

## NEVADA -- 2001 Community PASS Grant

### **Identified Problems with the States' Long-Term Care System**

- Inability to recruit and retain personal assistants due to low pay and lack of benefits. Benefits, when provided, are only available to those working 40 hours or more per week.
- Waiting lists for Personal Assistant Services (PAS).
- PAS programs do not adequately serve children, and adults with severe behavioral issues.
- There is no process for comparing client data across the three Nevada PAS programs.
- Inadequate infrastructure for direct pay consumers to employ and manage their own assistants while assuring payment of taxes, benefits, and health coverage, and training for assistants.

### **Perceived Strengths**

- In 2001, Nevada enacted a law mandating that all individuals requiring assistance with bathing, toileting and eating be identified and that planning for their needs must be initiated. The law also established a consumer majority Personal Assistance Council to guide the state's efforts in providing access, consumer choice and control, training and systems change related to PAS.
- Personal assistance services are provided by three state programs: through the Medicaid State Plan, the Division of Aging's Community Home Initiative Program for seniors (an HCBS waiver program), and the State Office of Community Based Services (OCBS).
- The HCBS waiver program uses higher income eligibility criteria, allowing more people to receive PAS services. The state revenue funded program, which has a sliding fee scale, is available to persons with disabilities of all incomes who are capable of directing their own care.
- The combined efforts of consumers, Medicaid, OCBS, and Aging Services resulted in legislative appropriations to raise the wages of assistants to \$9.50 an hour.
- There is some type of consumer control model in each of the state's PAS programs

### **Primary Focus of Grant Activities**

- Increase the availability of personal assistance services through multiple activities, including those focused on increasing the effective recruitment and retention of PAS workers.
- Increase options for consumer direction of PAS, including an option for a budget and service responsibility model.

- Demonstrate and document the efficacy of PAS services that provide access to available assistive technology and other independent living services.
- Demonstrate and document the efficacy of training and employing adults with mental retardation as personal assistants through a supported employment prototype.

### **Goals, Objectives, and Activities**

**Overall Goal.** To ensure that at least minimal essential personal assistance services are available to all residents of the state with severe disabilities, and to provide them with meaningful choices and the maximum feasible amount of control over their personal assistance services.

**Goal.** Create a statewide network of cross-population personal assistance services (PAS) that will assure access to PAS regardless of age, ethnicity, income, disability, or geographic location.

#### ***Objectives/Activities***

- Examine eligibility and service provision criteria to determine what modifications are needed to assure inclusion of currently underserved populations, i.e., people with mental illness and pervasive developmental disorders, children, rural areas, and ethnic minorities.
- Identify existing unmet need for specialized services (e.g., among children), and determine needed specialization and/or modification in services to meet the need.
- Survey available training resources for use in filling gaps in identified specializations and develop and evaluate collaborative strategies to implement appropriate training modules.
- Identify incentives or service innovations that can increase access to PAS in rural areas and develop planning for implementation of those models.
- Develop referral agreements needed to insure access to PAS for persons not meeting Medicaid eligibility standards and those on waiting lists for HCBS waiver services.
- Develop and implement a central database to ensure that persons who need PAS are served as soon as possible by the most appropriate program, and that consumers are not double counted in planning for service resource allocation.

**Goal.** Design, implement, and evaluate facilitating practices to assure that consumers are fully informed and able to select and direct their own services and care from a variety of models, including a budget and service responsibility model.

#### ***Objectives/Activities***

- Identify and address existing barriers to the receipt of all types of PAS service models, including program rules and regulations which may hinder full consumer participation in service planning, budgeting, choice, and control.
- Identify facilitating practices and collaborations that will lessen liability, lower workers' compensation costs and insure health care coverage for assistants.
- Identify methodology for establishing providers rates that are consistent across programs, and that are sufficient to attract reliable high quality providers.

- Design and implement an ongoing, consistently applied, annual evaluation process that records recipient's experience, perceptions, and suggestions for improvement of PAS.
- Develop standards for the provision of PAS, including, to the extent authorized by state and federal law, the provision of services by unlicensed personnel.
- Design and implement consumer-approved, cross program training for consumers, assistants, and providers regarding consumer direction and independent living.
- Design and implement a consensus set of criteria for assessing satisfaction with PAS, including procedures for handling complaints and appealing adverse actions (e.g., denial, reduction, or termination of services).
- Develop reliable methodology to assure the availability of qualified backup, relief and emergency PAS, and a procedure for obtaining these services.
- Develop an interactive web site for consumers offering an educational component, advocacy alerts, answers to frequently asked questions, service and assistive technology information, consumer feedback, and links to national PAS sites.
- Establish a provider registry detailing the policies, wage scales, benefits and training packages of available providers.

**Goal.** Demonstrate and document the efficacy of PAS services that provide access to available assistive technology and other independent living services as an integral part of service planning.

***Objective/Activities:***

- Develop and disseminate a consumer friendly orientation packet for all PAS and independent living recipients describing the philosophy, principals and services of independent living and the availability and benefits of assistive technology (AT), listing options for access.
- Provide quarterly demonstrations of available technology to PAS recipients at centralized locations throughout the State.
- Assess PAS recipients for their independent living and assistive technology needs during initial intake and at annual consumer evaluations.
- Develop a statewide cadre of volunteer sponsors through the Centers for Independent Living to assist consumers in acquiring independent living services, advocacy, and technology.

**Goal.** Demonstrate and document the efficacy of training and employing adults with mental retardation as personal assistants through a supported employment prototype.

