

Capstone Project: ***Collaboration and Partnership between Social Service and Workforce Delivery Systems***: Marin County Health and Human Services (HHS)-Marin Employment Connection Center (MEC) and The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB)

**Vision:** Improve collaboration between the *Social Service* and *Workforce* systems in Marin County to provide employment and training services to a wider population of community members who are on the road to self-sufficiency.

**Background:** The *Marin Employment Connection Center* (MEC) is the America's Job Center of California for the County of Marin. MEC is funded through a WIOA allocation authorized by the regional Workforce Development Board (the WANB) and through various federal, state and local social service allocations embedded within the County of Marin (HHS), Employment and Training Branch. MEC, located in a county building, enjoys the benefits of being a comprehensive one-stop center under the umbrella of County government. With shrinking budgets across social services and workforce systems, and an increased focus of linking clients to employment and training services, it is imperative that resources of both programs are maximized.

**Project Objective:** Design and implement a branch-wide plan for improving employment and training business practices and direct service practices, blending the strengths of social service and workforce systems. Goals:

- 1) Implement an evidence based model to design and monitor system improvement.
- 2) Identify and braid funding streams across both program to offset costs.
- 3) Implement a contracts procedure through the Board of Supervisors to encourage efficiencies.
- 4) Initiate a culture shift within the team highlighting knowledge, understanding and blending of workforce and social service regulations, values and practices.
- 5) Create a service delivery flow which is seamless and integrated across the teams

**Scope of Work:**

Research: By engaging the expertise of an HHS analyst, the Results Based Accountability (RBA) model was chosen as the framework for monitoring programmatic shifts. The entire branch entered into a learning phase in RBA principles. UC-Davis was contracted to provide teaching on the County Expense Claim (the fiscal draw down of social service funds), and the on-site expertise of the WIOA program manager is used as the foundation for WIOA/Public Assistance employment services.

Team Engagement: Engaged branch leadership through bi-weekly meetings to establish a common understanding/knowledge of employment services across workforce and social service systems. A vision was developed, the programs mapped, referral processes and gaps were identified. This vision was shared with branch team members and conversations continue through quarterly all-staff meetings. Through a contract with UC-Davis, the entire branch learned the same elements of customer engagement through an 8 session training series. The completion of this series continues currently.

Development: County Counsel and fiscal were engaged to develop a "master contract" to simplify "earn and learn" opportunities across both systems. A \$1.5 million dollar grant linking CalFresh recipients to CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) was submitted and approved through the Dept. of Agriculture.

**Current Progress:**

The Branch continues on its journey to stronger collaboration and partnerships. Keys to success are the identification of measurements which indicate positive progress towards key data points, engaging the leadership and direct service teams in planning and implementation, and working with County partners to leverage opportunities for improved business processes.

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