E3TC

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center: Targeted Communities (VRTAC-TC)
Project E3: Educate, Empower, and Employ

Overview of 4 Phases of Intensive Technical Assistance

Presenters

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E3TC Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

Tribute to Dr. Alo Dutta

Project E3 Principal Investigator
October 1, 2015 – June 29, 2018

⇒**Her vision for Project E3:**

Improve the quality services to unserved and underserved economically disadvantaged people with disabilities by educating, empowering, and employing them in remunerative occupations, and thereby improve quality of life.

Tribute to Dr. Alo Dutta

Project E3 Principal Investigator
October 1, 2015 – June 29, 2018

Her contributions to the Rehabilitation Field:

⇒ Outstanding researcher, a prolific grant writer, and a visionary leader in VR

⇒ Principal Investigator/Project Director of 11 training, research, capacity building, and Technical Assistance Center grants

⇒ Co-PI/Associate Project Director of 9 other grants

⇒ Secured funding of $31 million

⇒ Guest Reviewer of 10 journals

⇒ Published 50 refereed journal articles

⇒ 80 presentations

⇒ Recipient of 14 awards and recognitions

The Purpose of Project E3

Improve capacity of State VR agencies and their partners to **address barriers** to VR participation and attainment of competitive, integrated employment of **historically-underserved groups** of individuals with disabilities from low-income communities.

Intensive TA was provided onsite through long-term service delivery relationships with local VR agency personnel and community-based partners in economically disadvantaged communities identified by the VR agencies.

Targeted Communities

Defined as any economically disadvantaged community that qualifies as an Empowerment Zone:

- The median **household income** is under 200% of the Federal poverty level;

- The **unemployment rate** is at, or above the national average;

- As a group, individuals with disabilities have historically sought, have been eligible for, or have received Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services or **achieved competitive integrated employment at 65% or less** of the State VR agency's employment outcome level.

Focus Populations (HLGNAs)

Targeted populations, or high-leverage groups with national applicability, (HLGNA) are underserved groups who have achieved substandard performance with needs in multiple locations across the country:

- Residents of rural & remote communities

- Adjudicated adults and youth

- Youth with disabilities in foster care

- Individuals with disabilities receiving Federal financial assistance

- Culturally diverse populations

- High school dropouts and individuals who are functionally illiterate

- Persons with multiple disabilities, or people living with specific conditions

  - HIV/AIDS, mental illness, cognitive disabilities, sensory disabilities, blindness

- SSI and SSDI recipients, including subminimum wage employees

Intensive Technical Assistance

Targeted Communities of Focus

Targeted Communities

Intensive TA Provision (4 Phases)

Community Outreach and Orientation for Target Populations

Community Needs Assessment/Strategies for Change

Training and Technical Assistance for staffs of State VR Agencies, Community Rehabilitation Programs, and Community-Based Organizations

Sustainability and Systems Change

Phase 1: Outreach & Orientation

➢ Public announcements structured to reach HLGNA populations in targeted communities.

➢ Targeted outreach to CRPs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) – and other organizations including advocacy groups –serving HLGNAs and the community.

➢ Orientation sessions for HLGNA individuals, CRPs, CBOs that address topical areas promoting greater participation in VR services (general information about VR, addressing lack of employment expectations or trust issues).

California

Targeted Communities:
California Central Valley
Fresno and Kern Counties

HLGNA 1
Young adults (18-30) who receive public assistance and are Hispanic with a disability or chronic illness

HLGNA 2
Young adults (18-30) who receive public assistance and are Hmong with depression and PTSD.

Project E3 Leadership Academy 2.0 California

Community Based Radio Stations

- *Appeared on local community radio show (Hmong Radio Station) to target unserved and underserved populations*

- *Increased number of referrals for Hmong individuals*

- *Would like to see concept expand throughout the state of California*

- *Each region will be able to target populations in need by accessing local radio*

- *Radio show approach helped educate and encourage community members to seek out resources*

Community Focused Marketing Materials/Staff Trainings

- *We would like to see an expansion of the community focused marketing materials that were created to sustain the E3 project*

- *Through the marketing materials, partnerships were created to establish a more unified way of providing services to unserved and underserved populations*

- *We would like to see a continuation and expansion of resources and trainings for staff and community partners.*

  - *Motivational Interviewing*

  - *Trauma informed training*

  - *Money management*

E3TC Integrated Resource Team

- *Barely started the planning and implementation stage therefore we want to receive comprehensive training in order to integrate and expand*

