SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Grant Development - PPT Page 9

Best Practice: Have a program in mind before the grant opens. Have partners, internal champions identified and have up-line support and approvals.
Tempe: We had been trying to start a program for about two years prior to the grant availability. Various strategies we tried didn't work.
Reality: People were starting to lose interest, because what seemed to be the "easy" solutions, were not working. Be mentally prepared for that…

Internal Support – PPT Page 10

Best Practice: Identify ALL your champions, high and low. City Council Members, City Management, Supervisors, Commissioners, Staff who have family members with disabilities who "get it." Financial, HR, Human Services are all needed.
Tempe: For over two years, Tempe had explored different models including: working through a third-party vendor-we had no staff person to work with them; working with a WIOA program - their qualifications were too narrow- out of school / under age 23 and qualified applicants with neurodiversity were generally referred to Vocational Rehabilitation as the WIOA program was not designed to provide needed supports.
Reality: It takes more time than you realize to develop the internal support. You need the basic structure in place BEFORE the funding opportunity arises**.**

Grant Writer and the Team – PPT Page 11

Best Practice: Be sure the grant writer and team knows the organization and the DETAILS of how HR is managed in the organization. There are centralized HR models and decentralized HR models. Get information in writing so all is clear. "Support" can mean one thing to the giver and another to the receiver. Early in the process people forget what was said. Also, support can be verbally given, thinking that the details can be worked out when and if you get the grant.
Tempe: Tempe has a centralized/decentralized system – Full time positions are centralized and part time positions are decentralized, and the departments manage the part-time funding and positions.
Reality: I worked with the departments. Yet HR had a dual system unknown to me, and the team thought everyone knew this. I only knew of the FT centralized function. I did not know of the Centralized FT hiring/ Decentralized PT hiring. That meant that funding for PT positions is controlled by the departments not HR. So, the strategy had to change in mid-stream after we received the grant to find departments with PT funds who were our champions.

Protect Your Seed from Opposing Forces – PPT Page 12

Best Practice: Actions must be approved up the chain, through council, down the chain to department heads, supervisors & staff. Opposing forces are strong. Be prepared to protect & defend your ideas using council priorities, data, change agents – build in some tolerance. Prepare DEEP.
Tempe was fertile ground because of all the work previously completed. Ground had been loosening up for two years. If you don't have a fertile culture for planting, you have to develop it, build it with training and policy change.
Reality: Be prepared for the opposing forces. stigma, misinformation, misperception, no exposure. "Why would you hire a person with a disability? Isn't that taking away a job from someone who can really do it? (Yes, that was an employee's perception., which was corrected quickly – but that how some people think, and you have to be on guard.) You must protect your idea and seed.

Change Strategies if it Strengthens the Effort - PPT Page 13

Best Practice: Keep strengthening the efforts directly and indirectly with exposure, training, complementary strategies, finding other ways to do things, using other people's voices. When systems aren't ready, strengthen them where they are and adjust. This all takes time!
Tempe: We changed the initial practice of identifying the skills sets and then looking for positions that fit the applicant, this is called "discover your genius". We consider that, but we also look at the positions and recruit the traditional way: here's a position, do you have anyone who qualifies.
Reality. The systems and supervisors aren't yet adapted to the "discover your genius" process within the time frame that part-time positions are open to hire (usually two weeks). So, we are supporting the process and constraints, while finding strategies to move forward. We will get to the point that we began with; but need to identify dedicated funding for positions we can control to facilitate the "Discover your Genius" process; which we hope to do in year two, if awarded.

People, Relationships and Outcomes – PPT Page 14

Best Practice: If a partner, strategy, or practice is not working out, prune and graft on another, nicely of course. Know that pruning must be done at the right time, not too early or too late. Grafting in different strategies and partners helps with acceptance.
Tempe: We were having trouble getting a relationship completed to commit to contract, so we needed to end the relationship in order to pursue another option. The grafted option is much better positioned to provide the results desired.
Reality: When we had a 6-month delay in getting a critical function for training under contract, we had to prune the opportunity, cancel the effort, and graft in another partner who could be fruitful. Now, we work with University of Arizona's Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, or "UA/Sonoran UCEDD."

