**Employment First Oversight Commission**

**2012 Goals and Objectives to Ensure Effective Implementation of the Employment First Initiative (4/20/12):**

**Employment First: the Law in Kansas and the First Law of its Kind in the United States –**

In 2011, the Kansas Legislature became the first state in the nation to pass an Employment First policy into law. KSA 44-1136 requires competitive and integrated employment as the first option for services for people with disabilities. The law sets up a five member Employment First Oversight Commission, tasked to establish the measurable Goals and Objectives for state agencies to follow that will ensure effective implementation of the Act.

**The Four Key Requirements in the Employment First Law:**

* **Competitive and Integrated Employment is the First Option –** Competitive, integrated employment must be the first option when providing services or supports to people with disabilities. This requirement is often called by the term “Employment First” (meaning that programs and services start with competitive, integrated employment as the FIRST option).
  + “It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state of Kansas that competitive and integrated employment shall be considered its first option when serving persons with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment.”
* **Policy is Effectively Implemented in all Programs and Services –** All state agencies must follow Employment First and ensure it is effectively implemented in all programs and services.
  + “All state agencies shall follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services.”
* **State Programs, Policies, Procedures and Funding Support Competitive and Integrated Employment –** All state agencies must coordinate efforts and collaborate to ensure that all state programs, policies, procedures and funding support competitive and integrated employment of individuals with disabilities.
  + “All state agencies shall coordinate efforts and shall collaborate within and among such agencies to ensure that state programs, policies, procedures and funding support competitive and integrated employment of individuals with disabilities.”
* **Data Sharing –** All state agencies share data and information across systems in order to better track outcomes and success under Employment First.
  + “All state agencies shall, whenever feasible, share data and information across systems in order to track progress toward full implementation of the act.”

**Five Goals with Objectives for Kansas on Employment First**

***Organized Under Each of the Four Key Requirements***

***Competitive and Integrated Employment is the First Option (Key Requirement)***

**Goal 1:** Kansas’ relevant state agencies successfully execute specific strategies to fully implement the Employment First law and to ensure competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities is fully supported in their programs, policies, procedures and funding.

Objectives for Goal 1:

Objective 1.1 – 50% of relevant state agencies will plan for and begin the execution of strategies under this goal, as indicated by reporting such to the Commission by September 1, 2012. The remaining 50% of relevant state agencies will report such to the Commission by December 1, 2012.

Objective 1.2 – Kansas will score at least a four (4) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard document by January 1, 2013: “Kansas relevant state agencies successfully execute specific strategies to fully implement the Employment First law and to ensure competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities is fully supported in their programs, policies, procedures and funding.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #4)

***Policy is Effectively Implemented in all Programs and Services (Key Requirement)***

**Goal 2:** Each relevant state agency has a strong and effective policy detailing how it will implement the Employment First law.

Objectives for Goal 2:

Objective 2.1 – 100% of relevant state agencies will develop an effective, publicly-available, written policy detailing how it will implement the law by July 1, 2012 (1 year after the law went into effect). This policy will detail how each relevant state agency is fully implementing the four key requirements of the Employment First law (see page one of this document for listing). For example, for all impacted programs or services within the relevant state agency, how are they ensuring and tracking that competitive, integrated employment is always offered as the first option to people with disabilities of working age.

Objective 2.2 – Kansas will score a four (4) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard document by August 1, 2012: “Each relevant state agency has a strong and effective policy detailing how it will implement the Employment First law.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #2)

Objective 2.3 – Kansas will score at least a three (3) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard document by January 1, 2013: “Relevant state agencies will enter into formal interagency agreements to successfully implement, track and support the Employment First policy and competitive and integrated employment.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #6)

***State Programs, Policies, Procedures and Funding Support Competitive and Integrated Employment (Key Requirement)***

**Goal 3:** Kansas has measurable annual performance goals and outcomes with clear and meaningful benchmarks that track a number of key indicators to prove full support of competitive and integrated employment and effective implementation of the Employment First initiative, including outcomes and goals for the numbers and percentages of persons with disabilities in competitive and integrated employment.

