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DHS investing more than \$6 million in employment provider transformation

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) is investing \$6.75 million to improve employment services and outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

DHS is seeking up to 30 service provider agencies looking to transform their current organizational and program models from the delivery of facility-based employment services (sometimes known as sheltered workshops) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), to community-based, integrated employment services. Interested providers will be selected via an application process that closes Sept. 26, 2014.

The selected providers will receive a minimum award of \$25,000 and up to \$150,000 to participate in strategic planning and technical assistance activities in order to initiate and sustain their transformation from facility-based to community-based employment services. A total of up to \$3 million of the \$6.75 million is available for this effort.

Up to \$750,000 is also available as performance-based payments for providers that achieve specific employment outcomes for individuals with I/DD into community-based, individual integrated employment.

In addition, DHS will also invest up to \$3 million through a competitive solicitation for subject matter experts to provide guidance, consultation, training, and technical assistance to help the selected service provider organizations transform their business and program model. The Request for Proposals for the subject matter experts closes Sept. 29, 2014.

“These investments are an important part of Oregon’s work to carry out the Governor’s Executive Order, to create increased opportunities for integrated jobs in the community for those with I/DD,” said Mike Maley, Statewide Employment First Coordinator. “Oregon relies heavily on private provider agencies to deliver services to those with I/DD, and these investments will help increase provider capacity and capabilities consistent with the direction our services must continue to go.”

DHS is committed to continually improving the system for delivering employment services to individuals with I/DD. These improvement efforts are based on the principles

of informed choice, community integration and competitive employment. The specific investments in supporting service provider transformation are part of the DHS strategy to make continual improvements by:

- Increasing the specific capacity, in terms of provider numbers and skill levels, to deliver employment services in integrated employment settings; and
- Increasing the opportunities for individuals with I/DD to join the general workforce by being competitively employed in workplace settings typically found in our communities. This includes opportunities for self-employment, business ownership, or other entrepreneurial endeavors;
- Reducing the use of facility-based or small group employment services.

The investments and system improvement goals are consistent with the Employment First policy adopted in 2008 that established the expectation that “employment opportunities in fully integrated work settings shall be the first and priority option explored in the service planning for working-age adults with developmental disabilities.”

These actions are also consistent with Executive Order 13-04 signed by Gov. Kitzhaber in April 2013 and with statutory changes passed by the Oregon Legislature that same month.

Providers and technical assistance agencies who may want to apply for this Request for Proposal can apply at: <http://orpin.oregon.gov/open.dll/welcome>

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