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Author: Beare, Paul

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Abstract

This paper describes a successful model of supported employment developed by a single small agency previously providing services as a segregated day activity centre. The agency began by formalising its philosophy and mission statement, educating the Board and information seeking. Staff commitment and the support of parents was sought. The agency used to models; direct hire and small group enclave placement. The article looks at both worker and co-worker issues, staff training, job terminations and benefits, and future goals. Its summary advises guarding against slipping back into segregated options by maintaining high standards and goals. **Keyword: Employment**

Small Agency Conversion to Community - Based Employment: Overcoming the Barriers

Paul L. Beare, Susan J. Severson, and Evelyn C. Lynch
Moorhead State University

Donna Schneider
Clay County Diversified Services Incorporated

Community-based employment, widely accepted as the major goal for most persons with moderate to severe disabilities, has yet to be fully realized at the local agency level. This paper describes a successful model of supported employment developed by a single small agency previously providing services as a segregated day activity center in a small Midwestern city. Included is discussion of the service agency, program methodology, and barriers to successful community-based employment along with the manner in which they were overcome, and program outcomes. Included in these outcomes is a current community employment rate of 80% and increased income for workers along with increased community integration. Several recommendations for practice are made from both administrative and programming standpoints.

DESCRIPTORS: activity center, community integration, developmental disabilities, employment, integration, job placement, supported employment

The concept of supported employment, first legislated in 1984 as part of the Developmental Disabilities Act (P.L. 98-527), has gained widespread acceptance as the desired employment outcome for persons with developmental disabilities. Supported employment targets “competitive work in integrated settings for individuals who, because of their handicaps, need ongoing support services to perform that work” (“The State Supported,” 1987, p. 30546). Integration, a key concept in the supported employment work model, has now become a national focus in all types of service delivery and is perhaps the single most distinguishing characteristic of the supported work model (Chadsey-Rusch, 1986).

Although the literature describes the concept of supported employment in depth (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, & Albin, 1988; Rusch, 1986; Wehman, 1981) and several examples of state-wide supported employment programs have been widely disseminated (Conley, Rusch, McCaughrin, & Tines, 1989; Hill et al., 1987; Hill & Wehman, 1983; Noble & Conley, 1987; Rhodes & Ramsing, 1986), there is still a lack of integrated programming at the local level. This may be due, in part, to the difficult task of sorting through available literature to establish a model and identify methods for overcoming the barriers that small agencies face in establishing a functional supported employment program in their individual locales.

The purposes of this paper are to describe the methods and outcomes of a supported employment program developed by a single, small agency previously providing services as a segregated day activity center. The paper describes the service agency,

its philosophy, the program goals, the barriers it faced in establishing supported employment, and the strategies it developed that might be utilised by other agencies in their attempts to achieve integrated employment.

Agency Background

The described program was operated by a typical non-profit, county-based agency, Clay County Diversified Services Incorporated (CCDSI), located on the western edge of northern Minnesota, adjacent to North Dakota. The largest city is Moorhead, just across the Red River from Fargo, North Dakota, giving the metropolitan area a combined population of approximately 120,000 persons. In 1984, CCDSI converted from the developmental model to a program based on the zero reject principle of integrated employment and a total commitment to integrated services and the provision of choice to individuals concerning where they live, work, and socialise.

At the time of program initiation, supported employment did not exist in the county or across the river in North Dakota, and persons with moderate to severe disabilities were not working in community-based employment in the area. Because integrated employment was deemed the only acceptable outcome of vocational programming for the population served the goal of CCDSI was to have full community-based employment for all individuals served through the agency by the end of 1991. There were no specific timelines devised to mandate the placement of specific numbers of individuals by certain dates. Because this was the agency's first attempt at such placements, it was deemed impossible to predict the rate at which success would be achieved.

