

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

AIVRTTAC- Meeting the needs of AIVRS programs through the provision of Universal, Targeted, & Intensive TA



"The VR program staff encouraged me not to give up and now I work in the schools with our youth."

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings Everyone!

During our recent trip to Alaska to provide targeted technical assistance to the AIVRS programs I was approached, by no coincidence, by a Yupik gentleman who asked to share a table and have breakfast together at the hotel. Customary to Native people meeting for the first time, we asked each other about our tribal affiliations and what we were doing in Anchorage. This then led to talking about our families and type of work we do.

Sam shared with me that he was attending educational meetings in Anchorage, had served as a school principal, and during the summer months worked with and taught Alaska Native youth about subsistence living. Likewise, I shared with Sam that my co-workers and I were providing targeted technical assistance to the AIVRS programs in Alaska, which provide VR services to help tribal members with disabilities to prepare for and obtain gainful employment.

Sam replied, "I was helped by the tribal Voc Rehab in Bristol Bay." I asked him if he knew Gail Sorenson. He said, "Yes, that VR lady. They helped me get hearing aids and helped me through college. I have a disability but that didn't stop me from getting my college degree. The VR program staff encouraged me not to give up and now I work in the schools with our youth."

Lee R. Gaseoma

Lee Gaseoma

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY | Institute for Human Development

The Institute for Human Development is a research and training program located on Northern Arizona University. Our program is part of a national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). In Arizona, we are designated as one of two Arizona University Centers on Disabilities (AzUCD).

HOPI VR PROGRAM

...STORY OF INTENSIVE TA



Left to Right: Lee Gaseoma, James Fred, Suzanne Malson, Kathy Sumatzkuku, Paula Shupla, Noreen Sakiestewa, Martina Talayumptewa, Paula Seanez, Jessy Zykosky, Back Row (L-R) Elyse Lomawaima, Darold Joseph. Not pictured: Meridith Van Winkle and Rosemary Polivema

We want to take this opportunity to introduce the Hopi Tribe Vocational Rehabilitation Program (HTVRP) to the AIVRS community. We here at AIVRTTAC were very fortunate to have been invited to the Hopi Tribe to provide training and technical assistance (TTA) as part of the intensive technical assistance (ITA). The HTVRP operates under the auspices of the Hopi Department of Education, directed by Dr. Noreen Sakiestewa. Five talented, compassionate, and dedicated individuals comprise the staff for HTVRP. They include: Kathleen Sumatzkuku, HVRP Manager, James Fred, TVR Counselor, Meridith Van Winkle, TVR Counselor, Elyse Lomawaima, TVR Technician, and Rosemary Polivema, TVR Secretary.

Through the ITA process, the cultural value of a responsibility to community in the Hopi Tribe contributed to a greater understanding and re-commitment to the VR Process. AIVRTTAC worked with the Hopi Tribe to take advantage of a cultural value that already existed to make improvements to their program. The grounding in culture and training has seen outcomes in improving the communication with their State VR Agency and a greater understanding of how their individual roles impact the larger picture. The collaboration between AIVRTTAC and HTVRP began in July 2017 with a formal ITA Agreement developed and signed in August of 2017. The agreement addresses specific ITA needs continuing to the present day. Strides have been made and accomplishments have focused on aspects of program management, program policy, and program practice for the HTVRP. AIVRTTAC would like to commend the HTVRP for their time, energy, and commitment to address their program needs to increase program performance and consumer employment outcomes. Here is what the HTVRP staff have to say about ITA experiences:

AIVRTTAC TESTIMONIALS



"Without the support and assistance of AIVRTTAC, Hopi VR would not be the program it is TODAY. "

"I have benefited from the intensive technical assistance as it helped us put things back into perspective."

"I have found AVIRTTAC to be extremely helpful in my first month of employment. The training I received had brought me up to speed and provided me with a lot of information. Thank you."

"The technical assistance received was great! I also learned a lot about the VR Program as well as what AIVRTTAC has to offer. Our VR Program has gained so much knowledge and the ability to make the necessary moves to help out consumers and educate others as well. Thank you staff of AIVRTTAC!"

"My experience with AIVRTTAC has been great. Being a new Manager for the Hopi VR program was very overwhelming and I had a lot of learning to do. If it wasn't for AIVRTTAC coming in and providing us the TA that we requested I wouldn't have known how to begin to work with VR staff and how to realign the program. I am very thankful that this type of TA was made available to the AIVRS programs."

