

The Arc of New Jersey/Project HIRE

Frank DeLucca, Director

Fiscal 2013/2014

OUTCOME MANAGEMENT REPORT

Project HIRE, The Arc of New Jersey's supported employment program, is in its 29th year of providing supported employment services to people with disabilities. This past year, the program provided services to nearly 600 participants in 16 New Jersey counties, and since 1985 has placed thousands of people with disabilities into independent community jobs.

Project HIRE continues to support New Jersey's designation as an "Employment First" state and advocates for the position that competitive employment should be the first and preferred post-education activity for everyone, including people with disabilities. Our Governor has declared that "Everyone should have the opportunity to be productive, earn a living, and feel a sense of personal fulfillment from employment" and Project HIRE has been pro-active to help ensure that people with disabilities become and remain an important part of New Jersey's workforce.

In its school-to-work program Project HIRE saw several new milestones. We created a core team whose time in the field is devoted almost entirely to serving our student population. The team is headed up by a supervisory staff member whose sole responsibility is to job development and classroom instruction. Our life skills classroom component starts as early as middle school and its curriculum is designed to pair classroom instruction to community participation in an effort to equip students with the knowledge and resources for successful employment. Our school-to-work staff members regularly attend IEP and CST meetings, transition fairs, and back-to-school nights to contribute to the vocational planning and success of the students.

The Arc of New Jersey/Project HIRE management team continued to work toward fashioning policy and technology to meet changing eligibility, record-keeping, and billing requirements of our funding sources. These changes, introduced last year, are now scheduled to go into effect and The Arc of New Jersey is comfortably prepared for the changeover.

All Project HIRE staff members have the certifications required by our funding sources, and continuously participate in workshops, seminars, and conferences that enhance their skills and professional development. Many staff members belong to organizations across the state whose mission is to advocate and advance "Employment First".

With many milestones this past year, some of the more prominent highlights and events, by month, are as follows:

July

Project HIRE staff participated in a special panel discussion hosted by the New Jersey Association of Persons Supporting Employment-First (NJAPSE) on providing effective, results-orientated Community-Based Vocational Assessments, with highlights of the presentation published for dissemination throughout the state.

August

Project HIRE entered into agreements with many school districts for their 2013/2014 student transition services, and offered districts a new, and free, classroom component, funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities; The Arc of New Jersey's "Planning for Adult Life" (PFAL).

September

The program's Assistant Director teamed with The Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Director Alice Hunnicutt to present to a coalition of federal contractors in New Jersey on meeting employment needs with people with disabilities.

October

Project HIRE was represented at the annual Autism NJ conference, the Middlesex Education Services Advisory Council, and participated in a charity-awareness forum for public sector employees working in state government. In an annual event, Project HIRE partnered with select Long Horn Restaurants in New Jersey and hosted luncheons for program participants to observe October as "Disabilities Awareness Month".

November

The Assistant Director attended the New Jersey Alliance for Full Participation and the Cape May Disabilities Awareness Day, while in our school program a new position, "Job Developer for Student Services", was created to better serve an increasing population in Project HIRE's transition program.

December

The leadership of Project HIRE changed hands when Frank DeLucca was named as Director of the program, reporting to Assistant Executive Director Michael Prendergast. The new Director attended the annual Arc awards dinner where his nominee for Educator of the Year, Edison Assistant Superintendent Christopher Conklin, received the award.

January

Project HIRE made another strong commitment to excellence in service delivery by creating and filling the position of Coordinator for Quality Assurance and Operations, a position that oversees operations and compliance to policy for the program statewide.

February

The Director was interviewed and appeared in a short public-awareness video entitled "Believe and You Can Achieve", which also featured Project HIRE participants and staff. The video received mention in the monthly newsletter of The Arc of the United States.

March

The program was reviewed for its tri-annual accreditation survey by the Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The survey re-affirmed Project HIRE's commitment to quality of service delivery and awarded the program with a full three-year accreditation. The NJAPSE annual conference and workshops were held, with several staff members in attendance to see Project HIRE's nominee, the Shop-Rite corporation, receive the "Employer of the Year" award.

April

Project HIRE's Director joined with supported employment agency directors from across the state for discussions on the future of NJ's Medicaid eligibility at a meeting of NJ CeArc, and was also a member of the Middlesex County Area Transportation grant-funding committee, which voted on this year's county specialized transportation budget.

May

Project HIRE field staff were trained in the use of new wireless technology that greatly enhanced their ability to record, save, and share daily case notes and service logs with funders and stakeholders directly from the field, and the program's Director and Quality Assurance coordinator began to research software programs to meet our future needs for Medicaid reporting and billing.

June

Project HIRE closed the books on another successful school year, where over 7,770 service hours were recorded, while at our state office the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities completed a two day audit of the program, rendering a very positive final report.