The Conversion Process

Initial Steps,

The first step in achieving conversion from day habilitation and segregated work models was formalising the philosophy and mission statement for the agency. Two board members originally prompted the philosophical change and the Executive Director, who read of supported employment and normalization and became committed to this approach. These three individuals educated other members of the board and staff in this new, progressive philosophy. They shared articles on community-based services, normalization, and supported employment with the board and discussed them at the monthly board meetings. Several board members attended a state conference where they heard presentations by Lou Brown and Paul Wehman concerning the merits of integration. The agency then sent the Executive Director to Richmond, Virginia, for training in supported employment services. With potential grant funding becoming available for developing and implementing a supported employment program, the two board members and the Executive Director designed a potential program and wrote a successful grant application. During the first year of the grant, board members received reports on the program and made comparison tours of the segregated workshop and the supported employment sites. By the end of the fourth year of grant funding (two different grants), all board members were committed to complete conversion as the only acceptable goal and policy for CCDSI. No board members left because of disagreement with the new program philosophy.

There was no pressure or even stated preference by people served by the agency or their parents to change to the new philosophy.

The second step in the agency's conversion effort was securing staff commitment. The same material distributed to the board was made available to staff. Staff attitude did not change as quickly as board attitude, and not all staff reached agreement with the concept of supported employment services. This disagreement was due to a variety of factors, including fear of change, paternalistic attitude, and the increased effort required on the part of staff members. New staff was hired to lead and implement the supported employment effort. During the first grant year the current staff received multiple in-service training sessions, attended state conferences, went through Program Analysis of Service System (PASS) training, and experienced a site visit by Mary Falvey, who presented the concept of community-based instruction, visited the supported employment sites, and made suggestions to assist with conversion. These changes seemed too severe to some of the six staff who had formerly provided day habilitation services. By the end of 1984 two staff members had transferred to the residential program, one resigned, and two requested to remain in the segregated workshop with the few remaining segregated workers. This outcome proved positive with the hiring of new employees with unquestioned commitment to the conversion efforts. By 1989 none of the original staff remained employed by the agency. In retrospect, this staff turnover was not efficient, but philosophical commitment to supported employment was then (and still is) seen as necessary by the board. If staff cannot adjust attitudes and performance, they must be replaced.

The third step in achieving conversion was gaining support of parents. A parent survey was completed before the implementation of the supported employment program. The result found marked resistance to changing the day habilitation system. The agency realised the potential positive impact of parent support. A workshop was held to address Social Security Income/Medical Assistance (SSI/MA) concerns. Parents became members of the supported employment advisory council and the Board of Directors. Parents were given tours of the supported employment sites and were offered 30-to 60-day trial placements for their sons or daughters at these sites. After 2 years of supported employment, a number of parents willingly participated in making an agency supported employment video. The video was shown at local advocate meetings and copies were given to other parents and workers. The parents in the video took phone calls about the program and presented their perspective to parent groups. The agency also developed an Advocacy Council for people served by the agency to provide input to the Board of Directors concerning issues or difficulties that the conversion process caused for the workers. This council was composed of workers, parents, residential provider staff, and job coaches.

Supported Employment Procedures

Models. In establishing the supported employment program, the board decided that only two supported models would be utilised during the conversion process: direct hire and small group enclave placement. Of the four approaches to the supported work model described in the literature at that time, only the direct hire and enclave approaches provided for ongoing interactions for workers with disabilities and their co-workers (Mank, Rhodes, & Bellamy, 1986). The other two models available for adaptation in 1984 (mobile work crews and entrepreneur business) were viewed by

the Board of Directors as providing only limited, short-term interactions and not facilitating hoped-for relationships with co-workers.

Job development. The first step in developing supported employment opportunities was to contact businesses as to the potential for job placements. The initial contact involved obtaining data about the business, completing a tour of the premises, and scheduling a meeting to discuss which of the agency's supported employment models might meet the needs of the company. Agency criteria to determine potential job development at a site included the number of work hours available each week, the number of workers without disabilities at the site, wages and benefits available, and the potential for increased integration for persons at the work site.

An environmental analysis of the business was completed to facilitate employment/worker/job match. The completed analysis provided the data used to match the needs of the business and the skills of the individual. The expectations of the employer and the job standards in relation to consumer skills and interests were the primary considerations. The composite of a typical workday was charted for later use in the development of a task analysis on which to base training.