RECRUITMENT FOR NEW ITA SITES

All AIVRS Programs! AIVRTTAC staff are currently recruiting for new Intensive Technical Assistance (ITA) sites for Year 4, beginning October 1, 2018. ITA includes personalized services through an ITA Agreement between the AIVRTTAC and an AIVRS programs. ITA duration is based upon the AIVRS program needs (e.g., development of policies and procedures, development or amendment of cooperative agreements with the State VR Agency) and involves onsite and offsite coaching and guidance to address specific program needs. The outcome of ITA should result in improvements in policy, program, practice, and/ or operations, as well as AIVRS program performance and consumer employment outcomes. The ITA process includes:

- AIVRS Program Director completes the Request for ITA Form
- AIVRTTAC schedules a call to review the ITA request with the AIVRS Program Director
- AIVRTTAC informs assigned RSA Project Officers about the AIVRS program ITA request
- Once the ITA request is approved, the AIVRS program is assigned an ITA Team
- First onsite ITA visit is conducted with the AIVRS program to finalize the ITA Agreement, review the five-year AIVRS program grant proposal, conduct training in the use of the Consumer Case File Review Tool (with consumer consent or redaction of personally identifiable information), review program forms to determine alignment with the VR process, and conduct community tour to meet tribal leaders, program administrations and local service providers
- Follow-up ITA coaching and guidance is provided to AIVRS programs based on the work plan that is part of the ITA agreement
- ITA phase out plan is determined by the ITA Team and the AIVRS Program Director

For additional information and materials, on the ITA criteria and process, please go to the following link: www.aivrttac.org.

"Seek wisdom, not knowledge. Knowledge is of the past, Wisdom is of the future."
- Lumbee

OP-ED: INTENSIVE TA- THE REASON



SUZANNE MALSON
VR TRAINING & TA SPECIALIST (FORMER AIVRS PROGRAM DIRECTOR)

Introduction: The Need

So, you think you are unique. You think you are the only one who is struggling with the requirements of Tribal, Federal, and State governments. In your uniqueness, perhaps you think you are the only one to be persuaded to accept the role of an American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) Director with the expectation of "leading," "fixing," and/or "saving" your Tribal VR program. Accepting the challenge to lead, your first day on the job you learned that your office is non-compliant with the American Disability Act (ADA), such as doorways too narrow for a wheelchair, bathrooms with no room for a wheelchair to turn around in, and no ramp to access the building. In addition, you do not have a confidential consumer interviewing room. Furthermore, you do not have important functioning material, such as a current Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedure Manual, previous annual reports, a copy of the funded grant proposal, compliant forms, a consumer database, and your memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the state vocational rehabilitation is outdated. You may have learned that in the past staff turnover was high, and that the consumers of your program consider it an employment agency rather than an effective VR program that works in partnership with consumers to achieve an employment outcome.

Are you willing to change?

Vocational rehabilitation is about change. Consumers decide to say yes or no to taking steps to achieve the change they want. When a VR decision is established, something always changes; and when this happens, a commitment is made to invest in oneself. This is also true of VR program change. The AIVRTTAC Team will assist Directors to define change, develop a plan, provide information, and in partnership promote an equitable change.

Conclusion:

AIVRTTAC has encountered AIVRS programs that are experiencing high staff turnover, difficulty in providing services because of extreme remoteness in rural areas, and consumers with little to no education and low-skill or no-skilled work experience. Another barrier for an AIVRS program may be a State VR Agency that is an unwilling partner. The AIVRTTAC Team is honored to be invited into the AIVRS program community with a desire to provide technical assistance to the Director, VR Counselors, and support staff.

The diversity in American Indian and Alaska Native communities drives the diversity in AIVRS programs. Diversity informs the array of differences in AIVRS programs. Program Directors expand programmatic parameters to honor tradition and culture to provide culturally appropriate rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO CRY. IT WILL FREE YOUR MIND OF SORROWFUL THOUGHTS.
-Hopi

MAN HAS RESPONSIBILITY, NOT POWER.
-Tuscarora

AIVRTTAC TEAM

The AIVRTTAC Team is a cadre of experts focused on preserving the dignity of Native people with disabilities. The Team is about assisting with "Native nation building" and the preservation of culture in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

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PROJECT DIRECTOR

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VR TRAINING & TA SPECIALIST

DAROLD H. JOSEPH (HOPI), M.Ed.

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ARDEN DAY, M.A.

PROJECT EVALUATOR

JESSY ZUKOSKY

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The following Content Expert Consultants have been involved in providing ITA and Targeted TA to the AIVRS programs: **Dr. Carol Bergquist**; **Michelle Wilson** (Chickasaw); **Paula Seanez** (Navajo); **Wayne Dagel** (Blackfeet); **Rebecca Holland**; **Betty Bennalley** (Navajo), and **Sara Lizak**.

