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# PROMISING PRACTICES

*Innovation in*

*Human Services*

## **It takes a village to provide employment support**

### **Ohio organization coordinates with its local One-Stop Career Center to provide additional supports for persons with severe mental illness**

So often what you do is often who you are. Jobs are an important way to participate in society, to become independent, and to find self-worth and meaning. However, the reality is that the majority of individuals with disabilities are not working—for individuals with severe mental illness the unemployment rate is 85 to 90 percent.

This is a complex social problem without an easy fix. Debbie Dutton-Lambert, Chief Vocational Officer of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS), recognized the value of work in the recovery process for individuals with mental illness and the alarming trend toward revenue compression from all traditional funding sources for vocational rehabilitation. Given these realities, she hypothesized that using services from the Hamilton County One-Stop Career Center, Southwest Ohio Career Resource Center, would leverage the vocational services available to persons served by GCBHS and potentially provide better vocational

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Volume 2, Issue 6

August 2007

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#### **News From CARF**

#### **CARF 101 and 202 added to the fall lineup!**

Due to popular demand CARF ECS has scheduled an fall training in the beautiful Raleigh Durham, North Carolina.

**CARF 101, October 1–2:** Come and learn more about the CARF accreditation and survey processes,

outcomes.

This hypothesis was crafted into a research design with assistance from a consultant and presented to The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati for funding. The overall intent of this study was to establish a new best practice for psychiatric rehabilitation that leverages untapped resources and facilitates employment for individuals with severe mental illness.

There were challenges to the integration of Touchstone Employment Network (TEN), GCBHS's supported employment program, into the One-Stop, which was grappling with its own challenges of constant policy changes and staff turnover. Despite training through a Department of Labor Work Incentive Grant, many One-Stop staff members didn't yet have the experience to serve individuals with disabilities. Persons served were encouraged by TEN staff to utilize the One-Stop independently for such activities as job readiness workshops and computer use in the resource area; however, long waiting periods and lack of individualized attention discouraged independent use.

Even with these barriers, there were many factors to this collaboration that promoted employment, namely benefits counseling and financial planning. Benefits and entitlements counseling is an essential service for individuals who are returning to work, as many depend on Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits such as Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance to meet healthcare needs. The One-Stop provided this consultation service to individuals free of charge through the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati.

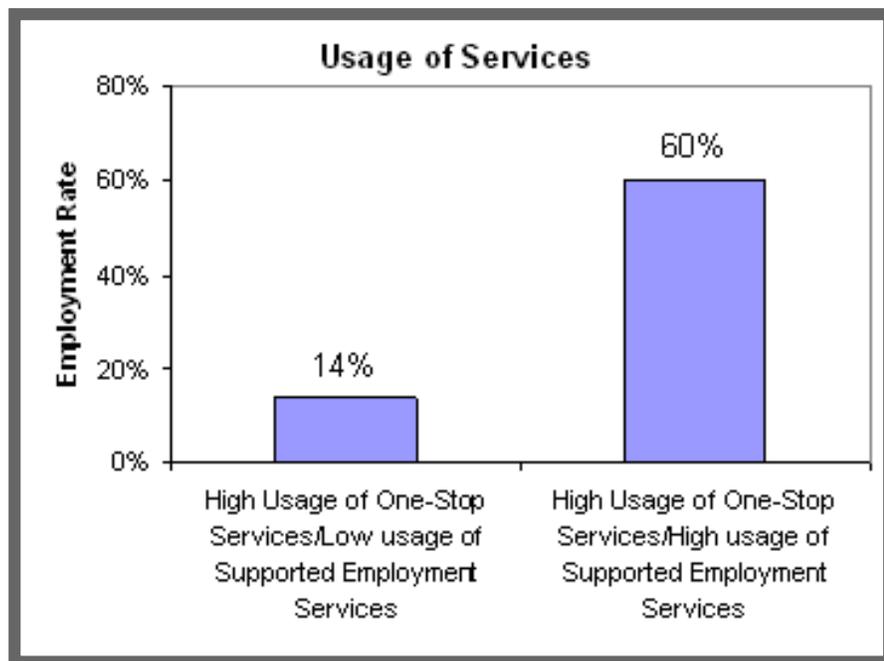
Furthermore, One-Stop staff members also helped many persons develop résumés. The One-Stop made accommodations, including job interview workshops scheduled in the afternoon to compensate for medication effects typically experienced in the early morning. TEN staff was trained to complete the Workforce Investment Act registration paperwork prior to escorting persons to the One-Stop, which helped to minimize anxiety and frustration while waiting in the busy center.

