



## A Culture of Coordinated Support for Missouri

### **The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Position:**

Missouri agencies supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities must collaborate and coordinate their efforts. If agencies work with the people they support to develop shared plans, goals, and responsibilities, they will provide more effective, efficient, and person-centered services and empower people to live full, productive, and independent lives.

### **The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Reasons:**

Far too often, agencies and organizations supporting people with disabilities operate in “silos” – they focus only on what they provide and are unaware of what others do.<sup>1</sup> Such a “fragmented system of services within high schools and adult services”<sup>2</sup> can result in people receiving poor, duplicative, or contradictory support, wasting agency time, effort, and funds.<sup>3</sup> Worse, when people with disabilities receive poor support resulting in poor life outcomes, it contributes to society’s ongoing and incorrect view that they are unable to be full and productive members of their communities.<sup>4</sup>

Missouri should implement the Culture of Coordinated Support (CCS) model.<sup>5</sup> In CCS, people and agencies work together to develop and implement shared plans, goals, and responsibilities that build upon each other’s strengths and resources. Thus, when multiple agencies are supporting a person, they will develop joint goals with well-defined, coordinated responsibilities. As a result, the person’s plans and supports will be consistent and complementary rather than “fragmented,” contradictory, or counterproductive.

For example, Special Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Medicaid provider agencies are all required to provide supports addressing education, employment, and independent living.<sup>6</sup> In a “silo system,” when those agencies support a person, each will have its own plan with its own educational, employment, and independent living goals and supports. As a result, scarce state resources are spent on duplicative, possibly contradictory, efforts. In CCS, the agencies work with the person to develop a joint vision of success with shared goals based upon the person’s abilities, needs, and preferences. Then, the agencies work with the person to divide the responsibility to provide supports based upon each agency’s strengths and specialties. Consequently, supports will be provided by the agency best suited to do so - schools will focus on education, Vocational Rehabilitation agencies on employment, and Medicaid providers on independent living – resulting in the person receiving more person-centered, targeted, effective, and efficient support. In addition, CCS gives agencies new opportunities and avenues to receive and provide advice, information, and resources across programs and settings.

In sum, the CCS model will help Missouri agencies provide appropriate support in a way that maximizes state funds. In addition, research has shown that the interagency collaboration inherent to CCS enhances “program development and service delivery”<sup>7</sup> and results in better life outcomes for people with disabilities.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Recommendations:**

- When multiple Missouri agencies support a person with disabilities, they should communicate, collaborate, and coordinate their efforts to ensure that the person’s supports are consistent, effective, and efficient. The agencies should work with the person to ensure that his or her goals are consistent across programs and that their plans and supports build upon and complement each other, rather than duplicating effort or contradicting each other.
- Agencies supporting people with disabilities should develop lines of communication, joint training, and educational material to increase staff knowledge and encourage cross-agency collaboration and support.
- Agencies that are required by law to collaborate, like Special Education systems and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies,<sup>9</sup> should develop joint policies and procedures to ensure that their work is effective, efficient, and based upon each person’s abilities, needs, and preferences.
- Missouri should convene a Culture of Coordinated Support Task Force of agencies supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Task Force should develop interagency agreements, policies, practices, and forms designed to increase communication, collaboration, and coordination of effort.
- Missouri should communicate with and learn from states and agencies that have implemented support systems for people with disabilities based on the Culture of Coordinated Support model.<sup>10</sup>

---

## References

1. e.g., Gustin, J. & Martinis, J. (2016). Change the Culture, Change the World: Increasing Independence by Creating a Culture of Coordinated Support. *Apostrophe Magazine*. Available at: [www.apostrophemagazine.com](http://www.apostrophemagazine.com)
2. Katsiyannis, A., deFur, S., & Conderman, G. (1998). Transition services: Systems Change for Youth with Disabilities? *Journal of Special Education*, 32(1), 55-61.
3. e.g., Katsiyannis, deFur, & Conderman, *supra* note 2; Gustin & Martinis, *supra* note 1.
4. e.g., Blanck, P. & Martinis, J. (2015). The Right to Make Choices: The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making. *Inclusion*, 3(1), 24-33.
5. e.g., Martinis, J. & Gustin, J. (2017). Supported Decision-Making as an Alternative to Overboard and Undue Guardianship. *The Advocate*, 60(6), 41-46.; Gustin & Martinis, *supra* note 1.
6. See, 20 USC 1401(34) (required Special Education Transition supports); 34 C.F.R. 361.48 (required Vocational Rehabilitation supports); [www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-topics/long-term-services-and-supports/home-and-community-based-services/downloads/1915c-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-topics/long-term-services-and-supports/home-and-community-based-services/downloads/1915c-fact-sheet.pdf) (required Person Centered Planning supports)
7. Kohler, P., & Field, S. (2003). Transition-focused Education: Foundation for the Future. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37(3), 174.
8. e.g., Michaels, C. A., & Ferrara, D. L. (2006). Promoting Post-School Success for all: The Role of Collaboration in Person-Centered Transition Planning. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 16(4), 287-313; Malloy, J. M. (2013). The RENEW model: Supporting Transition-Age Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Challenges. *Emotional & Behavioral Disorders in Youth*, 13, 38-48.
9. See, 20 USC 1401(34) (Special Education Transition supports must be "coordinated" and include vocational education and services); 34 C.F.R. § 361.22 (Vocational Rehabilitation agencies must coordinate with schools).
10. States that have implemented Culture of Coordinated Support-based projects and systems include Kentucky (MyChoice Kentucky project led by state University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities); Vermont (Statewide Task Force headed by state Department on Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living); and Tennessee (Inter-Agency Roundtable led by state Developmental Disabilities Council).

This document was developed in partnership and with support from the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (PL 106-402) and Something Else Solutions, LLC.