Objectives for Goal 3:

Objective 3.1 – 50% of relevant state agencies will provide to the Employment First Oversight Commission the goals and outcomes they want to establish and track in regards to this goal by August 1, 2012. The remaining 50% of relevant state agencies will provide this information by November 1, 2012.

Objective 3.2 –Kansas will score at least a four (4) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard document by January 1, 2013: “Kansas has measurable annual performance goals and outcomes with clear and meaningful benchmarks that track a number of key indicators to prove full support of competitive and integrated employment and effective implementation of the Employment First initiative, including outcomes and goals for the numbers and percentages of persons with disabilities in competitive and integrated employment.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #1)

Objective 3.3 – Kansas will score at least a three (3) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard by January 1, 2013: “Kansas’ relevant state agencies aggressively pursue resources to support innovation in competitive/integrated employment services and to better advance and implement the Employment First initiative.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #7)

Objective 3.4 – Kansas will score at least a two (2) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard by January 1, 2013: “Kansas has effective strategies for supporting Kansans with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency as direct part of supporting competitive and integrated employment.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #9)

Objective 3.5 – Kansas will score at least a three (3) on the following standard of the Kansas scorecard by January 1, 2013: “Adequate resources are readily available to Kansas transition-age students, individuals waiting for services and their families, and individuals currently served in non-integrated and non-competitive settings in order to encourage them to choose competitive integrated employment over other options.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #8)

**Goal 4:** Kansas has effective, meaningful and productive collaborations among stakeholder groups and between these stakeholders and state government to support the Employment First policy and competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities.

Objectives for Goal 4:

Objective 4.1 – 100% of relevant state agencies will have effective collaborations with stakeholder groups, including self-advocates and consumers by December 1, 2012. Indicators of success toward this objective may include but not be limited to:

* Appointment of at least one lead agency staff member to a collaboration workgroup, made up of relevant state agencies and representatives of stakeholder groups
* Regular meetings of this collaboration workgroup with regular attendance by state agency designees
* Effectively utilizing this collaboration workgroup to discuss meaningful topics, vet important Employment First issues, and create engagement opportunities
* Using this collaboration workgroup as a conduit to discuss the success of the past two Employment First statewide conferences and how the State can build on this success in the future
* 80% of stakeholders indicating overall satisfaction with the meaningfulness of their participation as well as the participation by relevant state agency in the collaboration workgroup through an independent survey conducted by the Employment First Oversight Commission.

Objective 4.2 – Kansas will score at least a three (3) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard document by January 1, 2013: “Kansas has effective, meaningful and productive collaborations among stakeholder groups and between these stakeholders and state government to support the Employment First policy and competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities.” (Kansas Scorecard, Standard #5)

***Data Sharing (Key Requirement)***

**Goal 5:** Kansas has an effective method for collecting and publishing outcomes data involving competitive and integrated employment for people with disabilities. This method tracks a variety of data, including but not limited to competitive and integrated employment data. These data are used to engage stakeholders and inform strategy and policy decisions.

Objectives for Goal 5:

Objective 5.1 – 100% of relevant state agencies will collect and regularly publish outcomes data involving competitive and integrated employment under this Goal by November 1, 2012.

Objective 5.2 – 100% of relevant state agencies will use these data to engage stakeholders and is effectively integrated into making better strategy and policy decisions by state agencies. Performance under this objective can be covered with the implementation of the written policy under Objective 2.1.