- *We would like to see a continuation and expansion of the IRT within our district to better provide better customer service to our targeted populations*

- *We would also like a continuation of the IRT to support the teams*

California Sustainability

Describe the steps you will be taking to ensure the sustainability of your efforts

⇒ *Presentation to Executive Leadership for buy in.*

⇒ *Dedicated staff person for RTI*

⇒ *Work group established to expand E3 pilot best practices*

⇒ *RTI training*

⇒ *Demographic data, data driven practices*

⇒ *Developing additional local advisory boards*

⇒ *Securing funding for ongoing training in E3 project topics*

Phase 2: Needs Assessment & Strategy Identification

➢ Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) utilized, as appropriate.

➢ Focus groups for needs assessment, e.g., Parent-Educator Groups, Communities of Faith-Interfaith groups, and other groups.

➢ Advisory Councils or Planning Groups

New Jersey

Targeted Community:
Newark

HLGNA 1:
Consumers with Drug Abuse/Dependence and Alcohol Abuse and Dependence receiving SSI

HLGNA 2:
Persons with Mental Illness receiving SSI.

Priority #1

Give a brief description of the efforts or innovations you want to see continued.

- Expand efforts of the Disability Issues Subcommittee of the Workforce Development Board (Newark & Essex County)

- Added members

- Expanded community partnerships/outreach

Priority #2

Give a brief description of the efforts or innovations you want to see continued.

- Cross training opportunities between partners in the Workforce Development System

- Brought together public and private partners

Priority #3

Give a brief description of the efforts or innovations you want to see continued.

- Increase employment participation rates for individuals with disabilities between the public Workforce System and Community-based Organizations.
- Cross-training was helpful to increase awareness around serving individuals with disabilities.

New Jersey Sustainability

Describe the steps you will be taking to ensure the sustainability of your efforts

-Develop a Community Academy (when in-person events are again possible.)

-Search for other opportunities to engage with training and technical assistance.

-Continue regular meetings of the Disability Issues Subcommittee

Kentucky

Targeted Communities:
The Appalachian Regional Commission, based on national averages on unemployment rates, income, and poverty rates identified the dark counties as 'distressed counties' (those that rank in the worst 10 percent of the nation's counties (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016).

HLGNA 1
Students or transition-aged youth (aged 16-24) with commonly identified developmental disabilities (e.g., Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Intellectual Disability).

HLGNA 2
Individuals with Mental Health diagnoses.

COUNTY MAP OF
KENTUCKY

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Oregon

Targeted Communities:
Medford and Bend

HLGNA 1
Students or transition-aged youth (aged 14-24 at the time of contact with Project) who are residents of rural & remote communities, and who have specific sensory impairments including (1) Blindness, (2) Other visual impairments, or (8) Deaf-Blindness, seeking VR services.

HLGNA 2
Adults over age 24 who have specific sensory impairments including (1) Blindness, (2) Other visual impairments, who are residents of rural & remote communities.

COUNTY MAP OF **OREGON**

Priority #1 – IRT Development

Ask the client during the intake to anticipate potential IRT members

Start early

Schedule a meeting

Express the common goal(s) among IRT members

Sum up the plan

Share the success(es)

Priority #2 – Community Outreach & Peer Mentoring

*A*ttend meetings – LLTs, Employment First, Chamber of Commerce, or ? - regularly

*C*ontact Education Service Districts, high schools and youth

*T*rain youth (HLGNA-1) and adults (HLGNA-2) using peer mentors

Priority #3 – Transportation Resources in Rural Communities

E3TC

*P*ursue transportation resources (SEE **https://transportation.hdiuky.org/ride-share/**)

*E*ngage with transportation resources administrations

*R*ide it yourself, e.g., try out Waze Carpool, if available

*S*tay on the "path"

*I*dentify what will and won't work for your clients.

*S*ell the routes, with regular "customers" (your clients) to cabs, Uber, Lyft, etc.

*T*alk, talk, talk about it until you find a solution

Oregon Sustainability

Our Targeted Community 1 (Jackson, Josephine, Douglas & Klamath Counties) has been a pilot project for our agency, along with our TC-2 (Oregon's high desert region). We are working on development and integration of these items.

