

RETAIN Sustainability Workshop: Funding Stability –Notes

Facilitators: Gabe Matthews

August 28, 2024

Gabe welcomed participants and facilitated introductions. He gave a brief refresher on the first session, strategic vision.

He then gave a funding stability overview where he touched on the importance of evaluating the different aspects of the program to sustain, the need to assess program resources, the need to diversify funding sources, and the need to develop a funding plan.

Gabe then told participants that they would be placed in four breakout groups for discussion. Each breakout would discuss a different question on the topic of funding stability. The questions included were (a) How might we continue or expand RETAIN's programmatic innovations? (b) How might we maintain program resources to ensure RETAIN's long-term successes? (c) How might we identify optimal and diverse funding sources to support prioritized program structures and strategies? and (d) How might we adapt areas of RETAIN to accommodate new funding opportunities and minimize budget shortfalls?

Discussion from Breakout Room Four: How might we adapt areas of RETAIN to accommodate new funding opportunities and minimize budget shortfalls?

- Vermont said it has a few irons in the fire. For example, it applied for the disability innovation fund grant, which would help fund a health coach program and create a more integrated and streamlined flow. Vocational rehabilitation would come from the disability innovation grant funding and would be a subawardee of the grant.
- Ohio has a sustainability plan that connects RTW case management along with leave management. This would be a service that Ohio would sell to employers and would be used to fund RETAIN. Ohio's RETAIN program is also part of the Mercy Health System, and Ohio RETAIN has backing from Mercy in terms of sustainability. Ohio is also looking into additional grants and using partnerships they have already established.
- Kansas is assessing existing systems in different regions of the state (e.g., rural and metropolitan areas) to see what services are available in those regions and how they can provide services. The state also is looking to find partners from specific communities.
- Minnesota plans to adapt its RETAIN program to accommodate new funding. It has shifted to enrolling through provider referrals. The state previously had used subrecipients and has a direct referral line through its website; not using subrecipients will save a lot of money. Minnesota has also applied for the disability innovation fund grant as well. New legislation that passed in the state has expanded eligibility for the funding dedicated to dislocated workers to ill

and injured workers. Local workforce boards can now access those dollars to provide services to those individuals.

Large Group Share-Out

After the breakout rooms ended, Gabe led participants through a large group share-out.

Group: How might we continue or expand RETAIN's programmatic innovations?

- This group talked about the need to reach out to community partners to spread the work of RETAIN. It discussed the need to increase employer engagement and find different funding resources. It talked about the need to expand into rural areas and focusing on the bio and psychosocial aspects. The group also highlighted the importance of getting stakeholders to see the necessity for keeping people at work.

Group: How might we identify optimal and diverse funding sources to support prioritized program structures and strategies?

- This group discussed looking into current federal and WIOA grants. It discussed looking into partnerships with healthcare systems, including clinical reimbursement and case management programs. It talked about corporate sponsorships that may provide funding and keeping an eye on the political landscape, which could also affect funding.

Group: How might we adapt areas of RETAIN to accommodate new funding opportunities and minimize budget shortfalls?

- This group talked about modifying their program slightly to save money and services they could sell to employees. Multiple states mentioned applying for grants that directly relate to the work. This group also talked about leveraging past partnerships.