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Outcome Evaluation Results July 2013 to June 2014

Objective 1 : *To place a minimum of 40 people per quarter into competitive employment*

Fiscal Year	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
1st Qtr (Jul 1-Sept 30)	41	29	33
2nd Qtr (Oct 1-Dec 31)	44	33	48
3rd Qtr (Jan 1-Mar 31)	37	29	22
4th Qtr (Apr 1-Jun 30)	42	61	35
Year Total	164	152	138

The overall employment picture brightened in 2013/14, as did the placement report for Project HIRE, with placements increasing by 8% over last year. We exceeded our goal in three of the years quarters and also succeeded in reaching our goal for the year.

As the national and state hiring picture gets brighter, Project HIRE staff looks forward to more hiring opportunities for our participants.

Objective 2: *For at least 75% of individuals to remain employed 6 months or more **

Percent of Participants Remaining in Job:

For placements made in:	<u>2013*</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Percentage remaining employed:			
1 month after placement	86.4	96.9	88.1
2 months	90.0	90.7	80.9
6 months	68.2	73.4	70.9
12 months	70.8	69.0	55.4

*Individuals placed in jobs in the 2012/2013 fiscal year were tracked to determine job retention

Job retention rates dropped slightly over last year, and the goal of 75% in the 6 month timeframe remains just out of reach as it has in recent years. None-the-less, we came very close to our objective and continue to work to improve the retention rate.

Despite a number of participants having eligibility reversals for in FY2014, our follow-along services continue to be available for a substantial majority of participants to help ensure long term employment stability.

Objective 3 : *To place all participants within 60 days of referral.**

For placements in :	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
<i>Placed less than 30 days from referral</i>	(29) 17%	12%	18%
<i>31-60 days</i>	(29) 17%	20%	21%
61-90 days	(32) 21%	17%	26%
91-180 days	(38) 23%	16%	12%
More than 180 days	(36) 22%	26%	24%

*does not include re-placements or school placements

34% of our placements were made within 60 days of referral. Our placement rate in placing within a 180 day or 6 month period has historically been in within 70-75%, so this past year's 78% exceeded our previous performance in that category.

Our continuing goal of placing 100% of our referrals within 60 days, although challenging to obtain, remains an important one; our objective is that all referrals get the most immediate and quality-driven attention possible from our program.

Objective 4: *Ensure appropriate staffing, training, and other resources to meet the needs of individuals served in consideration of demographics.*

Project HIRE continuously monitors the demographics of the population served. It is our resolve to research and utilize any and all resources available to best assist an increasingly diverse referral pool.

To meet the diverse needs of all participants, we employ bi-lingual job coaches that are available to any office or funding source. We provide information, presentations, and trainings in bi-lingual format, and maintain a library of materials on serving a diverse population. To assist people with different disabilities, staff also receive training and attend in-service sessions addressing service

delivery for people with brain injury, mental illness, dual diagnoses, etc. and Project HIRE regularly explores alternate training opportunities for its staff in these areas.

Objective 5: To bill a minimum of 9,800 hours per quarter, or 39,200 hours per year.

Billable Hours:

	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
1 st Quarter	8,817	7,517	8,781
2 nd Quarter	9,072	7,588	9,521
3 rd Quarter	10,470	9,125	9,013
4 th Quarter	10,406	10,297	8,373
Total:	38,675	34,527	35,688

Project HIRE achieved its objective in the second and third quarter, but was short of our goal for the year. Despite that, we accomplished an acceptable number of placements with the billable hours produced.

Billable hours are constantly studied and analyzed, as they serve as the primary indicator of the program's fiscal condition and an important factor for future planning

