



Kansas Employment First Grant Steering Committee

August 12, 2026



Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Overview
- Kansas Employment First Project Highlight: TARC
- Grant Partner Updates
- Discussion from the Steering Committee
- Next Steps



Introductions

- Please put your name and the organization you represent into the chat
- Remember that private messages are recorded in the final chat transcript
- *We utilize Zoom AI Companion to help with notetaking
- *This meeting is being record to be shared on our website



2026 Meeting Updates

- Quarterly Meetings

- ☒ • February 11, 2026

- ☒ • May 13, 2026

- ☒ • August 12, 2026

- November **16**, 2026

- Invites and materials will come from ksemployment1st@ku.edu



Prior Steering Committee Materials

- Website is hosted by KUUCD
 - KansasEmploymentFirst.org
- Steering Committee materials can be access at this website
 - [Steering Committee](#)



Project Overview

Statewide initiative led by:

- Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services
- Kansas University on Disabilities (KUCD)
- Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE)
- Institute for Community Inclusion, UMASS Boston (ICI)

Focuses on expanding Employment First pilot project to capacity for competitive integrated employment (CIE)

Provides Technical Assistance to providers not in the pilot

Pilots Data Collection and Visualization tool



Key Components of Phase 2



Grant Pilot Expansion



Training & Technical Assistance



Data & Policy Monitoring



Phase 2 of Pilot

- Launch Event - January 2026
 - Technical Assistance: Mentors in Specific Areas of Need
 - Training – KS ACRE 100, Project to Placement
 - Set Goals
 - 7 CIE Jobs each
 - Complete Organizational Self - Assessment
 - Create Action Plan
 - Submit to Data Dashboard
- 7 Providers Over 1 Year
 - COF Training Services Inc.
 - Easter Seals Midwest
 - Good Life
 - Hetlinger Developmental Services, Inc.
 - Inclusion Connections
 - Journeys, Inc.
 - TARC



TARC

Service · Support · Advocacy

Phase 2 Project Highlight

Presentation Overview

Who We Are

TARC's history, mission, programs, and longstanding commitment to employment services.

Employment First Journey

Why we joined the project, what we learned, and how our practices have evolved.

Outcomes & Sustainability

Employment outcomes, success stories, and how we will continue building capacity.

About TARC

Serving individuals with disabilities and their families in Shawnee County

- TARC, Inc. was founded in 1954 by parents and advocates seeking stronger resources and support for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).
- Today, TARC provides services across the lifespan, including Children & Family Support, Avenues Day Service, Employment Services, Assistive Technology, Feeding Clinic, TCM, Self-Determination, and TARC Industries.
- Our organization has grown from a grassroots movement into a comprehensive community support provider while maintaining a focus on compassionate, person-centered services.
- TARC has provided Employment Services since 1962, making it one of Shawnee County's longest-running supported employment providers.

Our Journey in Employment Services

1960s

TARC began providing vocational support and helping individuals build skills for meaningful work.

1980s

As community need grew, TARC Industries and Employment Services expanded job training, placement, and ongoing support.

Today

Choice, individualized support, and helping people pursue work that fits their goals remain central to our employment services.

Why We Joined the Employment First Project

Our goals for participation

Strengthen Knowledge

Expand our team's knowledge of supported employment and Employment First practices.

Improve Our Process

Refine our approach so services are more efficient, coordinated, and responsive to each person.

Increase Community Employment

Build on our existing services to support more individuals in pursuing and sustaining competitive integrated employment.

What We Have Learned

How participation has influenced our practice

- Communication is essential. We have strengthened communication among team members, creating better coordination and consistency.
- A person-first perspective keeps individual goals, abilities, preferences, and choices at the center of employment planning.
- Challenges and unsuccessful attempts are opportunities to learn, adjust supports, and continue moving forward—not signs that the process has failed.
- The project has helped us sharpen our supported employment skills and identify ways to make our process more effective.

Our Employment Support Process

From individual goals to sustained community employment

1. Assess

Identify the individual's goals, needs, abilities, interests, and support requirements.

2. Prepare & Connect

Provide individualized support with job exploration, applications, employer connections, and preparation for community work.

3. Start & Sustain

Support the individual through starting the job, learning expectations, addressing barriers, and maintaining employment.

Employment Outcomes

Progress since beginning the Employment First Program

16

individuals supported in new job placements

6

individuals transitioned from our job training facility into new placements

- Individuals from our job training facility receive the same individualized employment approach as other referrals.
- We assess each person's needs and abilities and provide support throughout the employment journey—from job search and starting work to long-term job retention.

Success Story: Harley

SUCCESS Story

MEET HARLEY

Harley is a valued member of the Topeka community.

