



2006 Bakersfield Cross Agency Health Coverage and Benefits Training on Work and Disability: Evaluation Report—November 2, 2006

Introduction

The California Health Incentives Improvement Project (CHIIP) conducts statewide training and outreach on benefits, work and disability. Training and outreach activities are designed for independent living center staff, cross-agency and county program staff, employment services, employer Human Resource departments and other service providers who work with individuals with disabilities. The main purpose of the trainings is to increase the capacity of program staff who work with individuals with disabilities to supply information which will enable and encourage persons with disabilities to seek gainful employment while pre-serving benefits. CHIIP presentations include how to use benefits information online at the web-site Disability Benefits 101 (DB101), *Working with a Disability in California*. In addition, participants learn about new laws and benefits planning services for working Californians with a disability, Medi-Cal benefits for working Califor-

nians with a disability, using In-Home Supportive Services in the workplace, how work incentives support employment, and how benefits programs interact with each other. Trainings also include how to use benefits information online at the website, ***Disability Benefits 101 (DB101), Working with a Disability in California***. The 2006 cross agency trainings emphasize familiarizing participants with the new Benefits to Work Calculator that can be accessed on the DB101 website. The benefits to work calculator shows individuals with disabilities how their benefits might change should they go to work.

Thus, the 2006 training sessions emphasize teaching benefits planners how to access and use the Benefits to Work Calculator. In addition, participants in the training learn about:

- New laws and benefits planning services for the working disabled
- Medi-CAL benefits for the working disabled

- In-Home Supportive Services Providers in the workplace
- Social Security's new Ticket to Work program
- How work incentives support employment
- How programs interact with each other

- Social Security Administration

The training covers public and private health, benefit and employment programs and protections, and introduces trainees to Disability Benefits 101, www.db101.org ("working with a disability in California.") Participants from different agencies are encouraged to get to know each other, share resources and create networks beyond the one-day training. The Fresno trainings took place at the California State University, Fresno, and at the Fresno Regional Center. Participants were provided snacks and lunch, along with a resource manual to which they can refer after the training. Trainings are conducted by Bryon MacDonald from the World Institute on Disability, Maria Iriarte, Protection and Advocacy, Inc., and Abygail Medina, California Department of Rehabilitation.

Partners include:

- Fresno County Public Authority
- Center for Independent Living, Fresno
- Tulare County Department of Education
- Fresno City College, Disabled Students Programs and Services
- California Institute on Human Services at Sonoma State University

Evaluation Results

Participants

Thirteen people attended the Bakersfield training and all of the participants filled out the exit questionnaire (100% response rate).

Participants' Affiliation

Bakersfield cross agency training participants reported that they were mainly non-profit organization staff (7 people, 54%).

- Community non-profit staff (7 people, 54%)
 - Kern Regional Center (6 people)
 - BARC (one person)
- Public agency staff (4 people, 30%)
 - Kern County Mental Health (2 people)
 - Social Security Administration (1 person)
 - One person did not indicate which agency
- Educator (1 person, 8%)
- Did not indicate their affiliation (8%)

How Participants Heard About the Training

These participants heard about the training session mainly from a colleague connected with their place of work (8 people, 62%)

- Colleague connected with work (8 people, 62%)
- Non-profit organization (4 people, 30%)
 - Kern Regional Center (4 people)
- Other (one person, 8%)
 - H.I.R.E. committee

Prior Knowledge Compared to Knowledge After the Training

Participants were asked several questions designed to assess their levels of knowledge before they participated in the health and benefits training on work and disability, and were also asked to assess their levels of knowledge after having participated in the training (see Table 1

Topic	Average Knowledge Before the Training	Average Knowledge After the Training	Statistical Test: Significance of Difference
Public disability income programs (e.g., SDI, SSI, SSDI, CAPI):	2.54 "An average amount"	3.54 "A lot of knowledge"	$t(12) = -3.39$, $p < .05^*$
Health coverage options for people with disabilities:	2.38 "Some previous knowledge"	3.31 "An average amount"	$t(12) = -2.98$, $p < .05^*$
General knowledge on health and employment services available:	2.54 "An average amount"	3.38 "An average amount"	$t(12) = -3.09$, $p < .05^*$
How benefits programs interact to support entry, re-entry or advancement in the workplace:	2.15 "Some previous knowledge"	3.08 "An average amount"	$t(12) = -2.65$ $p < .05^*$
Tools (such as the benefits to work calculator and the disability 101 website) available for people with disabilities:	1.69 "Some previous knowledge"	3.46 "An average amount"	$t(12) = -4.01$, $p < .05^*$
250% Medi-Cal Working Disabled program:	1.92 "Some previous knowledge"	3.15 "An average amount"	$t(12) = -2.99$, $p < .05^*$
Youth Transitions and Section 301 Protections:	1.62 "Some previous knowledge"	2.77 "An average amount"	$t(12) = -3.09$, $p < .05^*$