***Objectives/Activities***

- Survey people with MR for interest and ability in providing PAS.
- Implement and evaluate a person-centered supported employment model program.
- Research resources for ongoing supports for people with MR in PAS.

**Key Activities and Products**

- Training to increase knowledge of consumer-directed service models among consumers, personal assistants, and providers.

- Training to address specialized PAS needs.
- Implementation of mechanisms to increase access to available assistive technology.
- The development, implementation, and evaluation of preferred consumer-directed service models, including a budget and service responsibility model.
- Implementation and evaluation of a supported employment program for high functioning persons with MR to provide PAS services.

### **Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Planning Activities**

- Consumers and consumer-representatives were involved in setting the goals, objectives, and activities of the grant proposal. Their input was obtained through focus groups, individual review, and telephone contact.
- Consumers of PAS through the OCBS program were given opportunities to comment on proposal goals and objectives.

### **Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Implementation Activities**

- The Nevada PAS Council (also called the Consumer-Directed PAS Advisory Council), which is mandated by law to have a 51 percent majority of persons with disabilities, will guide all project activities. The Council will form four subcommittees to assist in the achievement of project goals and to assure consumer involvement in all phases of the project.
  - C *The Consumer Involvement Subcommittee* is responsible for developing strategies and structures for assuring consistent consumer involvement in systems and policy development and in developing and evaluating PAS delivery options, training and services. It will also assure ongoing feedback to consumers regarding all activities undertaken through this grant. Additionally, this subcommittee will, in conjunction with the State representatives and CIL interviewers, design, evaluate and report the outcomes of the consumer and assistant surveys to be carried out by the project.
  - C *The Policy and Regulatory Oversight Committee* will recommend and coordinate interdisciplinary action to remove and/or ameliorate barriers to consumer preferred PAS models caused by policy, regulation, operational procedure, impeding practices and deficiencies in the training provided to agency and/or provider personnel.
  - C *The Facilitating Practices Subcommittee* will be responsible for reviewing and assessing facilitating policies and practices.
  - C *The Universal Access Subcommittee* will identify systemic barriers to universal access to PAS, including those caused by program eligibility criteria/income guidelines; placement on waitlist for waiver programs; temporariness of disability, age, disabling condition or geographic location.

**C** Providers, people with disabilities who receive PAS, individuals from the Nevada Commission on Aging and Seniors with Disabilities, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Centers for Independent Living will be actively involved (1) in all deliberations of the State PAS Council addressing project goals; (2) in soliciting additional consumer input in evaluation of project milestones and outcomes; (3) in soliciting PAS recipient feedback; (4) in discussions with policy makers and State officials; and (5) in advancing legislative agendas stemming from project activities.

### **Public Partners**

- State Aging Services.
- State Medicaid Program.
- State Office of Community Based Services.
- State Bureau of Family Services.
- University of Nevada, Department of Special Education.
- Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

### **Private Partners and Subcontractors**

- Family Health Services and community service agencies.
- The Nevada Community Enrichment Program (NCEP).
- The Washoe Association of Retarded Citizens and Opportunity Village.
- Centers for Independent Living.
- The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).
- The Nevada Commission on Aging and Seniors with Disabilities.
- State Independent Living Council.
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Nevada Forum on Disability.
- Nevada Alliance for the Mentally Ill.
- Parents Encouraging Parents.
- AARP.
- Sanford Center on Aging.
- ARCs.

### **Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in the Planning Phase**

- Many private organizations that represent persons with disabilities participated in the proposal development process by providing input about project goals and activities through focus groups, individual review, and telephone contacts.
- All of the state programs that provide PAS services were involved in the development of the grant proposal. The lead agency for the project, OCBS, wrote the grant and gave sections of the grant to partners for review. Partners with expertise in specific areas contributed to the writing of the grant. Each draft was reviewed and edited collectively.

### **Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in Implementation**

- Public programs that provide PAS services and private organizations, such as Centers for Independent Living, will be involved in grant activities through their representation on the PAS Advisory Council, through a range of project administration activities, and in an oversight role.
- The Nevada Community Enrichment Program is a PAS provider agency that will implement several activities related to independent living and assistive technology.
- The Washoe Association of Retarded Citizens and Opportunity Village will implement grant activities related to supported PAS employment for persons with MR.
- The Nevada Centers for Independent Living will conduct project surveys.
- The University of Nevada at Las Vegas will coordinate activities of the overall projects as well as implementing several activities, including those related to training.

### **Oversight/Advisory Committee**

All project activities will be guided by the Nevada PAS Council.

### **Formative Learning and Evaluation Activities**

- The three PAS integration specialists will track and report progress and activities of their respective goals to the lead project staff person in each of their agencies. These reports will then be shared with the Principle Investigator who will include them in a quarterly review of PAS Council, stakeholder and subcommittee activities, and deliberations.
- The lead staff persons or their designees in each of the grants major areas will report quarterly on their activities and progress. Their reports will include the input, suggestions, complaints, and activities of consumers related to project. .
- The PAS Council will hold quarterly public meetings, which will include a review of quarterly reports. The Council has legislative authority to guide the state in designing, modifying and implementing personal assistance services and programs.

### **Evidence of Enduring Change/Sustainability**

- Because a primary aim of the grant is to implement state mandates related to PAS, the grant activities are designed to produce changes and products that will endure after the grant period ends.
- By the end of the grant period, an Executive Budget will be developed to add any needed components to the PAS system, and a legislative agenda will prepared for submission to the 2005 Legislative Session.

### **Geographic Focus**

Statewide.