Leadership continues to support these activities and is hopeful to build all these programs into statewide client supports.
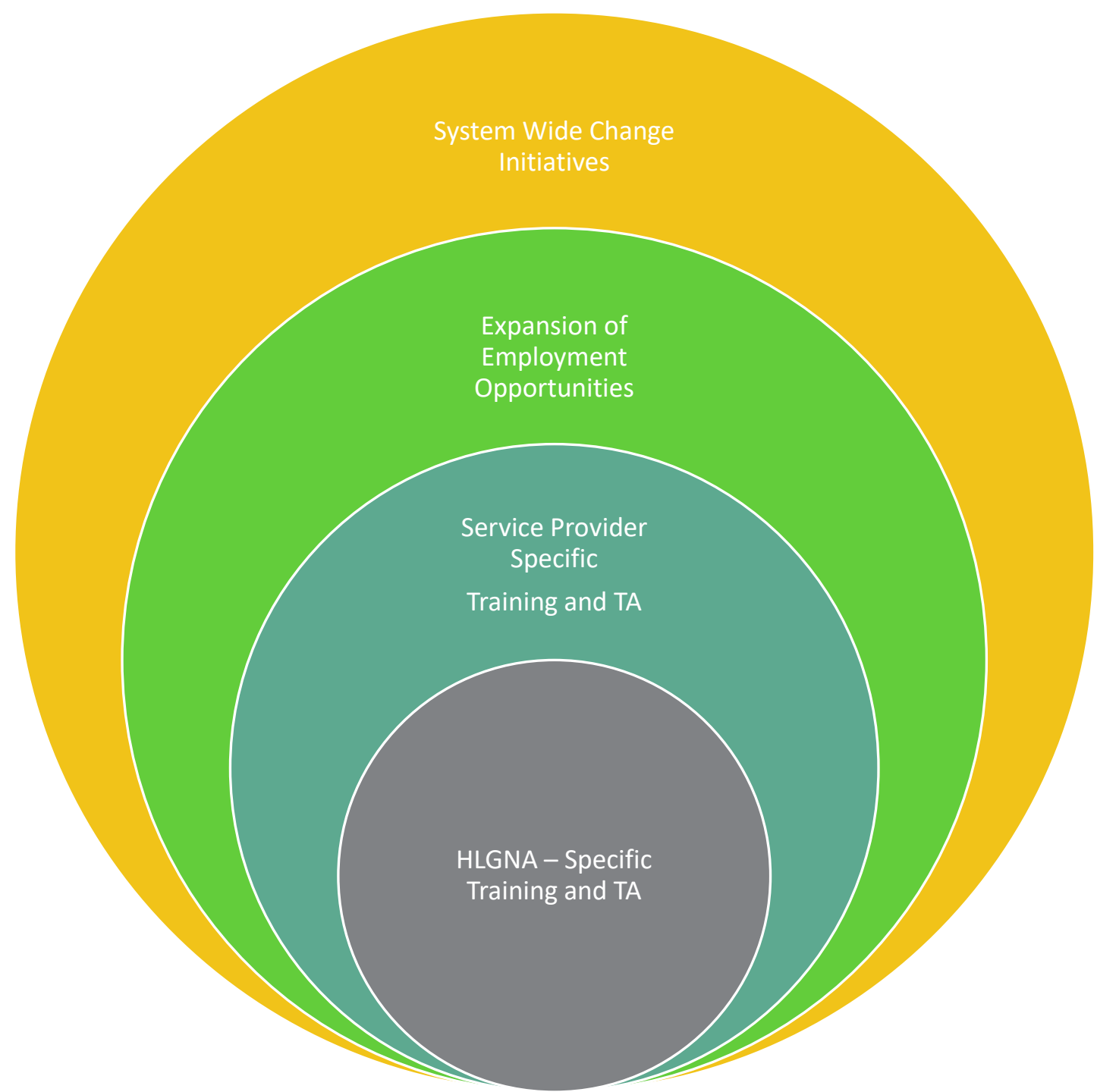
Kentucky Sustainability

We have integrated these priorities into the workflow of our counselors.

Leadership will continue to encourage these activities of our counselors, and build the programs into our regular client services.