Direct hire placement. Simultaneous with the job development activities, each potential employee underwent screening, matching schedules and interests of the individual and direct service staff (job coaches) to each potential job site. After the match was made, but before placement, the job coach went on-site to learn the job tasks and develop a task analysis of job requirements. A file for the direct service staff was organised for each work site, including the person's goals and objectives, task analysis, transportation schedules, and data necessary for the maintenance of quality services in the event of job coach turnover. On placement, the workers were oriented to the physical work area and introduced to immediate co-workers. Once actual training began, refinements of the task analysis were made as necessary.

Enclave placement. At the start of conversion, CCDSI concluded that using only the direct hire model would slow transition to community-based employment for many workers and exclude others entirely because of additional physical, behavioural, and cognitive challenges that might require more support than that available in a direct hire position. At the start of the second year of the program, the enclave model was implemented. All persons not yet placed in direct hire positions were considered candidates for enclave employment. There was no pre-set difference between people in direct hire jobs versus enclave placement. As might be expected, however, the outcome was that persons with fewer challenges were easier to match to direct hire jobs and those with more challenges were more likely to be in enclaves. The top three people matched to certain jobs were placed in an enclave with one direct service staff member providing continuous training and supervision. Persons placed in enclaves always remained candidates for any direct hire positions that might be developed. Because of the agency's rejection of the developmental model, a person's present placement was not seen as a step to direct hire. The entire population was always screened and considered for the direct hire placements. The placement decision was always made through the matching process previously described.

The job developer completed hourly rate determinations for each individual and reached agreement with the employer concerning the responsibilities of each party, the work standards, and the wages to be paid. The job developer, enclave members, and employer met once a month to discuss any changes to the agreement and the progress of each worker at a task analysis review. This meeting, along with discussion of the task analysis, included a review of other work behaviors, job satisfaction, and employer satisfaction. Outside consultants provided technical assistance to direct service staff by providing on-site observations and recommendations for programming as necessary. The technical assistance was generally in the form of behavioural programs to reduce interfering behaviors or to increase work productivity.

Barriers to Successful Conversion

Developmental Philosophy

The major barrier to successful conversion was seen as "developmental thinking." This may be defined as the belief that individuals must be made "ready" to be moved into the community or that all the skills needed in job sites are prerequisite to placement. This belief in a readiness model was the predominant one in Minnesota at onset of this program. This thinking was not a significant barrier to CCDSI because it started the conversion process with a total board commitment to integration and immediate placement and was able to hire staff who believed in the integrative philosophy. Having an appropriate philosophy in this regard allowed CCDSI to avoid many difficulties faced by similar agencies that still utilised a developmental model.

Financial Resources

The CCDSI board was committed to keeping overall operating costs the same as when operating under the old model, unless additional sources of income could be obtained. Many agencies use funding to justify not converting to community-based employment. Because of CCDSI's philosophy, this excuse was unacceptable, so resources had to be manipulated. One major effort involved cutting overhead costs. Because supported employment is so labour intensive; administrative costs had to be reduced arbitrarily. This was done in a number of ways, including sharing the executive director, bookkeeper, and office space with a community-based residential program. A number of members of the residential program's Board of Directors were former members of the CCDSI board. This allowed for easy negotiations, particularly in that both agencies were non-profit and had very similar philosophical orientations concerning community integration.

Because the goal was integration into the community, little or no funds went to improving the segregated site. Far from being lavish, offices were spartan and even the director shared an office with the personnel supervisor. Certainly, office equipment was maintained, computers acquired, and so forth. However, staff commitment to integration and understanding that those efforts were prioritised in resource allocation kept requests for physical plant enhancement to a minimum. With the goal being to shut down the segregated workshop, staff understood that this area would eventually be transformed into office space.

Operating funds were derived from a variety of sources. A total of four grants were received from two different funding sources to partially support start-up costs over the 1984-1988 period. These included \$112,683 for 1984-1986 from the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and \$52,892 from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for 1987-1988. These funds went entirely to job coach and job developer salaries. These funds sped up the conversion process. Outside funds were not available after 1988; however, the program has continued to operate with the agency's regular funding resources.