Since **June 8, 2026**, Harley has worked for the **City of Topeka** as a **Blight Abatement Worker**.

Harley's hard work, dedication, and positive attitude make him a valuable asset to his team and the community he serves.



Hard work. Teamwork. Success.

-  **HARLEY'S IMPACT**
 - RELIABLE & DEDICATED**
Consistently shows up ready to work and gets the job done.
 - TEAM PLAYER**
Works well with others and supports his team every day.
 - COMMUNITY PRIDE**
Helps keep Topeka neighborhoods cleaner, safer, and stronger through his daily work.
 - MAKING A DIFFERENCE**
His work has a direct impact on improving the quality of life in our community.

 **WHY IT MATTERS**

Employment is more than a job—it builds **confidence**, **independence**, and a sense of **purpose**.



Harley's success shows what's possible when opportunities and support work together.

Thank you,
Harley, for being such an important part of our community! 

 **STRONGER TOGETHER. BETTER FOR BUSINESS. BETTER FOR OUR COMMUNITY.**

TARC
Employment Services
*Connecting People.
Building Futures.*

 **EMPLOYER PARTNER**
City of Topeka
 **START DATE**
June 8, 2026
 **POSITION**
Blight Abatement Worker


*Changing Lives.
Strengthening Our Community.*

Success Story: Tasha

SUCCESS Story

MEET TASHA

Tasha is a Lobby Attendant, working as an important part of the McDonald's team.

She started with her employer on April 6, 2026.

Tasha's dedication, positive attitude, and strong work ethic make her a valuable member of the team. She takes pride in her work and helps create a clean, welcoming environment for every customer every day.



Hard work. Teamwork. Success.

TASHA'S IMPACT

- RELIABLE & CONSISTENT**
Shows up ready to work and can always be counted on.
- CUSTOMER FOCUSED**
Provides a clean, welcoming environment and friendly service for every guest.
- TEAM PLAYER**
Works well with others and supports the team's success every day.
- ATTENTION TO DETAIL**
Takes pride in keeping the lobby clean, organized, and inviting.
- MAKING A DIFFERENCE**
Helps create a positive first impression and a great experience for every customer.

WHY IT MATTERS

Employment is more than a job—it builds confidence, independence, responsibility, and a sense of purpose.

Tasha's success shows what's possible when opportunities and support work together.

Thank you,
Tasha, for being such an important part of the team!

STRONGER TOGETHER. BETTER FOR BUSINESS. BETTER FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

TARC
Employment Services
Connecting People.
Building Futures.

EMPLOYER PARTNER
McDonald's
START DATE
April 6, 2026
POSITION
Lobby Attendant

Changing Lives.
Strengthening Our Community.

Success Story: Mark

SUCCESS
Story ♡ +

MEET MARK

Mark is a Golf Cart & Range Attendant
with Shawnee County Parks & Rec.

He started with his employer on
March 19, 2026.

Mark's positive attitude, reliability, and strong work ethic help create a great experience for park visitors every day. He takes pride in his work and is always willing to go the extra mile to help others.



♥ Great people. Strong teams. Better parks. ♥

MARK'S IMPACT



GASSES UP CARTS

Keeps carts fueled and ready
for golfers to enjoy the course.



PUTS CARTS AWAY

Returns carts to the proper location in a safe and organized manner.



ASSISTS GOLFERS

Helps golfers returning carts after they finish their round and ensures a smooth experience.



CLEANS UP & KEEPS AREAS NEAT

Picks up trash and helps keep the course and cart areas clean, safe, and welcoming for everyone.



MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Mark's hard work and positive attitude help create a better experience for all park visitors.



STRONG

TARC
Employment Services
*Connecting People.
Building Futures.*

STRONG

EMPLOYER PARTNER
Shawnee County Parks & Recreation
START DATE
March 19, 2026
POSITION
Golf Cart & Range Attendant

WHY IT MATTERS

Employment is more than a job—
it builds confidence, independence,
responsibility, and a sense of purpose.



Thank you, Mark, for your dedication
and all you do for our parks!

We appreciate you! 



STRONGER TOGETHER. BETTER FOR BUSINESS. BETTER FOR OUR COMMUNITY.



TARC
Employment Services
*Connecting People.
Building Futures.*



EMPLOYER PARTNER
Shawnee County Parks & Rec
START DATE
March 19, 2026
POSITION
Golf Cart & Range Attendant



Changing lives
Strengthening
communities.

Building Capacity for Competitive Integrated Employment

How we plan to sustain the work

Practice Changes

Continue stronger team communication, person-first planning, and a learning mindset when barriers or setbacks occur.