Phase 3: Training & Technical Assistance

Broad topic areas:

- **Training on issues impacting HLGNA populations**

- **Service delivery to VR clients, including HLGNA-specific information**

- **Expanding employment opportunities for HLGNA populations**

- **Collaboration with community stakeholders and coordinated service strategies**

System Wide Change Initiatives

Expansion of Employment Opportunities

Service Provider Specific Training and TA

HLGNA – Specific Training and TA

Phase 3: Training & Technical Assistance

Motivational Interviewing

Impression Management

Financial Literacy/Empowerment

Poverty Awareness

Intersection of Disability and Poverty

Benefits Counseling & Work Incentives

HIV/AIDS Awareness

Mental Health/Substance Abuse Awareness

Transportation Access

Trauma-Informed Care

Job Club

Individualized Placement and Support

Customized Employment & Discovery Process

Self & Home-Based Employment

Employer Engagement/Business Development

Braiding and Leveraging Resources

Integrated Resource Team Model (IRT)

Grant Writing

North Carolina

Targeted Communities:
Counties served Rocky Mount VR and Greenville DSB; and
Boone VR, and Asheville and Winston Salem DSB

HLGNA
Transition age youth and adults of economically disadvantaged rural and remote communities who:
Have one or more mental impairments (cognitive and/or psychosocial/emotional)
Have Blindness or Other Visual Impairments
Have historically applied and engaged with VR at lower rates, and attained lower competitive, integrated employment outcomes than their peers,
Receive SSI and/or TANF benefits.

Project E3 North Carolina

TARGETED COMMUNITIES

Region 1 Counties: Allegheny, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, Yancy

Region 2 Counties: Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton

Project E3 North Carolina

TARGETED POPULATIONS

Residents of targeted communities between the ages 14 – 64 who are eligible for, have applied for or are receiving SSI, SSDI and/or TANF

- **Are blind or visually impaired; or**
- **Have one or more intellectual, developmental or mental health disabilities**

PROJECT PARTNERS

Core partners include:

- **NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
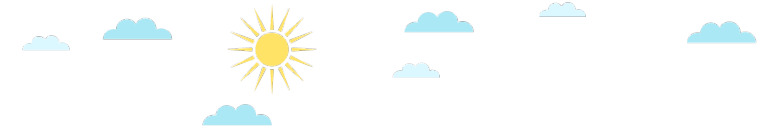- **NC Division of Services for the Blind**

Additional stakeholders include:

- **Community rehabilitation providers**
- **NCWorks Career Center**
- **County Department of Social Services**

Priority #1:
Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing (MI) training sessions provided evidence-based tools and techniques that were easily incorporated into daily practice and resulted in:

- Improved counselor/client communication and collaboration

- Helped consumers discover passion for a given career path

- Increased consumers' ability to take meaningful action towards goals

# Priority #2: Innovative Strategies for Job Placement

Innovative strategies for job placement provided value for all participants, regardless of position or experience, highlighting:

- Importance of a *customer service trio* approach that adds VR counselor to the dual-customer equation
- Necessity of elevating business engagement as an organizational priority, not just a goal of business services staff
- Need for strategic research and planning to develop relevant, innovative strategies that meet demands of employers

Priority #3: Trauma-Informed Culture
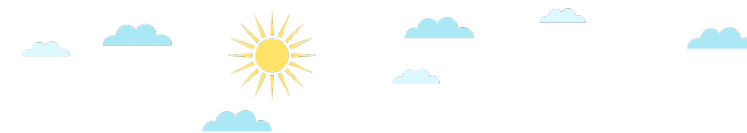
The training offered guidance on how to develop a trauma-informed culture that:

- Recognizes the impact of adverse childhood and other traumatic experiences may have on emotional, relational and mental health, as well as work performance

- Provides services in an environment that enhances feelings of safety and belonging and empowers consumers and employees

North Carolina Sustainability

Sustaining Project E3 priorities:

- Ensure alignment with organizational values and strategic goals to maintain support **from** leadership

- **Partner with Professional Development and Training (PDT) team to develop virtual Project E3 training modules and resource guides**

- **Develop communications plan to promote Project E3 trainings and resource guides**

Motivational Interviewing Sustainability

Sustaining Motivational Interviewing:

- Aligns with Proactive Communication, Teamwork and People-Focused organizational goals
- **PDT team developed Intro to Motivational Interviewing (MI) module for DVRS/DSB Learning Management System**

- **Planning session for additional MI training scheduled for January 2021**

Innovative Strategies for Job Placement Sustainability

Sustaining Innovative Strategies for Job Placement:

- Aligns with Teamwork and People-Focused organizational goals
- **Series of four, 1-hour Project E3 trainings were provided virtually and will be loaded into DVRS/DSB Learning Management System**

- **Developing Innovative Strategies for Job Placement resource guide and communications plan to promote training to all DVRS/DSB staff**

Trauma-Informed Approach Sustainability

Sustaining Trauma-Informed Culture:

- Aligns with People-Focused, Belonging and Joy at Work organizational goals

- **PDT is reviewing E3 materials and other resources to develop training around the importance of a trauma-informed culture**

- **Developing a Unit/District office environmental assessment to ensure a welcoming office environment for staff and consumers**

THANK YOU!