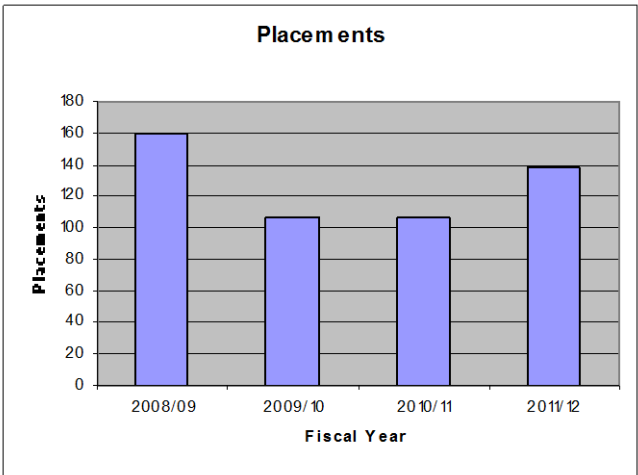
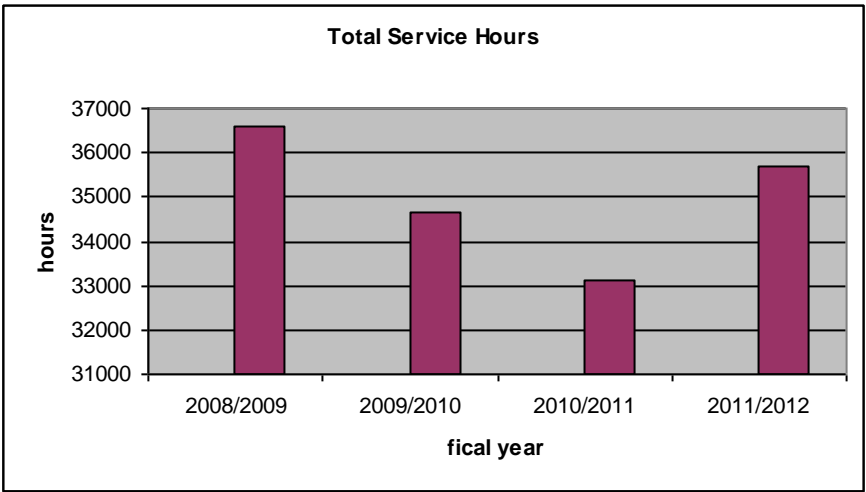
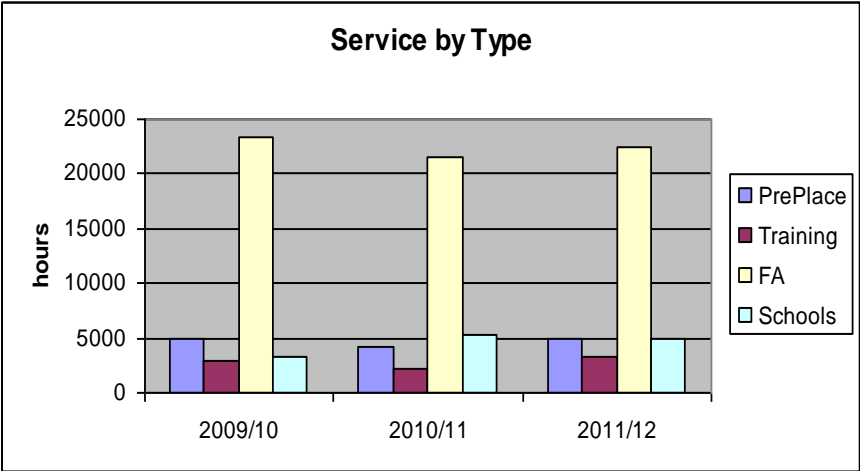
Objective 6: Maintain staff stability with a retention rate of at least 70 percent.

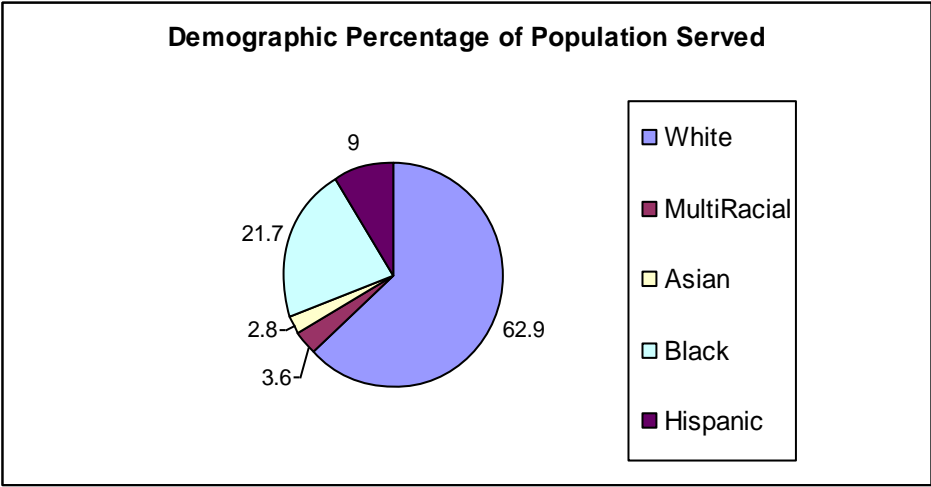
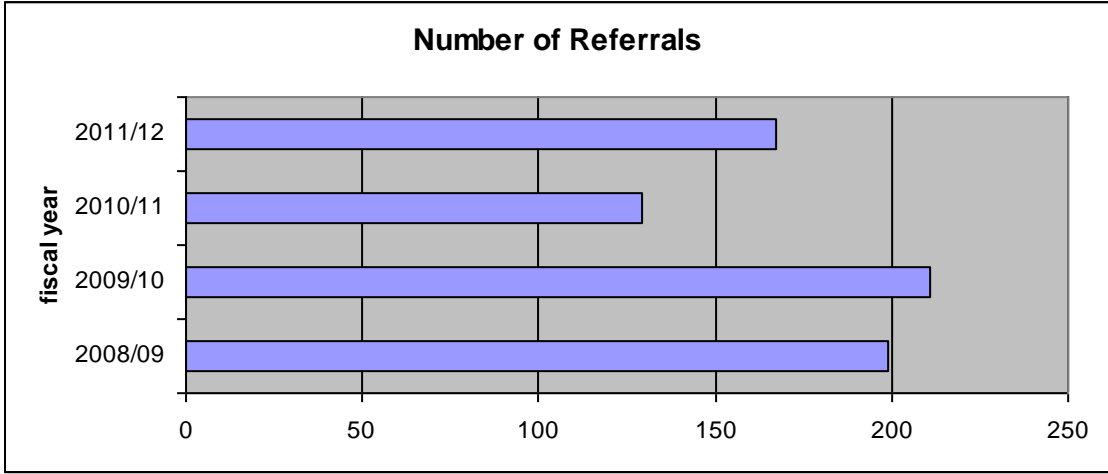
Project HIRE prides itself on having a professional, well trained and dedicated staff, several of which have long tenure with the program. Ten of our thirty three staff members have been with us for over 10 years.