Objective 5.3 –Kansas will score at least a three (3) on the following standard of the Kansas Scorecard document by January 1, 2013: “Kansas has an effective method for collecting and publishing outcomes data involving competitive and integrated employment for people with disabilities. This method tracks a variety of data, including but not limited to competitive and integrated employment data. These data are used to engage stakeholders and inform strategy and policy decisions.” (Standard #3)

Objective 5.4 – The Disability Subcabinet (as the entity ultimately tasked by the Governor to broadly take the lead on Employment First issues) will take a leadership role to bring together a cross-agency data working group (or some other appropriate method) to examine how to better share data across agencies and systems, as well as examining opportunities to have a more integrated data system to ensure implementation of the data sharing requirements of the law and better sharing of data.

*Further explanation about the above goals and how they tie back to the four key requirements of the law –*

*For each of the above goals, the Commission list one of the four key requirements that it believes is the most directly applicable to the goal. However, most of the goals are tied to more than one of the four key requirements. For ease of reference, this report simply lists the key requirement that is most closely tied to the goal. Additionally, the law has other requirements of State agencies and the Employment First Oversight Commission above and beyond the four key requirements listed. These other requirements provide additional context and justification.*

*Note: As used in this document, the term “relevant state agency” means those state agencies services, functions or support impacted by the act. This includes, but is not limited to, services and supports such as job placement, supported employment, vocational rehabilitation, workforce centers, job coaching, transition services for youth in special education and related services, etc. The law requires “all state agencies” to comply with the law. However, many state agencies do not have applicable services, supports or functions for people with disabilities. At this time, the Employment First Oversight Commission believes that the relevant state agencies include at least the following:*

* *Kansas Department of Children and Families (formerly Kansas Dept. of Social and Rehabilitation Services)*
* *Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (formerly Kansas Dept. on Aging)*
* *Kansas Department of Health and Environment*
* *Kansas Department of Commerce*
* *Kansas State Department of Education*
* *Kansas Department of Transportation*

**Employment First Oversight Commission**

**Barriers, Effective Strategies and Policies Regarding Employment First (July 2012)**

*The law requires that the Employment First Commission “shall identify barriers to achieving the outcomes along with the effective strategies and policies that can help realize the Employment First initiative.”*

The Commission would like the barriers and strategies to be reflective of all disabilities. While these barriers and strategies may not represent every barrier that exists they represent the majority of barriers.

*Competitive and Integrated Employment is the First Option (Key Requirement)*

**Goal 1:** Kansas relevant state agencies successfully execute specific strategies to fully implement the Employment First law and to ensure competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities is fully supported in their programs, policies, procedures and funding.

Examples of Barriers include:

* Competing priorities within and across current systems
* Disincentives to integrated employment
* Lack of capacity for implementation (multiple elements)

Examples of Strategies include:

* Identify and address competing priorities within and across current systems
* Increase the use of existing incentives and develop new incentives
* Invest in broad-based training and technical assistance for all stakeholders.

*Policy is Effectively Implemented in all Programs and Services (Key Requirement)*

**Goal 2:** Each relevant state agency has a strong and effective policy detailing how it will implement the Employment First law.

Examples of Barriers include:

* Lack of information to agencies about Employment First Law
* Policies not fully in sync with Employment First Law within agencies.
* Mechanism not in place to assure congruency in policy across different service systems.

Examples of Strategies include:

* Educate relevant state agency policy makers about the Employment First Law.
* Provide technical assistance as state agencies review, align, and/or develop and implement policies for the Employment First Law.
* Implement flexible and fluid policies via collaboration between agencies.

*State Programs, Policies, Procedures and Funding Support Competitive and Integrated Employment (Key Requirement)*

**Goal 3:** Kansas has measurable annual performance goals and outcomes with clear and meaningful benchmarks that track a number of key indicators to prove full support of competitive and integrated employment and effective implementation of the Employment First initiative, including outcomes and goals for the numbers and percentages of persons with disabilities in competitive and integrated employment.

Examples of Barriers include:

* Transportation is required to get and keep a job, however is lacking in most communities.
* Agencies lack clear and meaningful benchmarks to identify and track outcomes related to Employment First.
* Agencies use of minimum compliance to law and program requirements inhibits the effectiveness of services.