Partnerships, policies and practices – PPT Page 15

Best Practice: Graft in partnerships & policies with agencies who have characteristics you need.
Tempe: We initially started with partners to refer applicants to us. Some are active. We have added new partners to bring us more applicants and provide supports.
Experience: We are working through some barriers related to processes and information sharing with some agencies. Some of it pertains to legalities in their organizations and word choices. We are in the process of simplifying our application and processes for better collaboration. Changing the application will make things easier for everyone.

Funding and Alternatives – PPT Page 16

Best Practice: Be sure what others understand is verified repeatedly, and it is the same as what you mean. Don't assume it won't change. When there are changes, be willing to find alternatives. There's no time for blame or recriminations, because it didn't rain, we have seed in the ground now, and it needs water.

Tempe: When we realized that the funding for the six part time positions were not controlled by HR, as we initially thought, but by individual departments. We needed to quickly determine who in each department could be approached to see if we could use their funds (part time vacant positions) for our purposes.

Experience: When HR said they would support the program with positions, we thought it was through them. They meant it would be coming from the departments, using their funds, their positions. So, we developed an alternative to address this. We issued a short survey to find out where our champions who wanted to supervise BEST employees were and then cross referenced with the finance reports to see if their department had wage funds. We called them all, and while some backed out, "O you want to use our wage funds… no, we thought you had some." We found some good resources who were willing! We just needed 6 positions. But that led to another strategy as well. Why limit the program to Part Time, there may be full time positions desired by the applicants as well, who are we to limit it!

Collaboration and Coordination – PPT Page 17

Best Practice: Be sensitive in collaboration and coordination. It takes more time than you want it to! Pushing too hot and hard or at the wrong time can backfire or cause people to burn out. Strong coordinators need to know when to "shine" less and let everyone catch up.

Tempe: We wrote a very ambitious grant in terms of tasks and timeline. It seemed there were delays at every turn. It was crucial that we meet deadlines, but also crucial that we understand the constraints everyone was under with their existing work and not push so hard and hot that they withdraw.

Experience: The coordination was managed through a Gannt chart (Smartsheet) – so we knew each planned task, when it needed to be completed, by whom, and when. A lot of thought went into it to be sure all the collaborations needed would know what to do. But right off the bat, we started off late as our own Council approval process was delayed when meetings were cancelled. Other delays required shifting priorities and the sun shone hot! We had to back off some in the expectations as it was too much!

Challenges make the processes strong – PPT Page 18

Best Practice: There will be challenges, otherwise known as crap. Don't give up, find the solutions, explore other ways to do things. Have a sounding board to help push the process to success. Don't minimize the resistance, address it.

Tempe: Neurodiversity is diversity. But not everyone understands that. Training helps change the minds of people who believe the lies of stigma and the medical model limitations. And there are people who are afraid of discriminating because they have no knowledge, or they haven't experienced people with disabilities in the workplace.

Experience: As we were looking for people who would be good supervisors, we experienced the negativity of some who didn't understand the value of hiring people with disabilities. It is hard to stay strong in the face of resistance, stay strong anyway. You have to be willing to address it, and advocate for change.

Adversity Strengthens and Removes Weaknesses- PPT Page 19

Best Practice: The team must be resilient enough to work through continuing difficulty, persevering over time. If it was easy it would have been done already.
Tempe: Changing Tempe's cultural and linguistic competencies to prioritize competitive integrated employment (CIE) and supports for employees with neurodiversities, requires tenacity.
Experience: We planned to request hiring policy changes, but the opportunity wasn't available initially. We asked to be included in any upcoming change opportunities. Thereafter, an opportunity came about due to a change in other areas for us to address prioritizing hiring people with disabilities. We expected some opposition, a storm of sorts because changing hiring policies is complex. In Tempe, there are numerous stake holders including unions and all have to accept the changes. The roots were deep already of political support from the City Manager and City Council., community support from the Mayor's Commission on Disability Concerns, the law department, advocating agencies, and more. Yet HR recommended more. More "wind" to push the change. We pursued an Employment First City designation to generate additional "wind," and it was sufficient to support the changes.