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Louisiana

Targeted Communities:
New Orleans and Baton Rouge

HLGNA 1:
African Americans with HIV/AIDS
(primary or secondary disability).

HLGNA 2:
African Americans with mental
health diagnoses.

COUNTY MAP OF
LOUISIANA

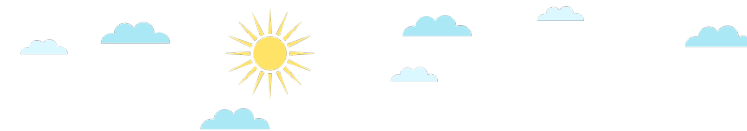Copyright © 2020 www.mapsofworld.com

Project E3 Leadership Academy 2.0 Louisiana

Priority #1

Increase community engagement opportunities with stakeholders! Project E3 provided training for different agencies regarding HIV and Mental Health. The exchange of information empowered persons with challenges related to mental health and HIV and strengthened the VR Service Delivery system.

Priority #2

Increase LRS' internal capacity to effectively serve persons with mental health and HIV challenges through Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS)! LRS is currently hiring these positions statewide to provide focused efforts to secure successful employment opportunities for individuals with unique challenges.

Priority #3

Assist departments and agencies within Louisiana State Government to become model employers for individuals with disabilities, inclusive of individuals with challenges related to mental health and HIV! LRS is an active participant on the State As Model Employer (SAME) Taskforce in accordance with Executive Order JBE 18-08. The purpose is to increase the representation of individuals with disabilities employed in Louisiana State Government.

State Name Sustainability

Describe the steps you will be taking to ensure the sustainability of your efforts

⇒ *Actively participate in forums that provide for effective exchanges of information with stakeholders (referrals, CRPs, coalitions, etc)*

⇒ *Identify and provide training opportunities to the REDS related to employment strategies specific to persons with mental health challenges and HIV*

⇒ *Contribute to the development and identification of strategies, resources and partnerships to assist state agencies with the recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities in employment*

Phase 4: Sustainability & Systems Change

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE LOCAL & STATE LEVEL

⇒ **Leadership Academy**
- Sustainability Planning Committees from each TC
- Assess the environment (internal/external capacity)
- Identify major barriers to engagement and potential solutions for engagement.
- Develop Shared Vision for Sustainability
- Develop Sustainability Work Plan

⇒ **Supported by Community of Practice Calls**

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

⇒ Project E3 Website

⇒ Universal Technical Assistance

⇒ Project E3 Webinars

⇒ Results Webinars

⇒ NCRTM Archiving
- Activities, webinars, resource manuals and other products

New Mexico

Targeted Communities:
Albuquerque and Deming

HLGNA 1:
Persons with a primary disability of anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, personality discords, and/or other mood disorders.

HLGNA 2:
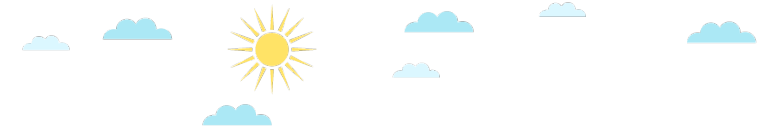Persons with a primary disability of alcohol abuse or drug dependence.

Project E3 Leadership Academy 2.0
New Mexico

E3TC Priority #1

Greater collaboration between partners in the Workforce Development System

- **Create and nurture a shared vision**
- **Deepen and expand relationships with partners**
- **Explore new partnerships with community-based organizations**

Priority #2

Implementation of the Integrated Resource Team model

- **NM-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (ABQ & Deming)**
- **NM Workforce Connection (ABQ & Deming)**
- **Casa de Phoenix (ABQ)**

Implementation of New Projects/Programs

Deming:

- **Implement TRAILS model (adapted for SW New Mexico)**

  [Teaming Resources for Alignment thru Integrated & Leverages Services)

Albuquerque:

- **Peer Support Network at NM Workforce Connection**
- **Job Club at Casa de Phoenix**

New Mexico Sustainability

⇒ **Collaboration – Workforce Development System partners**

- Deming – Community Academy to expand partners/Implementation of IRT Model.

