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## MISSION POSSIBLE

by Sean Lore

As many have heard, there are some new things happening that are affecting agencies like the Scott Key Center all around the state. These include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Home & Community Based Services Final Rule, and Employment First.

In 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (or WIOA for short). **WIOA** is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.

Also in 2014 the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released the HCBS Final Rule. The purpose of this regulation is to ensure that individuals receive Medicaid HCBS in settings that are integrated in and support full access to the greater community.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) began aligning services with the new legislation adopted the Employment First initiative, and became an Employment First state. Employment First is a concept to facilitate the full inclusion of people with the most significant disabilities in the workplace and community. Under the Employment First approach, community-based, integrated employment is the first option for employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities.

The Scott Key Center is committed to making the necessary adjustments to how supports are provided to meet the changes in legislation from the Federal and State governments and DDA.

In 2016, SKC went through a strategic planning process that involved people receiving services, families, staff, and board of directors. The strategic plan focused on community based activities, discovery process, job readiness training, and updating policies to align community based supports. SKC has also established 2 different pilots, and is doing a third pilot to look at the various ways to provide supports in a different organizational model.

The adjustment from providing center based services to community based services seems unfathomable. However with planning, the proper resources, and system changes throughout the DDA supports system, this too is obtainable. We must take that leap out of our comfort zone, do what is right, and support each person to the level that they need to be successful people in our community.

“We cannot change the cards we are dealt, we can only change how we play the hand”

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## NEW FACES

The Scott Key Center is excited to announce we have added several new people to our staff.

Juli Sullivan, Vocational Training Specialist

Matthew Winn, Transportation Specialist

Katelyn Casperson, Job Development Specialist

Morghan Hammond, Vocational Training Specialist

Ebony Glover, Part-time Vocational Training Specialist

Bryan Summerwell, Part-time Vocational Training Specialist



# CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

Customized Employment (CE) was developed as a multi-strategy approach to match the discrete skills and unique contributions of a job seeker with a significant disability to an employer who has an immediate need for those skills and contributions. The strategies of CE have been used with job seekers with disabilities and other significant barriers to employment, offering them the chance to work in areas of interest to them, in environments conducive to their individual needs for success, at or above the minimum wage, and with opportunities for advancement. CE includes strategies such as job carving, self-employment, job restructuring, and negotiated job descriptions crafted to highlight a job seeker's contributions and meet the specific needs of an employer.

A definition of Customized Employment is now included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and is defined as: "Competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability, designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer, and carried out through flexible strategies..." (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, H.R. 803, 113 Congress, 2009, p. 210)

## DISCOVERY

Discovery is the critical first step in the Customized Employment process; it guides job seekers through a process of finding out who they are, what they want to do, and what they have to offer. Think of Discovery as an alternate assessment; one that collects information about the job seeker's interests, skills, environmental preferences, employment goals, and other topics related to the job seeker's employment search, rather than outlining their deficits. It is a strength based, individualized, qualitative assessment strategy that avoids some of the more comparative strategies that often exclude job seekers with significant disabilities and other barriers from generic workforce programs or the conventional job application process. The process opens up possibilities for further exploration by the job seeker rather than just trying to "fit" into a fixed job description. Discovery is grounded in a belief that assisting job seekers to develop a full understanding of who they are is a critical step in successfully securing employment that is rewarding and sustainable because it creates a good fit for both the job seeker and the business that hires the job seeker.

## SUCCESS STARTS WITH THE FIRST STEP

by **Shawn Dennison & Sean Lore**

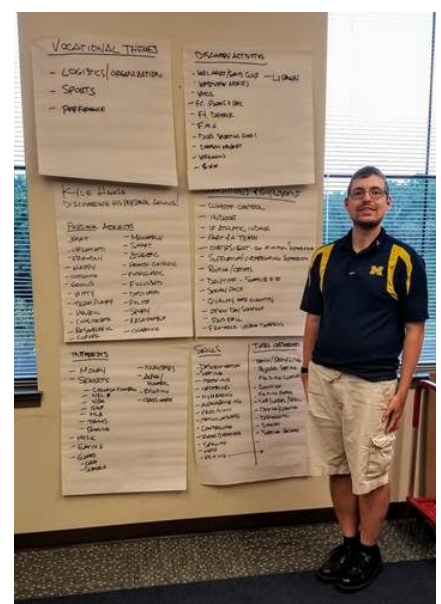
Shawn Dennison, Job Development Specialist, recently started working with a gentleman with the Discovery process. His name is Kyle Hawse and has been supported by the Scott Key Center for 7 years.

A Community Action Team (CAT) meeting was held one evening in August at the Urbana Library. The team, assembled by Kyle, was tasked to walk through the process of developing Vocational Themes. The process examines Personal Attributes, Conditions for Employment, Interests, Skills, and Tasks Observed which, ultimately, create Kyle's Vocational Themes. The Vocational Themes will then be used to develop a list of 10-20 business that we will contact to establish Discovery Activities – job shadows, job trials, internships, etc.



Community Action Team (CAT)

Kyle's CAT meeting represents one of the most beneficial elements of the Discovery process. It brings the power of the team – the insights, experiences, observations – and focuses this information to find the ideal employment for Kyle. It is, however, only one of the first steps in the employment process. There is much more ahead for Kyle and all of us at SKC. It's going to be challenging, but we're up to the task.



Kyle Hawse