including a full review of the 2007 CARF standards. This comprehensive and engaging training session will highlight examples of organizational conformance to the standards as well as effective business management and service-delivery practices. This session is highly recommended for any first-time organizations preparing for the accreditation survey process or organizational contacts new to the accreditation process.

**CARF 202, October 3:** Serving as a “sequel” to the CARF 101 format, this advanced training is designed for accredited organizations preparing for re-survey or those organizations that have participated in the CARF 101 format and desire more information regarding preparing for an original survey. This intensive and dynamic training session provides “hands on” support in developing and implementing plans, policies and procedures needed to demonstrate organizational conformance to the standards.

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Overall, persons expressed positive feelings and enthusiasm about being part of a mainstreamed employment service. However, this study showed that a combination of a One-Stop and supported employment is the most effective way to provide employment services. It also helps individuals with severe mental illness navigate through the One-Stop system, providing maximum benefit.



Since the conclusion of this research study, the One-Stop is under new

[Educational Opportunities](#) section.

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### **Promising Practices issues now archived online!**

Do you remember a past article coming out that you'd like to forward on to a colleague? Did you just join Promising Practices and want to see issues we covered in the past? Well, now you can! Old issues of Promising Practices are now available online. Visit archived issues at [www.carf.org/newsletter](http://www.carf.org/newsletter) and follow links to past issues. Past issues are categorized by topic so you can easily find articles of interest.

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### **Putting Out the Good Word: Some Information about the Promising Practices Series**

We are offering a series of short articles on a variety of promising practices that CARF surveyors have observed during surveys from 2004 to the present. There is no particular order that we will follow in presenting this series of short reports. The purpose is not to rate one organization over another, but to encourage U.S. and Canadian community providers to dialogue

management, and despite hopes for future partnerships, there hasn't yet been the same level of cooperation. Regardless, the One-Stop still offers a wealth of resources to a financially strapped public mental health system, so Dutton-Lambert shifted her focus to a more systemic approach statewide. To promote the use of One-Stops by behavioral health providers, she collaborated with her peers across the state of Ohio to form an alliance of providers called the Employment Leadership Alliance (ELA) of Ohio to serve as a clearinghouse to connect trained mental health and vocational rehabilitation services practitioners with those seeking information. The ELA seeks to educate funding sources, providers, persons with mental illness, and the community at large about the value of employment as integral to recovery. The ELA has been very successful in educating Ohio's mental health system on how to access One-Stops for employment needs and resources as well as how to participate on the local workforce boards to represent the interests of the mental health system in community workforce development.

To learn more about this study, go to <http://www.healthfoundation.org/publications/other.html> to obtain a copy of the full research report, titled "Efficacy of a Collaboration Between a Mental Health Supported Employment Program and a One-Stop Center in Assisting Individuals with Severe Mental Illness Obtain and Maintain Employment."

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with one another and to encourage creative solutions to individual service designs and organizational business practices and thereby achieve effective and positive results in each organization's community.

Although there are indeed a number of ways to approach conformance to a standard, what makes organizations given an exemplary rating stand out is their professional and strategic response to an observed service or business need, always designed with input from their stakeholders and based on those individuals' quality expectations.

We hope you enjoy the series. We encourage you to contact the identified representative in the article to get more information about their services.