- Albuquerque – IntraNet developed at NM Workforce Connection (digital tool)/IRT Model Implementation

⇒ **IRT Model Implementation**

- Lead staff in pilot project will serve as mentors to promote method with colleagues.

- Administrative support to facilitate implementation of the model.

⇒ **New Projects/Programs Implementation**

- Administrative support to facilitate implementation of the TRAILS model.

- Job Club integrated into program at CdP

- Development of Peer Support Network program at NM Workforce Connection.
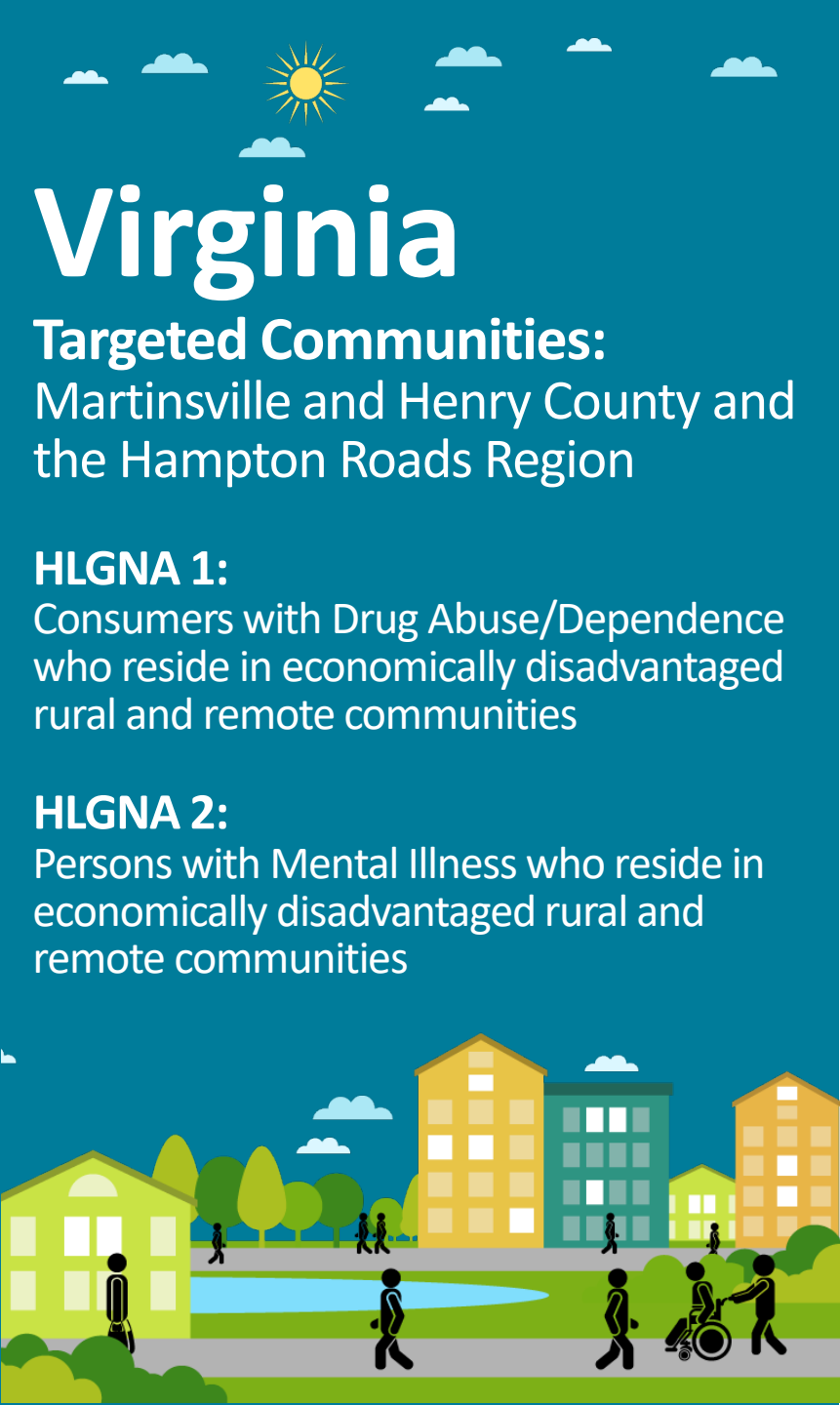
Virginia

