



## **North State Regional Office – SB 639 Community Conversation March 14, 2022, 3pm-5pm**

**The Community Conversation for the North Coast and North State Regional Offices was held on March 14, 2022, attended by 34 people.**

The March 14, 2022, Community Conversation was supported with Live Captioning, American Sign Language (ASL), and Spanish interpretation. Julie Eby-McKenzie, SCDD North Coast Regional Office Manager and Sarah May, SCDD North State Regional Office Manager facilitated and used a power point presentation to help guide the meeting. Tina Reszler and MaryAgnes Nolan were note takers.

The meeting included a series of questions with input on the topic areas listed below.

### **Comment/Question prior to the listed questions:**

- Federal government needs to stop limiting what can be made on a yearly basis as minimum wage raises fewer hours can be worked. This comment was about the impact of wages on means-tested benefits such as SSI, Medicaid,, etc.

### **SB 639 Community Conversation Questions**

**Ice Breaker – “What has been your experience in your employment journey and what would have made it better”?**

- Awareness videos for employers with Autism and / or with I/DD.
- Focus on the Neuro-typical.

**1. In a perfect world, with no funding (money) or other barriers, what would the future of employment look like for people with developmental disabilities?**

- Quality training for all
- More flexible requirements for daily/weekly hours
- Have an onsite resource center specifically for DD Population as local job resource centers do not always feel comfortable working with people with disabilities. Services would include providing extra supports such as interview

help, figure out ways to get to work, how to get a haircut, interview practices, help with resumes, submitting applications, dressing for interviews, etc.

- Ombudsperson or liaison

## **2. What needs to be in place to help a person move from a subminimum wage sheltered workshop into a meaningful day based on their interests?**

- Tutor, accommodation, or support staff (not just what they have at the training centers or workshops)
- Support, training, and classes
- More opportunities to try new things
- Mentorship/internship programs
- Teaching about micro business (learning opportunities)

## **3. For people who want something other than work, what are the best options or ideas?**

- Volunteering
- Support activities of interest
- More educational opportunities for those with disabilities
- Program to teach how to get along with peers, staff, work skills, places to go
- Social Opportunities
- Meaningful activities
- De-Compress places
- Utilizing Community College Disability Service Centers
- More businesses offering job shadowing as a way to do some job exploration
- Conference for employers
- Employment fair for people with disabilities

## **4. For people who want to work, what services to support success?**

- Need good advocates (sometimes people are let go before the employer is aware of accommodation needs and employers who know an employee has a disability tend to be more willing to work with them.)
- Well trained and intuitive job coach – almost like a mediator with employer
- Mentoring
- Transportation, funding
- Onsite peer mentor, job coach
- More job coaches and better pay for the job coaches
- Community Awareness
- Staff that care and like people with disabilities

- Maintaining the same staff and incentives for staff
- Building relationships
- Must know what employers are looking for
- Standardized job coach training curriculum
- Wages to keep people to stay
- Paid mental health days
- Extensive training program – 4–8-week course
- Higher wages, better training equals certification
- Facilitation and job coaching

**5. Let's think about supported employment professionals - like job developers or job coaches. What additional skills or supports do they need to be successful in their roles?**

- Personality makes a big difference.
- Need to match job coaches appropriately so it fits
- Natural supports, employers use staff with a mentor mentality
- Better results with clients being paired with someone they like
- State/Fed tax breaks for businesses that employ those with disabilities, not time limited, as the tax breaks leave so does the businesses encouragement to employ

**6. How can we encourage employers to hire people with disabilities to work at their companies?**

- People fairs for employers to meet potential employees with disabilities. (They may even be willing to create a job for a person)
- Employer conference
- Sensory rooms at workplace
- Mandatory trainings to increase awareness/sensitivity regarding developmental disabilities would break down some barriers
- Private places for nursing mothers could also be used as an accessible accommodation area – this is an example of protected spaces for a particular purpose.

**7. Thinking creatively or outside the box, what kind of new programs should California develop for people with significant disabilities and or support needs?**

- Flexibility, working from home
- Flexible hours – work more one week, and less the next
- Allow for individualization as is stressed with Self-Determination
- Social coaches help

- Provided other things/supports, like social skills not just employment focused – combo service needs
- Look at all the variables
- Empower people, bring people
- Individualized level of service may help people bridge the gap toward eventual employment

**8. For a last question, please complete this thought: “Success will be achieved when...”**

- The person who says it, feels successful
- We feel it has been
- Happy or content
- Achieve desired goals
- When we don’t have to hire people to support individuals with disabilities
- The advocates and supports are no longer needed