

Fund for Social Change

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For more information about the FAR Fund and how to apply visit:

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The OMRDD/FAR Fund Collaboration

"The partnership between the Fund for Social Change, the FAR Fund and the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities is a model of collaboration between government and private philanthropy. The project helped us pilot a new service planning process aimed at designing individualized services for a group of people on the Autism Spectrum in New York City. The state's resources could then be applied to implement the service plans. As a result, the quality of life for participants was greatly enhanced. The process is now underway with additional agencies during Phase 2, and we are excited that the collaboration continues."

-- Allen A. Schwartz, PhD
Director, Planning and Service Design
NYS OMRDD

Between its creation in 2001 and 2006, the FAR Fund, administered by the Fund for Social Change, contributed to significant reform in practice and policy in the Far Fund's three funding domains: improving and expanding services for people on the autistic spectrum, preventing violence against youth, and preventing homelessness.

Currently, the OMRDD/FAR Fund collaboration, administered by the Fund for Social Change, provides grants to agencies to provide person centered services to individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) residing in the five boroughs of New York City. The project focuses on providing person centered approaches and developing individualized services for transition planning and provision of services for late adolescents with ASD.

Phase I of the initiative began in 2003 when the FAR Fund, working with the Fund for Social Change and the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, supported three service providers—The Shield, Life's WORC and the Institute for Applied Human Dynamics (IAHD)--to support person centered lives for people on the autistic spectrum. Job Path provided technical assistance and created a support network for the agencies. The

Institute for Basic Research evaluated the initiative during each of the three years of Phase I. IBR's final evaluation concluded "...the PCP [Person Centered Planning] implementation produced positive changes in individual outcomes, organizational practices became more person-centered, and participants were pleased with the results."

Because of the successful collaboration and impact during Phase I, the collaboration has expanded to include six service providers as part of a learning community, including the original three service providers in Phase I and three new agencies: Lifespire, AHRC and the New York City Department of Education/District 75. Technical assistance and a learning network are provided by Job Path. The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities is committed to supporting participating agencies to expand the person centered services they provide to people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Options for People through Services (OPTS), Consolidated Supports and Services (CSS), Agency-With-Choice (AWC), or Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS) are ways that OMRDD might support these expanded services.

The Institute for Basic Research is continuing to conduct a yearly evaluation of the initiative. The initiative will be supported by the FAR Fund and administered by the Fund for Social Change between 2007 – 2010.