Targeted Communities:
Martinsville and Henry County and the Hampton Roads Region

HLGNA 1:
Consumers with Drug Abuse/Dependence who reside in economically disadvantaged rural and remote communities

HLGNA 2:
Persons with Mental Illness who reside in economically disadvantaged rural and remote communities

E3 Influencer - Groups of Two Staff per Office from each district across the state

Staff comprised of:

∉ *District Directors, VR Office Managers, VR Counselors, VR Placement Staff, VR Assistant Staff*

Six 2-Hr Interactive Synchronous Sessions that included both preparatory and follow-up activities covering the following content:

∉ *Intersection of Disability and Poverty, Partnership Development and Collaboration through Community Academies and the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and Financial Empowerment*

Priority #2 Integration of Financial Empowerment in VR Service Delivery

E3TC

Project (Targeted Community Sites) Emphasis:
- *Bridges Out of Poverty*
- *Intersection of Disability and Poverty*
- *Social Security Work Incentives and Medicaid Expansion*
- *Financial Empowerment and Behavioral Economics*

E3 Influencer Cohort Emphasis:
- *Intersection of Disability and Poverty*
- *Community Financial Empowerment*

Integration of Financial Empowerment into VR Service Delivery:
- *40 Hours of Financial Counselor Training - utilizing framework from Cities for Financial Empowerment*
- *2 Cohorts for a total of 40 VR staff*
- *Statewide DARS Financial Empowerment Workgroup*

Priority #3 Community Capacity Building

- *VR and CIL State Level Leadership agreed to partner around expanding capacity of CILs to provide Financial Empowerment for VR Consumers with potential for increased fee for service opportunities*
- *The CILs in the two Targeted Communities received customized training on financial empowerment strategies designed to support CIL staff in engaging and serving underserved and economically disadvantaged persons with disabilities.*
- *Six 2-Hr Interactive Synchronous Sessions that included both preparatory and follow-up activities in each Targeted Community*

Virginia Sustainability

Describe the steps you will be taking to ensure the sustainability of your efforts:

® Statewide Introduction of Project

® Integration of Financial Empowerment into VR Service Delivery

® Community Capacity Building

® MOU with City for Financial Empowerment Project - Roanoke

Targeted Technical Assistance

⇒ **Wisconsin DVR**

- Identify and address systemic issues in Milwaukee VR
- Approached Project E3 for assistance

⇒ **Community Engaged Research**

- Intersection of Disability/Poverty and Race
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Action steps for VR programs Equity in Service Delivery
- Visit ProjectE3.com for this report.

Universal Technical Assistance

⇒ **Project E3 Website**

- Activities, webinars, resource manuals and other products
- Communities of Practice
- Project E3 Webinars
- Results Webinars
- Leadership Academies

⇒ **NCRTM Archiving**

Resources: ProjectE3.com

Targeted Community Profiles: https://projecte3.com/communities/

Webcasts: https://projecte3.com/webcasts/

Resource Library: https://worksupport.com/targeted_communities/resources/

Research Summaries: https://projecte3.com/category/activities/research/research-summary/

Resource Roundup: https://projecte3.com/activities/resource-roundups/

Strategies to address barriers: https://projecte3.com/strategies/

Communities of Practice: https://projecte3.com/community/

Closing Remarks

⇒ **A cadre of knowledge developed by E3 will be helpful to VR agencies, CRPs, and CBOs, to access and implement in providing quality services leading to enhanced employment outcomes for economically disadvantaged people with disabilities.**

- E3 Website

- E3 Archived Webinars

⇒ **Sustainability Plan developed by the state VR agencies indicating their commitments for collaboration**

⇒ **Video vignettes affirm that Project E3 has made an enormous impact in the rehabilitation Community, successfully achieved its objectives, and vision of Dr. Alo Dutta.**

⇒ **Collaboration among state VR agencies and their partners have increased tremendously, leading to:**

- Increased referrals

- Increased applications

- Increased eligibility for VR services

- Increased job placement

⇒ **To access additional information on results of Project E3, please view our Results and Reflections webinar at: https://ncrtm.ed.gov/RSAVirtualSeries.aspx**

⇒ **Please visit ProjectE3.com in July 2021 for the Final Report.**

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