conference. Each session received favorable feedback from the attendees. Over 88% of the respondents rated the Town Hall session as good or better, and an overwhelming majority of the respondents (98%) rated the Ticket-To-Work and MIG sessions as good or better; and an average of over 96% of the respondents rated each of the break-out sessions as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.”

At the conclusion of the conference, a majority of the attendees indicated their satisfaction with the information provided prior to the conference. The majority of the respondents at the 2011 MIG Employment Summit rated the conference as “Excellent” (26%), “Very Good” (61%), or “Good” (13%).

Program Highlights

The MIG is designed to help individuals with disabilities enter the workforce. Thus far, the program has made considerable strides. Below are several achievements the MIG has accomplished:

- ♥ Launched a nationwide campaign aimed towards educating employers on recruiting, hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.
- ♥ Built awareness of the benefits of employment and gaining access to work incentive programs through direct support for work incentives counseling.
- ♥ Initiated cross-agency, inter-state collaborations to further promote the

employment of people with disabilities in 40 states in 2010.

- ♥ All states receiving MIG funding provide PAS to eligible individuals for a minimum of 40 hours per week.
- ♥ Increased the buy-in participation in 2009 by nearly 8 percent over 2008. This was the same growth rate reported between 2007 and 2008. In 2009, Buy-In participants accounted for roughly \$28 million in premium charges that were incurred by 55 percent of all enrollees with an average premium of \$56 per month.
- ♥ Thirty percent of 153,000 participants, who enrolled in the Buy-In program in 2009, were first-time enrollees.
- ♥ Strengthened key delivery system such as the workforce development and vocational rehabilitation, healthcare coverage, long-term support services, education and training.

Thinking Beyond the Label

Various states and their MIGs used funds towards the national Think Beyond the LabelSM campaign. This national awareness campaign, which targets those who make hiring decisions, promotes the employment of people with disabilities and provides the infrastructure for businesses to find qualified candidates with disabilities.

Organizers of the Think Beyond the LabelSM campaign include roughly 30 state Grantees, CMS, and the Health and Disability Advocates (HDA), a national non-profit organization that promotes income security and improved access to health care, coordinates the campaign as its fiscal agent.

Their collaboration produced ads targeting businesses for television, print, and various Internet channels to counteract negative stereotypes and promote the employment of people with disabilities.

The key elements of the campaign included:

- National marketing and social media campaign developed to incite employers to hire people with disabilities.
- Website dedicated to providing links to employer resources for various states.
- Print and audio/visual materials that expounded on various state and regional implementation plans.

Pulling It All Together

Under a contract with CMS, Ascellon has provided support to the MIG Grantees throughout the cycle of the grants. Ascellon staff support CMS in monitoring the progress of each MIG Grantee, and reporting on their achievements and the challenges they face. Ascellon provides expert administrative and technical assistance to MIG Grantees to address obstacles affecting their ability to meet their work plan deliverables.

Ascellon is proud to have been a key part of developing practical and valuable solutions that enrich the lives of people with disabilities through the MIG grants. Although the MIG grants program is scheduled to end on December 31, 2011, Ascellon will continue to support programs and agencies dedicated to empowering vulnerable populations of people within our communities.

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