

## **Employment Data System Overview ~ GSEP, Spring 2009**

The goal of New Hampshire's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant is to improve the community infrastructure to support improved employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. One aspect this is to improve the collection and understanding of employment data across the different disability service systems. Data is needed for quality assurance, policy and practice decisions but we do not have a means of collecting comprehensive, meaningful data to guide us in our decision-making. To accomplish this, the Project is developing an Employment Indicator Data System using the Social Strength database. Tobey Davies from Southern New Hampshire University is heading the project in conjunction with representatives from the Monadnock Center for Successful Transitions, LinkAbilities and the State Project team with members from the Bureau of Developmental Services, the Bureau of Behavioral Health, Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Education. Ray Giroux, CSNI and Keene State College provide additional support.

The Employment Indicator System will allow for the collection of data across Area Agencies, Community Mental Health Centers and Vocational Rehabilitation offices. Currently, each disability system collects data but it only provides a snapshot of the overall services provided to an individual. Individuals with disabilities often receive supports from more than one agency but until now there has not been a way to capture that data to better understand the types of supports and services that truly benefit individuals with disabilities in their search for employment or the supports that assist them in maintaining that employment. By developing this database, local agencies will be able to better monitor the employment services they provide and as a State, we will be able to analyze the supports and services using de-identified data.

Social Strength will provide a web based, HIPAA compliant, secure data system that will allow for community agencies to track and monitor employment services. Social Strength was chosen after a comprehensive search for its ease of use and security systems that ensure all data is kept confidential and secure. Agencies will only be able to view the information on the individuals they serve, but will have access to de-identified data from other systems to compare the supports and services they provide to other areas.

The Employment Indicator System is currently being developed and will be piloted in the Monadnock region, greater Nashua and two other areas of the State. The goal is to take the system Statewide within the course of the next two years.