"We are all one child spinning through Mother Sky."

- Shawnee

THE IMPACT OF AIVRTTAC INTENSIVE TA...

AIVRTTAC personnel provided intensive technical assistance, including guidance and coaching, to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation (PBPN) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program staff. One primary goal was to increase the quality of collaborations with the State of Kansas Rehabilitation Services program. At the recommendation of AIVRTTAC personnel the PBPN VR staff began to participate in outreach activities. This included attending the Kansas State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meetings. Due to attending the SRC meetings the PBPN AIVRS personnel met and began to work with an SRC member who is the Offender Workforce Development Specialist with the Kansas Department of Corrections Parole Office. The Offender Workforce Development Specialist is now meeting with AIVRS clients who have a criminal history. He assists the AIVRS clients with completing employment applications, building resumes, preparing for interviews, and answering questions regarding their convictions and opportunities for employment. The PBPN program director stated that they "have had so many clients and community members work with Justin (i.e., the Offender Workforce Development Specialist) since we have started [to work with Justin], I don't even have an accurate number for you."

UP & COMING

EVENTS & PRODUCTS

THIS EVENT WAS HELD IN JULY OF 2018

The Northern Arizona University's Institute for Human Development will hold its 2018 Evidence for Success Conference on July 8 – 10, 2018 at the We-Ko-Pa Resort and Conference Center, Scottsdale/Fountain Hills, Arizona. This event will focus on Assistive Technology and Evidence-based Practices, featuring a track on AIVRTTAC program evaluation specific to the AIVRS programs. As many as 45 agencies and vendors will showcase their products and services in the Exhibit Hall. Dynamic speakers and presenters include Bernadine Burnette, President of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, who will lead the Native American Prayer Ceremony on July 9. To register and find more information on the conference, please visit: http://aztap.org/conference or call (928) 523-9325 or (928)523-7179.

WATCH FOR THE AIVRS PROGRAM TOOLKIT (FIRST 90 DAYS) - COMING SEPTEMBER, 2018

AIVRS Program Toolkit (First 90 Days) - The AIVRS Program Toolkit contains helpful hints and resources for AIVRS Program Directors as they navigate their understanding of the tribal VR services process to provide culturally appropriate rehabilitation services for tribal consumers in partnership with the Federal and State VR agencies.

These products have been developed to improve overall program performance and increase consumer employment outcomes. Personalized and onsite technical assistance may also be provided at the request of the AIVRS Program Directors.

To learn more about the AIVRTTAC project training and technical assistance services visit our website at www.aivrttac.org or email or call Lee Gaseoma at Lee.Gaseoma@nau.edu or (928) 523-6829.

"Our first teacher is our own heart."

- Cheyenne

LOOK OUT FOR NEW AIVRTTAC PRODUCTS COMING SOON!

The AIVRTTAC products are technical assistance resources that may be used independently or in a group setting by AIVRS program personnel. In August 2018, AIVRTTAC will begin disseminating the following technical assistance resources to AIVRS Programs through email and postings on the project website:

Consumer Case Review Tool - The purpose of the Consumer Case File Review Tool is to provide AIVRS Program Directors and VR Counselors with a case management tool to conduct periodic case file reviews as part of its internal program evaluation to identify and address areas of need to improve overall AIVRS services and consumer employment outcomes.

Sample MOU: AIVRS Program and State VR Agency - The purpose of the sample AIVRS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to provide: strategies for mutual interagency referral to serve tribal consumers; information sharing and joint training activities; procedures for outreach to potential consumers residing on or near the reservations; and coordination of consumer rehabilitation services under an IPE.

Sample Table of Contents: AIVRS Policies and Procedures – The purpose of the sample Table of Contents is to provide a framework to develop policies and procedures essential to the effective and efficient operations of an AIVRS program. The policies and procedures offer detailed clarity for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities and compliance with federal requirements and as appropriate, tribal requirements.

VR Process for New Case Managers PowerPoint (PPT) – The purpose of the VR process PPT is to describe sequential steps which include: applicant referral; intake to determine applicant's eligibility for VR services; joint development of the IPE by the consumer and the VR Counselor; provision of services to address consumer's barriers to employment; case closure; and as needed, post-employment services.

AIVRS Five-Year Grant Summary PPT - The purpose of the AIVRS five-year grant summary PPT is to highlight: the need for VR services for tribal members with disabilities; proposed goals and objectives to address the needs of tribal consumers to prepare them for gainful employment; provision of culturally responsive services with key service providers; and use of appropriate evaluation tools to assess program outcomes.

"No river can return to its source, yet all rivers must have a beginning."

- Tribe Unknown

Disclaimer
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