

Recommendations regarding the current policies in Georgia related to the programmatic and funding support of supported self-employment: August 2018

**Doug Crandell, MFA,
Public Service Faculty
Institute on Human Development and Disability/UGA
Senior Consultant
Griffin-Hammis;
Subject Matter Expert
Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program**

**Presentation to
Georgia Vocational
Rehabilitation
Agency's Statewide
Council**

Most recent data

- The successful closure rate for Georgians with disabilities in self-employment is very low, roughly one-half of one-percent, and none of those are job seekers with significant disabilities.
- However, of the 16 cases closed in self-employment, the rate of employment is 100%, suggesting that while the VR agency does very little work in self-employment, when it is provided and supported the results are sustainable employment.

| Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Closure Performance - Employment Outcomes | Closure status 3 - Self-employment (FY2012) | Closure status 3 - Self-employment (FY2013) | Closure status 3 - Self-employment (FY2014) | Closure status 3 - Self-employment (FY2015) |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| With employment | 0 | 16 | 13 | 16 |
| Without employment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Employment rate | — | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| Percent closed with employment of the agency total | — | 0.44% | 0.80% | 0.55% |
| With employment and a significant disability | 0 | 12 | 12 | 11 |
| Percent closed with employment and significant disability of the agency total | — | 0.00% | 1.00% | 0.00% |

Employment First in Georgia and Link to Supported Self-Employment

In May of 2018 Georgia's Employment First Act became law.

As the law states,

The General Assembly finds and declares that competitive integrated employment, including self-employment, in the general workforce is the first and preferred option in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of the level of disability (Georgia House Bill 831, 2018, p. 1).

The General Assembly chose to define competitive integrated employment as, work, **including self-employment,** in the labor market performed on a full-time or part-time basis in a setting in which an individual with a disability interacts with individuals without disabilities in all aspects of the job function and for which such individual with a disability is compensated at or above the level of salary and benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals without disabilities (Georgia House Bill 831, 2018, p. 2).

Recommendation #1

Review the Florida Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultants (CBTAC) project for application for Georgia. The EFSLMP team in Georgia has had three conversations over the last several months with Florida's Division of VR Services.

http://www.rehabworks.org/docs/vendors/ Vendor_Qualifications_Manual.pdf, July 2018: VR Policy 11.08062/latest version

In addition, staff at Griffin-Hammis has been working with Texas VR to create an updated (in accordance with WIOA) self-employment curriculum which should be available for review in early 2019.

Recommendation #2

Explore a collaborative effort with the Georgia Micro Enterprise Network for scalability throughout the state.

One of the GMEN programs at Kennesaw State University partnered in Georgia under ODEP's Customized Employment grants, which was actively involved with the local GVRA office and youth and adults with disabilities seeking self-employment support and customization. The Georgia Micro Enterprise Network (GMEN) is a non-profit association that is a catalyst for economic development in Georgia. Through its network of business development training and lending organizations, GMEN serves as a resource to support and fund viable micro-businesses in an effort to create new jobs and business opportunities at the local level.

<https://www.georgiamicrobiz.org/Programs>

Recommendation #3

In collaboration with the University of Georgia, Institute on Human Development and Disability, along with GMEN, Griffin-Hammis, and GVRA, create a credential much like the Florida and Texas VR CBTAC and offer the training and technical assistance to CRP staff and VR Counselors in each quadrant. By partnering with UGA, the credential can be delivered through continuing education efforts, and an official UGA certificate can be offered using pre and post-test, and on-going credential maintenance. This collaboration is considered best-practices as it is the type of state and local partnerships supported by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA partnerships are intended to align workforce, education, and economic development systems to meet labor market needs. Partnerships involve two or more organizations, including community-based, faith-based, and social service agencies, working together to meet the mutual objectives of providing education and training for individuals entering employment or enlarging their employment possibilities

Next Steps

- Discussion
- Review source documents
- Timeline
- Using the EFSLMP Vision Quest Replication Guide as a tool to implement recommendations