Consistent Pathway

Use the same individualized assessment and employment support process for people transitioning from our job training facility and for community referrals.

Sustainability

Carry Employment First principles into day-to-day employment services, strengthen employer relationships, and continue supporting people through job placement and long-term retention.



Questions for TARC?



Grant Partner Updates

- Wise
- ICI
- KUUCD



Grant Partner Update: Capacity Building





Kansas E1st Phase 2 Provider Pilot Update

August 2026



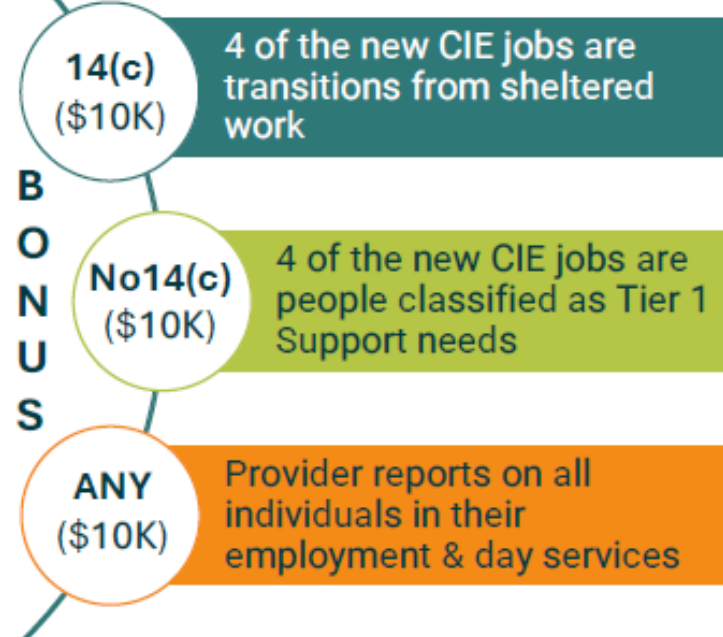


MILESTONES & BONUSES

Phase 2 Milestones



B O N U S



MILESTONE & BONUS OUTCOMES

Milestone 1 - All 7 completed

Milestone 2 – All 7 completed

Milestone 3 – All 7 completed

Milestone 4 – 3 Providers

Bonus 1 – 1 Provider

Bonus 2 – 0 Providers

Bonus 3 – 5 Providers



CIE JOBS TOTALS

Goal:

7 CIE Jobs for each of
7 Providers

49 Total CIE Jobs

Current Status:

0-14 CIE Jobs for each
of 7 Providers

44 Total CIE Jobs

CIE JOBS PROGRESS





Cohort Sessions & TA

Month	Topic
July	Financial Stability
August	Job Development Growth
September	Cultural Change & Everyone is a Job Developer
October	CIE Strategic Planning & Sustainability after the Project
November	Informed Choice
December	Celebrations – Share your Big Wins!



Grant Partner Update: Policy Analysis and Recommendations



ThinkWork!

UMASS BOSTON • ICI



Grant Partner Update: Stakeholder Engagement





Kansas Employment First Training and Technical Assistance Center

Purpose:

1. To support the development of a highly trained and networked employment support system across Kansas by providing coordinated and comprehensive training and technical assistance
2. Develop and pilot a data tracking tool to track CIE outcomes in Kansas



**Kansas University
Center on Disabilities**

Kansas Employment First Technical Assistance Team



Amanda Myers



Doug Berryman



Jason Crippen



Brindi Stables



Kendra Krier



**Kansas University
Center on Disabilities**



Kansas Employment First Training and TA Initiative

Current Technical Assistance Initiatives

- Increasing the number of VR vendors and assisting with VR Process
- Increasing the number of Working Healthy, WORK and STEPS providers
- Working with new providers and mentoring



**Kansas University
Center on Disabilities**



Kansas Employment First Training and TA Initiative

Kansas ACRE 100 Training

- Cohort 1 finished with 18 ACRE certificates issued
- Cohort 2 is finished with 42 ACRE certificates issues
- Cohort 3 begins in August 2026 through December 2026



**Kansas University
Center on Disabilities**



Questions and Discussion

- Are there any questions and/or discussion topics the steering committee would like to explore?



Next Steps

- Next meeting date for the Steering Committee has been rescheduled for **Monday, November 16, 2026 at 2pm CT.**
- Steering Committee meeting agenda and materials can be found at <https://kucd.ku.edu/steering-committee>
- [Kansasemploymentfirst.org](https://kansasemploymentfirst.org)
- ksemployment1st@kucd.edu



Thank you!