Identify Indirect Supports – PPT Page 20

Best practice: Watch for opportunities to provide indirect supports.
Tempe: There are many areas that could be improved that would support inclusion and reduce poverty for people with Neurodiversity. Some were indirectly related to Tempe's BEST Program, which include training on ADA Title I and II, adding Disability Inclusion Metrics that cover employment and independent living classes.
Experience: Tempe was accepted as an Employment First City to indirectly support HR efforts to obtain support to change the hiring policy. We engaged the Commission on Disability Concerns to forward the recommendation to City Council for approval via a Mayor's proclamation with support from the Arizona Employment First organization. Additionally, Tempe is working to create more Easy Reading , Easy English or Plain English documents in the city These bring awareness and accommodations for everyone.

Buy-in – PPT Page 21

Best practice: The roots of the program model are support and buy-in from the top down. Without top-down support, the program cannot be sustained, and in-kind/cash match amounts are hard to secure.
Tempe: When the grant funding became available, it was the City Manager who recommended that we apply for it. With City Manager endorsement, departments willingly worked together to provide supportive information that was needed.
Experience: City Manager support came because community members and advocates had previously communicated with Council on the need for people with disabilities to have opportunities to work. We had tried for two years to make it happen with various external programs. Additionally, City Manager buy-in facilitated indirect support to ensure the roots were protected in the funding stream, as a priority.

Time Management – PPT Page 22

Best Practice: Approach the opportunity with a few time-sustainable models. Allow triple the time you think you will need. Federal grants use an October to September funding year. Starting preparations in October means there will be delays or slowdowns due to traditional holidays. Use a Gannt Chart or similar program to facilitate timelines, priorities, and tasks.

Tempe: Research was completed on various models of employment. Three models were then detailed out for potential to scale and sustainability. Two were discarded before selecting a strengths-based "brokerage" model. The model was reviewed with internal staff and managers, and external partners. A brokerage model is having one person who serves as the conduit for Tempe's BEST Program. It requires the ability to develop relationships, trouble shoot, communicate, and persevere.

Experience: Grant management from seed to soil to fruition, requires maturity, experience, knowing when to say: O that won't work here and let's keep going forward. Each organization is different. An excellent program that worked in Phoenix (Clear Path Job Training Program) 15 years ago, won't work in Tempe. There is a lot of hurry up and wait, be prepared for that.

On-boarding - PPT Page 23

Best Practice: Don't rely on only external service providers paid by another party in critical path areas. You need other sources, internal and external, should there be delays in processes with agencies that provide contractual supports. Supports should be available from Day 1.

Tempe: On-boarding a new employee is a critical point and we need to know that any service accommodation, such as job coaching, is available starting day-1. We did not have a procured job coach services, upon reviewing this high priority need, we decided to procure services of a direct job coaching agency, should there be any gaps.

Experience: We are working with procurement office to determine if we need to go through the process to secure the service or whether we can piggyback off of a state contract.

Success Reproduces Success – PPT Page 24

Best Practice: There is no predictor of future success than current success.

Tempe: We currently have 10 BEST applicants waiting for the right position to become available. Three will be interviewing for one position, Box Office Cashier at the Tempe Center for the Arts in the next couple weeks. We are also recruiting for full time positions. There will be additional positions opening up as we have full time apprenticeship positions in fleet management and solid waste public works that has agreed to consider our applicants first.

Experience: Fast forward...The applicants who are hired, and continue in the positions, and promote. Have a strong opportunity to increase their independence, networking, better quality of life, and also show others Competitive Integrated Employment works.