Examples of Strategies include:

* Work with policymakers to prioritize public transportation.
* Determine key indicators and share with agencies for best implementation.
* Establish and share expectations for best practices that support Employment First

**Goal 4:** Kansas has effective, meaningful and productive collaborations among stakeholder groups and between these stakeholders and state government to support the Employment First policy and competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities.

Examples of Barriers include:

* Stakeholder groups are inconsistently working together in a strategic manner for the purpose of implementing Employment First.
* Not all necessary constituency stakeholders are effectively engaged with state agencies regarding Employment First.

Examples of Strategies include:

* Utilize workgroups to discuss meaningful topics, vet important Employment First issues, and create engagement opportunities.
* Create mechanisms for ongoing customer input and collaboration to the relevant Employment First agencies.

*Data Sharing (Key Requirement)*

**Goal 5:** Kansas has an effective method for collecting and publishing outcomes data involving competitive and integrated employment for people with disabilities. This method tracks a variety of data, including but not limited to competitive and integrated employment data. These data are used to engage stakeholders and inform strategy and policy decisions.

Examples of Barriers include:

* No viable method currently exists of consistently and systemically collecting, sharing, and tracking employment outcome data across systems and across relevant state agencies.

Examples of Strategies include:

* Evaluate current data management systems measuring employment within state agencies.
* Determine gaps that exist in the data systems that are needed to implement Employment First.
* Establish a consistent system for reporting outcomes related to Employment First.