After experiencing the departure of ten staff members in FY2014, our staff retention rate is 69.7%, just short of our goal. We continue a high level of confidence in staff ability to deliver a quality service to people participating in the program.

Objectives for Next Year:

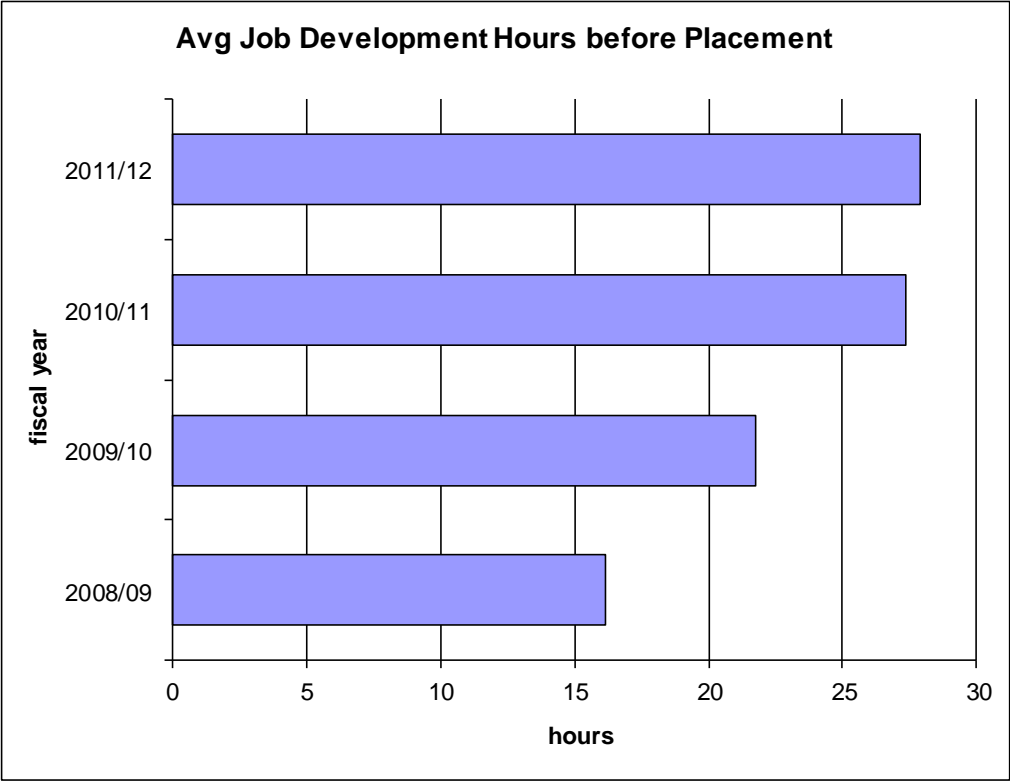
1. Place a minimum of 40 people per quarter (160 participants) in competitive employment
2. Maintain a retention rate of 6 month or more for at least 75% of placed individuals.
3. Place 100% of newly referred individuals into community employment within 60 days of referral.
4. Ensure staffing meets the needs of population served as indicated by participant demographics.
5. Provide 9,600 service hours per quarter.
6. Maintain staff retention rate of 70% or higher





Participants by Gender:

Male-328 Female 223



Population Served-Disability/Impairment