In 1984, Clay County had only the CCDSI day activity center. Because there was no sheltered workshop, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) vocational counsellors provided support for the community employment program. Their caseloads included individuals who did not want to be referred to the day activity center but who were unsuccessful in competitive employment. With successful supported employment placements of DRS referrals, the county social service case managers began referring and funding people for supported employment services. This resulted in an interagency agreement between DRS and social services in that DRS paid for the time-limited services such as on-site assessment and direct hire placement. Social services provided ongoing funding for continuing service such as that needed for enclave placement. This co-ordination of funding provided potential employees and their parents with the assurance of the continuation of services.

Since initial program implementation, people receiving supported employment services worked more days than the number for which the agency received funding each year. The agency worked with parents, workers, and advocacy groups to request additional funding days. There was an increase of 10 days with the possibility of 5 additional funding days pending. Since the agency received funding from governmental sources (Title XIX, Medical Assistance waiver, DRS, County Social Services Act), the regulations at times inhibited the conversion process. For example, a per diem rate was set by the state and approved by the social service agency. A full per diem included funding for 6 hours of services. Less than 6 hours of service was considered a partial day and received partial funds, but greater than 6 hours' service did not receive greater funding despite the need to provide services for an 8-hour work day.

To help defray the cost of the permanent on-site job coach in the enclave, the usual practice was to bid entire jobs to the employer (e.g., cleaning a certain number of hotel rooms per day at a specific dollar amount). Workers salaries ascertained through time studies, plus much of the job coach's salary were included in the bid price. The cost to employers would be greater than the cost if employees without disabilities were hired; however, the advantage to the employers was multiple. CCDSI guaranteed the job would be done to satisfaction, the agency handled absentees by having the other enclave members pick up extra hours, and training of new employees was easier because of job coach assistance and low turnover. In some instances the employer also avoided the paperwork of filing wage/hour exception requests.

Job Dissatisfaction

There were many potential sources of job dissatisfaction; however, the major source was seen as simple mismatch between the worker's interests and the job placement. To overcome this, CCDSI developed a time-limited, on-site assessment for each

prospective worker to assist the person and the agency staff in determining the best job match. The on-site assessment consisted of a person working 1 week at each of four job sites, accompanied by a direct service staff member. The staff member was responsible for the task analysis recording; the individual was responsible for deciding which placement he or she liked best. At the end of the 4-week assessment, the data were analyzed and a written and verbal report was presented to the worker and team members to help decide the final placement. A central part of program philosophy became one of “choice” whether to work, where to work, and whether to work in an enclave or individual placement.

Age-Related Employment Difficulties

Some people receiving agency services were of retirement age and preferred social/recreational activities to supported employment. This led to the development of the agency Community Social-Recreation Integration Program. This program served a number of purposes, one of which was to provide community integration through age-appropriate activities. A major aspect of this program was the seniors community integration program. Those individuals of retirement age were screened for their activity preferences and matched to community activities that they attended independently, with support by direct service staff, or with a senior volunteer companion who was a retired adult living in the community. Activities included such things as attending the senior citizens' center, gardening, walking in the mall, or exercising at a health club. This aspect was consistent with the concept of normalization in that persons of retirement age do normally halt employment and focus on recreation/leisure activity.

Co-worker Dissatisfaction

One of the first barriers faced in the community sites was resentment by worksite employees without disabilities. There was a general sense that their own jobs were somehow devalued if a person with moderate to severe disabilities could successfully accomplish the same tasks. Fears arose, based on experience at one particular site, that sabotage of success, particularly for those in direct hire placements, might result. The solution that was tried helped solve not only this problem but two additional difficulties: loneliness experienced by consumers placed in sites where they knew no one, and the need for continuing contact with the businesses once job coaches were faded. The solution was the development of a "colleague" program that matched each placed worker with a co-worker without disabilities in order to develop a working relationship and to increase social activities and opportunities. The initial plan, which was fully acceptable to all employers queried, was to offer a nominal reimbursement to these co-workers. However, it was immediately discovered that this was unnecessary and unwanted. The co-workers who were recruited felt themselves to be part of a group effort and became intrinsically motivated and rewarded to help the new worker and to make the supported employment placement succeed. Accepting funds would apparently reduce these feelings of reward, and the amount of money offered did not undo their feelings of altruism.

