

## Systems Change – Personnel & Leadership

The employment industry for persons with disabilities contains a myriad of public and private organizations striving to maximize the independence of its customers by facilitating effective and long-lasting employment.

As an organization operating within this industry, AHEDD recognizes that its own workforce is the single greatest asset which is used to achieve its mission. There are challenges to recruiting and maintaining a quality workforce. As a decentralized regional organization, AHEDD is relatively thin within each community where it operates. This places a great emphasis on maintaining staff complements to ensure case load management and continuity when experiencing turnover. The agency tracks turnover and associated variables on a quarterly basis, reporting through a Personnel Committee to the Board, which continues to maintain a high degree of interest in this matter. The most prevalent position for the agency is Employment Specialist, and at the start of the FY 04-05, 40% of these staff had 4 or more years experience with AHEDD.

By participating in a number of unique projects throughout its areas of operations, AHEDD has been able to develop career enhancing opportunities for selected staff. Most recently, AHEDD has begun an executive development program in order to identify and develop staff for continuing leadership roles and agency succession planning.

During the last few years, AHEDD has expanded from mostly large urban and cities to deliver services in smaller communities and rural areas. A basic strategy has been to operate without offices, but rather with staff working from home offices or community locations. Customer data, service notes, as well as personnel information, such as time records are facilitated electronically through a web-based data system, AHEDD Information Management System (AIMS).

For nearly ten years, AHEDD has featured a quarterly commission program to provide a significant portion of compensation through a team based “pay for performance.” Each year this program is adjusted for goals and priorities of the agency as well as key sponsors. Currently this program represents approximately 12% of program staff compensation. AHEDD continues to enhance this program which is expected to continue become a greater component of the compensation.

AHEDD has begun FY 04-05 with 75 employees including 58 fulltime and 17 part-time. This is a 15% increase over 2 years, and 34% over a 4 year period. Regionally, 44% of AHEDD’s workforce is based in Central PA; 25% in the Philadelphia area, 15% in Western PA; 13% in Northeast PA; and 3% in DE. Over 15% of AHEDD’s workforce are minorities, and in addition, over 15% are persons with disabilities.