Table 1: A paired samples t-test for non-independent samples was conducted on each pair to determine if the differences in averages are statistically significant. A $p < .05^*$ indicates that the two averages are statistically significant from each other, meaning that the observed differences in averages were unlikely to occur due to chance.

on this page). They rated their levels of knowledge as 1) "No previous knowledge," 2) "Some previous knowledge," 3) "An average amount of knowledge," 4) "A lot of knowledge," and 5) "Extremely knowledgeable." As shown in table one, overall, participants rated their previous knowledge as below the average amount on five of the items, but also rated an increase in knowledge to "an average amount" on those items after the training. Participants reported "A lot of knowledge" about public disability income programs after the training. Further, each pair of averages show an increase in amount of knowledge after the training. A paired samples t-test was conducted to determine whether or not these differences in

averages are statistically significant. For each topic, the differences in averages were statistically significant, meaning that the reported increase in amounts of knowledge after the training were unlikely to have occurred due to chance.

Participants' levels of preparation to carry out benefits training activities before compared to after the training
Participants were asked questions designed to assess their levels of preparation to carry out specific benefits training activities both before and after the training (see Table 2 on page 4). They rated their levels of preparation as 1) "Not at all prepared," 2) "A little prepared," 3) "Somewhat prepared," 4) "A lot prepared," and 5) "Extremely prepared." As

Activity	Average Preparation Before the Training	Average Preparation After the Training	Statistical Test: Significance of Difference
Work with individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain health care coverage when preparing to go to work	2.46 "A little prepared"	3.23 "Somewhat prepared"	$t(12) = -2.99$, $p < .05^*$
Navigate public, private, state and federal income and health care coverage programs	2.38 "A little prepared"	3.15 "Somewhat prepared"	$t(12) = -4.63$, $p < .05^*$
Identify a network of disability benefit program resources	2.54 "Somewhat prepared"	3.31 "Somewhat prepared"	$t(12) = -2.54$, $p < .05^*$
Utilize a network of disability benefit program resources	2.31 "A little prepared"	3.31 "Somewhat prepared"	$t(12) = -3.95$ $p < .05^*$

Table 2: A paired samples t-test for non-independent samples was conducted on each pair to determine if the differences in averages are statistically significant. A $p < .05^*$ indicates that the two averages are statistically significant from each other, meaning that the observed differences in averages were unlikely to occur due to chance.

shown in table two, overall, participants rated their previous preparation as below the average amount on almost every item, but also rated an increase preparation to at least "somewhat prepared" on those items after the training. Again, a paired samples t-test was conducted on each pair of averages to determine whether or not the differences in averages were statistically significant. For each activity, the differences in averages were statistically significant, meaning that the reported increases in levels of preparation after the training were unlikely to have occurred due to chance.

Do participants anticipate an increase in benefits counseling activities and referrals?

Participants were asked whether they anticipated a change in the number of times they engage in the benefits counseling and referral activities described below in Table 3, and indicated their reasons for their yes or no answer. Fifty-four percent of the participants indicated that they an-

icipated an increase in the number of times they engage in these activities. Participants who indicated no anticipated change (31%; 2 people, 15%, did not answer) also stated that it is not currently in their job description to do so, or that they do this as a part of their job on a daily basis and do not anticipate an increase in counseling activities. Table 3 (page 5) shows the overall anticipated change in activities (they rated the number of times they engaged in the activities in the past, as well as the number of times they anticipate engaging in the same activities in the future). Answers ranged from 1) "Not at all," 2) "One time a month," 3) "More than once a month," 4) "Once a week," and 5) "More than once a week."

Participants reported anticipating an increase in the number of times in the future that they will access benefits planning information on the internet as well as engage in benefits planning activities with individuals with disabilities (from "one time a month" to "more than once a month"). They reported a slight increase in the number of times in the future they anticipated referring individuals with dis-

Activity	Average Amount Before the Training	Average Amount After the Training	Statistical Test: Significance of Difference
Attempt to access benefits planning information via the Internet, telephone or printed materials	2.28 "One time a month"	3.31 "More than once a month"	t(12) = -4.50, p < .05*
Engage in benefits planning activities with individuals with disabilities	2.31 "One time a month"	3.08 "More than once a month"	t(12) = -2.74, p < .05*
Refer individuals with disabilities to other organizations for assistance with benefits planning	2.85 "More than once a month"	3.08 "More than once a month"	t(12) = -.90, p > .05, <i>ns</i>

Table 3: A paired samples t-test for non-independent samples was conducted on each pair to determine if the differences in averages are statistically significant. A $p < .05^*$ indicates that the two averages are statistically significant from each other, meaning that the observed differences in averages were unlikely to occur due to chance. A $p > .05$, *ns*, indicates that chance cannot be eliminated as the reason for any observed differences in averages.

abilities to other agencies for assistance with benefits and planning. The reported increase in the amount in which they anticipated accessing information on the internet and engaging in planning activities with individuals with disabilities was statistically significant. The slight increase in the average amount participants reported that they would refer individuals with disabilities to other agencies was, however, not statistically significant.