To implement the colleague program, the job coaches monitored the number of interactions the individual had with co-workers during the first 30 days of employment. This included conversations before and after work, shared breaks, and close proximity during work hours. The job coach then discussed the colleague

program with the new employee and co-workers. Those co-workers interested in the program were then matched with the employee. The colleague program was extended into after-work social activities. For example, one person went with co-workers to a local pub to listen to a band. The activity was so positive that the group had a social outing an average of once a month. Other people have lunched at restaurants, shared pizza during breaks, and attended parties with co-workers. At the monthly site meetings, worker and co-workers discussed work matters and shared social activities. By being part of the solution to problems faced by the new employees, the co-workers also were prevented from becoming dissatisfied and becoming a problem themselves.

Interagency Collaboration

The agency realised that another factor for success of the supported employment program was linkage and co-ordination with other community agencies, local school districts, and employers. Recognising this as important, CCDSI developed an Interagency Advisory Council for the supported employment effort, including representatives from schools, the business community, the sheltered workshop, vocational rehabilitation, the residential providers, parents, and county commissioners. This council met regularly to discuss issues and devise specific solutions to the general and specific barriers preventing various individuals from attaining community employment. The agency asked for information from each member of the advisory council during discussions on how agencies could collaborate to provide supported employment services. Through this process the roles of each agency were defined and problem-solving meetings were held to seek remedies for additional barriers to the conversion effort. One example of interagency collaboration was the development of a process for transitioning students from school to supported employment that would prevent most individuals leaving school from ever entering the segregated site. Another change involved residential staffing, allowing people to work days and hours that did not follow the typical day habilitation service schedule. Furthermore, involvement with the council helped give ownership and responsibility for the program's success to the involved representatives and agencies. Instead of creating barriers or blockages, it was an incentive to foster success.

A factor that in 1987 facilitated interagency collaboration was the development of Minnesota Transition Legislation, which mandated interagency transition committees. The Clay County Interagency Transition Committee was a body that facilitated interagency co-operation regionally. Although many of its goals were similar to those of the advisory council described above, there was no relationship or overlap between the two. The membership of the transition committee included a representative of all agencies serving persons with disabilities in the county, including CCDSI'S. Membership on this committee facilitated discussion about interagency barriers that needed to be addressed, because the committee saw as its mission the smooth transition of students from school to postschool environments. To foster this, it developed a directory describing services available, completed an assessment of transition needs throughout the county, and continued to problem solve on how individuals could access integrated postsecondary options.

Staff Training

A number of difficulties arose related to the staff employed as job coaches. Working in the community was more difficult and demanding than working in the segregated site. There was no pool of trained staff because this was the first supported employment program in the region. There was a high turnover rate as a result of the low salaries necessitated by the higher expenses and lower staffing ratios involved in community placement. As mentioned earlier, initial staff attitude toward the community integration philosophy was not necessarily positive.

To deal with these difficulties, three initiatives were undertaken. First, an orientation package was developed to immerse staff in the program philosophy and methodology. Second, a series of in-service training programs was delivered utilising Board of Directors members who originally designed the conversion effort. Third, CCDSI funded college course work for staff members who needed certain skills, and a 3-credit-hour college course videotape package of behavioural intervention skills was obtained by the agency and shown to all new employees. The number of in-service and college credit hours taken by employees was made part of the salary schedule advancement within the agency.

Small Agency in a Rural Area

Because of the program's geographic location, there were a number of potential barriers in providing community-based employment. The limited community size meant a limited job market that lacked large corporations where significant numbers of people could be integrated into a large work force. Likewise, the area lacked a sizeable corporation that could sponsor or adopt the program and assume partial fiscal responsibility.

The agency attempted to turn the liabilities of smallness into assets. Because of the smallness of the community, the agency was able to do direct mailing to virtually every employer in the region and inform them of services and survey their interest in community-based employment. The media market was correspondingly finite. A local television news reporter was a member of the Advisory Council. Through her expertise, the broadcast media were accessed and generated a great deal of publicity, resulting in heightened awareness and exposure. Because faculty were involved in initiating the program and authoring grants, the local university public relations office generated stories on integrated employment that were published in regional newspapers.