**Appendix A: Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission**

**Results of Kansas Score Card – Assessment Completed 12/28/2011**

**(Updated with new language April, 2012)**

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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission  Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 1: Kansas has measurable annual performance goals and outcomes with clear and meaningful benchmarks that track a number of key indicators to prove full support of competitive and integrated employment and effective implementation of the employment first initiative, including outcomes and goals for the numbers and percentages of persons with disabilities in competitive and integrated employment. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: There are no performance goals and outcomes relating to this goal. 2: There are performance goals and outcomes, but they are too vague and are worded within overall outcomes, such as quality of life. 3: There are performance goals and outcomes, but they are insufficient and all are not measurable. 4: There are measurable goals and outcomes, but they are somewhat problematic (i.e., meeting the outcome does not necessarily mean an improvement in or increasing the rate of services in employment, as compared to segregated or non-work services.) 5: There are measurable outcomes with meaningful benchmarks. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 2: Each relevant state agency has a strong and effective policy detailing how it will implement the Employment First law. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: No relevant state agencies have adopted an Employment First policy detailing how they will implement Employment First in all programs, supports and services, nor is one being considered. 2: Relevant state agencies are considering Employment First policies, but there is not a formal group working on it. 3: Relevant state agencies are actively working on an Employment First policy; or agencies have a policy but it is flawed, incomplete in its implementation details or it is not clear.  4: Relevant state agencies have an Employment First policy, but it could be worded stronger so that Employment First is more meaningful in influencing practice. 5: ALL relevant state agencies have a strong Employment First policy along with the details of how it will implement the policy in its programs, supports and services.. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission  Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 3: Kansas has an effective method for collecting and publishing outcomes data involving competitive and integrated employment for people with disabilities. This method tracks a variety of data, including but not limited to competitive and integrated employment data. This data is used to engage stakeholders and inform strategy and policy decisions. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: There is no comprehensive method for collecting and publishing data. 2: Partial data is sometimes collected. 3: Partial data is sometimes effectively collected, summarized & published. 4: Data is collected, published and effectively summarized but not a part of ongoing discussion and is not integrated into strategy discussions. 5: A comprehensive data system is in place both within and across state agencies. Information on employment, percentages and outcomes are routinely collected, analyzed, reported, and discussed. It is central to informing and impacting strategy and policy decisions. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission  Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 4: Kansas relevant state agencies successfully execute specific strategies to fully implement the employment first law and to ensure competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities is fully supported in their programs, policies, procedures and funding. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: There are no meaningful, specific strategies regarding employment first and competitive and integrated employment.  2: There are some programmatic/regional strategies in place and being discussed with some stakeholders.  3: A core group of stakeholders are discussing several programmatic/regional and agency-wide strategies in a more comprehensive manner. Some strategies are implemented.  4: All stakeholders are invited and a sizeable number meaningfully participate in developing programmatic/regional and agency-wide strategies. A robust discussion is occurring, some strategies are implemented, but all strategies have not been implemented.  5: Effective strategies have been both developed and fully implemented and they are adjusted at least yearly with further stakeholder involvement. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 5: Kansas has effective, meaningful and productive collaborations among stakeholder groups and between these stakeholders and state government to support the Employment First policy and competitive and integrated employment of people with disabilities. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: There are few, if any, relationships among stakeholders and between stakeholders and state government. 2: Relationships are beginning to form and some collaboration efforts exist.  3: Relationships exist among all the major stakeholders, collaboration is occurring somewhat and ideas are being discussed. 4: Relationships and collaborations are somewhat effective and improving at state/regional/local levels among stakeholders. 5: Effective collaborations and relationships exist among state, regional, and provider agencies, advocacy organizations and employers to support integrated employment, including regular workgroup and statewide meetings involving stakeholders. These collaborations are effective towards supporting Employment First both among the stakeholders and between the stakeholders and state government. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission  Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 6: Relevant state agencies will enter into formal interagency agreements to successfully implement, track and support the Employment First policy and competitive and integrated employment... | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: There are no formal agreements. 2: Agreements are beginning to be discussed. 3: Some formal agreements exist and a broad outline of other agreements is emerging. 4: Several formal agreements exist and others are being developed and discussed. 5: Formal interagency agreements exist to better ensure effective implementation of the Employment First policy. Issues and problems areas to be addressed in these interagency agreements should be developed from the input of disability stakeholders. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 7: Kansas relevant state agencies aggressively pursue resources to support innovation in competitive/integrated employment services and to better advance and implement the Employment First initiative. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: There is no plan to pursue resources or investment in innovations. 2: State agencies are discussing the need for innovations among some stakeholders. 3: There is agreement among state agencies and stakeholders to pursue resources to encourage innovations, but no applications for resource support have been made. 4: Some innovations are being encouraged and supported by state agencies, and some applications for resource support have been made. 5: Several innovations have/are emerging. These innovations are documented and discussed for broad implementation among stakeholders and state agencies. Multiple applications for resource support have been made. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission  Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 8: Adequate resources are readily available to Kansas transition-age students and individuals waiting for services and their families to encourage them to choose competitive integrated employment over other options. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1: Few if any resources are available. 2: The need for transition resources and resources for individuals waiting for services is beginning to be discussed. 3: There is agreement to provide these resources. 4: Some additional resources are available statewide and more are emerging for these needs. 5: Resources are readily available to transition-age students and individuals waiting for services and their families to encourage them to choose competitive integrated employment over other service options. |
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| Kansas Employment First Oversight Commission  Report and Scorecard |  |  |
| Standard 9: Kansas has effective strategies for supporting Kansans with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency as direct part of supporting competitive and integrated employment. | **1 2 3 4 5** | 1. There are no strategies in place. 2. Stakeholders have been identified across public agencies and private sector and a work group has been established to identify these strategies. 3. An Action Plan has been developed that identifies these strategies along with collaborative activities for policy development, education and training, and capacity building. 4. Pilot activities are being implemented in selected parts of the state and promising practices are being identified, documented, and disseminated to relevant stakeholders statewide. 5. Statewide/Regional/ Local strategies are being implemented with public/private partnerships, policy changes are in process, and outcomes are being tracked at an individual and systems level with an annual review and refinement of statewide strategies. |
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