Overall Ratings

Participants provided overall ratings of several components of the training session. Ratings are on a one to five scale, one being the lowest possible rating for that item, and five being the highest possible rating. As shown in table 4 (page 6), very high ratings were given to each component of the training.

Comments and Suggestions

Several open-ended questions at the end of the survey allowed participants to give more in-depth information about their experiences at the cross agency Training, along with their opinions and suggestions for future training sessions. The following bulleted lists summarize the percentage of comments offered in particular categories, and provide a few representative examples of some of the comments made.

Strengths of the training: The majority of participants' comments (46%) were in reference to the knowledge and expertise of the trainer.

- Knowledge and expertise of trainer (46%)
- Calculator (23%)
- Content of the training (23%)
- Having agency representatives available (8%)

Weaknesses of the training: Many of these comments (29%) stated that the question was not applicable, suggesting

Training Activity	Average Rating (scale = 1-5)	Standard Deviation from the Average
The presenters were effective:	4.69	.48
The presenters were knowledgeable:	4.85	.38
The presentation was well organized:	4.46	.66
The length and pace of the training was appropriate:	4.31	1.03
The training manual was explained well during the training:	4.62	.51
I would recommend this training to my peers or colleagues:	4.85	.38
The real case scenarios and DB101 Life Situations were helpful to me:	4.54	.66
The overview on public and private income support programs was helpful to me:	4.46	.66
The review on Medi-Cal eligibility categories (which included SSI linked Medi-Cal, section 1619(b) of Social Security Act and Work, and the Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program) was helpful to me:	4.69	.48
Information about Youth Transitions and Section 301 Protections Overview was helpful to me	4.31	.75
The benefits-to-work calculator demonstration was helpful to me:	4.77	.44
Overall, the training increased my ability to communicate with job seekers with disabilities about health and work incentive laws:	4.58	.51
Overall, the training had a positive impact on my knowledge, abilities, and skills:	4.67	.49
Overall, the training will have a positive impact on the individuals served by my organization:	4.58	.51

that many participants did not think there were any weaknesses.

- Not applicable (29%)
- Organizational “glitches” (29%)
 - Equipment glitch
 - A/V problems
 - Room was cold
- Need more time, or more than one day (29%)
- Need a list with contact information for

local agencies (13%)

Were participants’ goals and objectives met? Nine out of ten people who offered comments indicated that their goals and objectives were met, while one person indicated that they did not have any goals coming in because they were serving a supportive role. Other comments in this section included:

- They are better informed and prepared to advise clients (38% of comments)
- There was a lot of information available or they learned a lot (38%)
- Excellent written materials (12%)
- All of their questions were answered (12%)

Did their knowledge increase as a result of the training? Eight out of nine people who answered this question indicated that their knowledge increased as a result of the training, while one individual indicated that the question was not applicable to them. Of the few comments offered here, the most frequently mentioned was that participants appreciated having access to updated information so that they are better able to inform their clients.

Suggestions: Most of the comments offered here were not relevant to the training session per se, but of those comments relevant to the training, one said they had none (suggesting again that the training is effective as is), and one person mentioned having the training session regularly, on a yearly basis.

Miscellaneous: Participants were given the opportunity to add anything else they thought was relevant to their experience at the cross agency training. All of the participants who offered comments here took the opportunity to thank facilitators, to indicate their appreciation for the opportunity, or to praise the success of the cross agency training. One participant noted:

"Good pace [and] good interaction between trainer and trainees."

Summary

The evaluation results indicate that the Bakersfield cross agency full day training was very much a success. Comparing the average ratings of previous knowledge on disability and benefits topics to knowledge after receiving the training indicates that participants felt significantly more knowledgeable about these topics after the all day training. Participants indicated that they were significantly more prepared to carry out important benefits counseling activities with their clients. They also reported that they anticipated an increase in the number of times they would access benefits planning resources on the internet and engage in benefits planning activities with clients in the future, however, they did not anticipate an increase in the number of times they would refer individuals with disabilities to other agencies, perhaps because this is the one activity that they had already engaged in more than once a month in the past.

Participants' comments on the open ended section of the survey also indicated success. Participants pointed out to various strengths of the training, but had much less to say about weaknesses. In particular, participants appreciated the knowledge and know-how of the trainer, as well as the calculator, the content of the training, and having agency representatives available to them. They also indicated that their

goals and objectives were met during the training and that the training helped to increase their knowledge on various topics.

One thing was not captured in this evaluation was the emphasis on and the usefulness of the benefits to work calculator and the DB101 website. However, this is more of a function of the evaluation tool (the survey questions) rather than the training itself. A suggestion for the future would be to include questions in the survey similar to those included in the New Tools for Success half day evaluation forms that specifically address whether or not the calculator will be useful to them in the future, and whether or not participants are more hopeful that individuals can work without losing their benefits. These questions really captured why having these tools available to benefits counselors and disabled individuals is so important. That said, the absence of these data do not mitigate the apparent success of the Bakersfield cross agency all day training session.

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Please direct any comments, questions or suggestions regarding this report to:

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