Limited size also allowed the agency to guarantee every employer who participated in the program that each job would be done each day. This was a major factor in initial job procurement. Additionally, administrative personnel were familiar with each job site and could troubleshoot or substitute as job coach in emergency situations. Administrators could also be familiar with all the significant employees in the various government agencies with which CCDSI was involved.

Transportation

The rural nature of the area contributed to the transportation barrier, although admittedly urban areas have difficulties in terms of safety and complexity. An unavoidable problem in outstate Minnesota were delays and cancellations caused by

winter storms. In addition, people who lived outside the city were transported to the agency's central office. From there, the person had transportation options such as rides with co-workers, biking, walking, the city bus, dial-a-ride, and taxis. There were limitations with these options. For example, the bus system did not operate at night or on Sunday. There were limited routes during service hours that required passengers to walk several blocks to reach the bus stop. Dial-a-ride required a 24-hour advance request and many requests were denied or delayed. Taxi service was available at all times; however, the cost was prohibitive. The agency staff transported people when other options were unavailable. Workers and staff were members of an ongoing transportation committee to work on possible solutions to these difficulties.

Job Terminations

Some job placements were made but the person was not retained at the business. This was consistently viewed as a program issue rather than the failure of the person. A worker had the choice of receiving no services for a time, being temporarily placed with an enclave, participating in the community social recreation program, or returning to the segregated site while awaiting a new placement. This aspect of the social-recreation program was time limited in nature but allowed for continued integration in the community rather than going to segregated employment. The activities of this program were determined by the individual and included adult education courses, museum visits, movies, and visits to restaurants and the mall. Only one person chose to join an enclave, the social-recreation program, or to not work, rather than return to the segregated site. People who lived in group homes unfortunately were not given the choice of receiving no services because of group home staffing/funding limitations. These individuals had to come to the segregated site or use the recreation program if no enclave placement was available or if it was denied.

Job Benefits

People with direct hire placement have generally received more benefits from the businesses than workers with enclave placement. For example, full-time workers earned vacation and sick days and received health benefits, promotions, and raises. Those individuals who worked at enclaves funded by subcontract bids to help cover the job coach salary were legally CCDSI employees, thus exempting the business from responsibility for benefits. CCDSI does pay workers compensation, FICA (social security), and state taxes but has nothing in place for other benefits, such as paid sick leave or vacation, because of budget limitations. Such costs would make the bid price for the job too high and thus not competitive, and the placement would be lost. Several businesses with enclaves, however, provided reduced rates for meals, free business jackets, Christmas parties, and the like, but earned vacation, sick days, and health coverage were not extended to the supported employment workers. This barrier has not been addressed adequately as yet. A long-range solution, certainly, is to develop more direct hire opportunities.

Other Concerns

When a person is unemployed and elects to stay home and not work or join the recreation program (the county allows this for a 90-day maximum per year), CCDSI loses funding for them while expenses remain the same. Job coaches cannot be laid

off each time there is a job transition. Some group homes resisted evening and weekend employment because it disrupted their staffing patterns. Some individuals suffered a reduction in unearned (governmental) benefits because of increased earned income. Adaptive equipment was scarce or not available, preventing some individuals with more severe involvement from obtaining employment at all while others remained underemployed. Physical accessibility of job sites was limited for individuals who use wheelchairs. When businesses change ownership or management, sometimes attitudes of the new personnel affect the quality of the job site, requiring additional job development. Technical advances and automation have eliminated a number of job placements by replacing assembly workers with machines.

Outcomes of CCDSI Supported Employment Model

The present analysis compares data for individuals involved in CCDSI vocational services in 1984 with those in 1989 to demonstrate some results of the conversion process. Table 1 illustrates that the number of individuals served by CCDSI increased from 43 in 1984 to 64 in 1989. Five unserved persons who formerly did not choose to attend the segregated day program chose to enter community employment. Additional people came from the state hospital, which was in the process of discharging all Clay County residents. The 12 remaining new individuals were public school graduates.

