

# Partners with Business Annual Report to the Legislature, July 2021 – June 2022

The Wisconsin Legislature established the Partners with Business initiative to assist businesses interested in hiring and employing people with disabilities using an evidenced based coaching model. During the past state fiscal year, Partners with Business provided grant funds and coaching to nine grantees<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the continued challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Partners with Business initiative was able to demonstrate cost savings in Medicaid funded job coaching support through stronger partnerships with employers and influence positive changes with employment service providers that get more people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities working in the community.

## Cost Savings through Stronger Partnerships with Employers

The initiative collected employment data from 11 participants with disabilities to determine the impact on Medicaid savings when service providers invest in creating stronger partnerships with employers.

Before Partners with Business		After Partners with Business	
Average Hours per Week Employee with a Disability Received Medicaid Funded Job Coaching Support	Average Annual Cost to Medicaid System to Support this Person on the Job	Average Hours per Week Employee with a Disability Received Medicaid Funded Job Coaching Support	Average Annual Cost to Medicaid System to Support this Person on the Job
<b>5 hours/week</b>	<b>\$7,800/year</b>	<b>3.2 hours/week</b>	<b>\$4,992/year</b>

**The Partners with Business investment resulted in a 36% reduction in the number of Medicaid funded job coaching support hours. This saved the Medicaid system on average \$2,808 annually per person or about \$30,888 total per year for the 11 participants with disabilities in this year's Partners with Business cohort.**

## Employer Engagement in This Year's Partners with Business Initiative

Rangam, a private sector business, joined the Partners with Business Initiative last year to support more large businesses to hire people with disabilities. Rangam continued this partnership through this fiscal year by working with Cargill in the Milwaukee area to launch a hiring initiative. The Rangam and Cargill teams worked closely together to analyze their recruiting and hiring practices, conduct outreach and host a hiring event, from which two new employees were hired. They are continuing their partnership to expand more opportunities in Milwaukee and beyond.

The City of Madison joined the Partners with Business initiative to streamline their approach to inclusive hiring and supports and increase the number of employees with disabilities who work for the city. This first year has been a planning year, including presentations to the Mayor's Management Team and the Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative Core Team, as well as conducting a survey with the departments on their hiring needs. Their work will continue into the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

<sup>1</sup> Lakeland Care District, Clarity Care, We Are Hope, Goodwill of North Central Wisconsin, Disability:IN Wisconsin, Wisconsin Association for People Supporting Employment First (WI APSE), Best Buddies, Rangam SourceAble, and the City of Madison

## Promoting Best Practices and Building Capacity

Four agencies that provide job development and job coaching services to people with disabilities were supported by the Partners with Business grant coach to analyze their current practices to find areas where they could improve employer partnerships and implement strategies to reduce Medicaid funded job supports. After receiving training and technical assistance, they reported significant gains in understanding evidence-based practices for providing job coaching supports. They also reported that they took the time to analyze workplace culture and intentionally used strategies to develop natural supports with employers. After one agency experienced this initial success, the leadership of Goodwill of North Central Wisconsin decided to launch an organization-wide quality improvement effort to improve employer engagement and reduce Medicaid funded job coaching support. Read more about their efforts to **build capacity**.

### Partners with Business Capacity Building:



Ensure good job matches between employers and job seekers with disabilities;



Empower employers to directly train and supervise their employees with disabilities;



Cultivate workplace inclusion and natural supports;



Maximize independence on the job for workers with disabilities; and



Reimburse employers for the costs of providing formal support above and beyond the “natural supports” typically found in the workplace to their employees with disabilities, rather than relying on outside job coaches provided by a vocational agency.

## Partners with Business Success Story

Panera Bread in Oshkosh has employed Luis for 5 years. He works 14 hours per week. Before joining the Partners with Business initiative, Goodwill provided 14 hours of job coaching support to Luis each week. In other words, Luis was supported by an outside job coach 100% of the hours he worked at Panera. Goodwill of North Central Wisconsin and Panera worked together to develop a stronger partnership and network of natural supports for Luis at work. These positive changes mean more independence for Luis at work. He now gets the support he needs from his manager and coworkers, with only occasional check-in support from Goodwill staff. He no longer needs any job coaching support from Goodwill. This new partnership between Goodwill and Panera saves the Medicaid system approximately \$21,000 per year. Check out the **video** about this partnership.



The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) mission is to help people with developmental disabilities become independent, productive, and included in all facets of community life.