In 1984, at the beginning of the community-based employment program, none of the 43 people receiving services was employed in the community. After 5 years, 69% of individuals had full-time positions in the community and 11 % had part-time jobs. Twenty percent remained in segregated employment, although the percentage had been as low as 9% in 1988. At that time a number of individuals, some of whom had not been placed at the formulation of these data, entered the program from the schools and the state hospital, raising the segregation rate.

The mean age of the workers was 32 years, with a range from 20 to 63. The mean IQ score as measured by individual assessment by the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised was 46, with a range of 11-70. The mean hours worked per week was 23, with a range from 8 to 40. In 1984, 6% of the 1989 workers had resided in the state hospital, 41% had been in the segregated day program, 45% had been in school, and 8% had been receiving no services.

Table 1 shows that there was a 1,200% increase in the average salary earned by workers over the 5 years. It is interesting to note that four different individuals each earned more in 1989 than the sum earned by the 43 workers in 1984. The mean income for workers in direct hire placements was \$4,137 per year. They all worked at a 100% production rate, meaning they were paid on an equal footing with other employees at each business with no wage exceptions. The mean income for workers at enclave placements was \$ 1,135 per year. The mean productivity rate for enclave workers was 33%, since pay was based on productivity; the average enclave employee earned one third the salary usually paid for a person in their position because, in time study, they produced at one third the average rate of other workers.

Table 1
Descriptive Data Comparing Employment of Individuals Served for 1984 Versus 1989

	1984		1989	
	N	%	N	%
Individuals	43		64	
Integrated (total)	0	0	51	80
Full time	0	0	44	69
Part time	0	0	7	11
Enclave	0	0	12	19
Direct hire	0	0	39	61
Segregated	43	100	13	20
% FTE integrated		0		76
Total earned income		\$7,009 ^a		\$105,601
Mean earned income		\$163 ^a		\$1,650

^a1984 figures adjusted for inflation to 1989 dollar equivalent.

The average cost per worker for the entire program was \$4,974.37 in 1984. Costs are for the vocational program only, not residential or independent living. Adjusted for yearly inflation from 1984 to 1989, this amount would be \$5,905.73 (Hoffman, 1990). The average cost per worker for the program in 1989, calculated by subtracting enclave income of \$68,821 from total program expenditures, was \$5,465.94, or \$439.79 per worker per year less than 1984. Thus, CCDSI's costs have not escalated as a result of its commitment to community employment.

In 1989, 51 individuals were employed in community-based integrated settings. The vocational placements were dispersed among 13 business sites that included a furniture manufacturer, a grocery store, three fast food restaurants, two discount stores, two sit-down restaurants, a dry cleaner, a classic car assembly plant, a hotel, and an industrial plant.

In these vocational employment sites a variety of vocational tasks were performed. At the classic car-manufacturing site, workers organized and bagged materials to fill orders. The other industrial plant employed individuals to perform similar tasks and to assemble boxes. Employment at the grocery store included janitorial and machinery cleaning tasks in the bakery and meat departments and straightening grocery shelves. At the discount stores workers unpacked stock and prepared it for the sales floor. For some individuals, employment at the restaurants involved cleaning; others assisted with food preparation. Room cleaning was done at the hotel site. The individual who was employed at the dry cleaner sorted through clothes prior to cleaning.

The number of individuals with disabilities employed at the sites ranged from 9% to 38% of the workforce per shift. The breakdown of job placements within the employment sites included 18 individuals in assembly, 21 in cleaning, 7 in food preparation, 10 in hotel housekeeping, 5 in merchandise preparation, 1 in laundry checking, and 1 straightening shelves. The numbers add to greater than 51 because some individuals had two jobs (because each job was part time and the person wanted to work full time.)

Of the 51 people in integrated employment, 25 (49%) were still in their original job. Thirteen individuals (25%) were on their second job, seven (14%) were on their third job, and the rest were on their fourth or more jobs. All but one of the employed people met the federal definition of supported employment. The longest period of employment by one person was 55 months.

Future Goals

Future goals of the agency focus on increasing and improving community-based vocational options for all workers. Suggestions for these improvements came from workers, interagency advisory councils, staff, and advocacy groups. Since the conception of the supported employment program, a primary goal has been to become "facility free," meaning that all individuals will be employed in the community. To reach this goal, annual objectives are delineated and evaluated. One future objective is to develop jobs in the smaller surrounding communities enabling people to live in their home communities if they desire. A second objective is to facilitate improved transitional services allowing all students to move directly from school programs to integrated work. The agency is also exploring other employment models, such as the clustered or dispersed group models as described by Moon, Inge, Wehman, Brooke, and Barcus (1990), to move the remaining individuals from the segregated work environment to community settings. The plan also includes developing additional services and accessing the technical assistance needed to move individuals who still reside in state institutions back to the county and into the community.

Another major goal is to improve the quality of employment for individuals currently working in community-based sites. Extensions of the colleague program will improve interactions in the work place, enhance co-worker supports, and, it is hoped, lead to social relations outside the work environment. Career planning for all will allow for better job development and job matches and will facilitate job promotion or change for workers in direct hire positions. Transferring responsibility for the employees to the businesses in terms of wage and hour exceptions will promote more normalised employer-employee relationships. As CCDSI continues to provide vocational services to individuals, it will continue to make decisions and develop programs that focus on enhancing the dignity of the people in the work place.

Recommendations for Practice

It is clear that community-based services are preferable to segregated, day training, or other service options that limit employment and personal development potential. However, the transition or change to community-based employment by local agencies is often fraught with frustration and failure.

Based on the CCDSI experience, the following recommendations can be put forth in the administrative and program areas.

Administrative

1. Prepare a philosophy statement representing the agency's commitment to community-based programming.
2. Train staff so they know the philosophy and possess the skills to implement it.
3. Utilise multilevel planning teams to make community-based programming an interagency effort. Include potential workers, parents, guardians, teachers, case coordinators, vocational rehabilitation counsellors, and employers.
4. Form a supported employment advisory board to help the community, particularly the business community, to take responsibility for the program.

5. Expect staff turnover and plan for it. Train multiple employees for each essential role. Ensure that any organisational chart is tied to professional role, not employee personality.
6. Prepare short - and long-term program goals. If the agency does not know where it wants to be in 3-5 years, short-range planning is even more difficult.
7. Publicise the program across the community. Include professionals from the media on the advisory board to assist in this effort. Have frequent news releases, make presentations to service clubs, join the Chamber of Commerce, and so forth.
8. Restructure the organisation so that key staff, having the greatest strength, goes into the community instead of spending their days on paperwork and administrative minutiae, thereby assuring this component has its best chance to succeed.
9. Reduce administrative costs where possible to help deal with any increase in direct service staff.
10. Identify future workers so planning and service may commence before they leave school or other institutions. This prevents automatic referral to a segregated facility while planning occurs.

Program

1. Survey the community for employment opportunity, overlooking no opportunities.
2. Use a systematic approach to develop job sites.
3. Carefully match, place, train, and follow each individual.
4. Deliver what you promise to employers.
5. Go for early success - place people to serve as models and success stories for other employers, employees, parents, and workers.
6. Network with the community; employers are your best recruiters for other employment sites.
7. Be prepared to deal with difficulties caused by staffing patterns of group homes and idiosyncrasies of parents.
8. Be prepared to deal with the lack of generic transportation services characteristic of all but the largest cities.

Conclusion

It is difficult to develop community-based employment programs under any circumstances. If a program is initially successful, it must avoid resting on this early success. It is easy to slip back toward segregated site placement or to leave a particular person 30% in segregation while 70% in the community. In retrospect, clearly the one action the CCDSI Board should have taken was to set a firm date for closing the segregated site and requiring only integrated service options. This would prevent staff from using the facility as an option for failure in their assigned tasks of integration and prevent schools and the county from making referrals to segregated service options. Maintaining segregated service makes it easy to acquiesce to those who prefer the status quo and safety of the segregated site. Every agency must clarify an appropriate philosophy, set high standards and goals, and work until they are met, it is hoped at the point of full community-based employment for every individual.

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