

# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

These activities are snapshots of Georgia’s progress in its effort to build a sustainable, higher-performing integrated employment system.

## Systems Change in Action: Progressing Toward the Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) to increase integrated employment to 48.9% by 2025

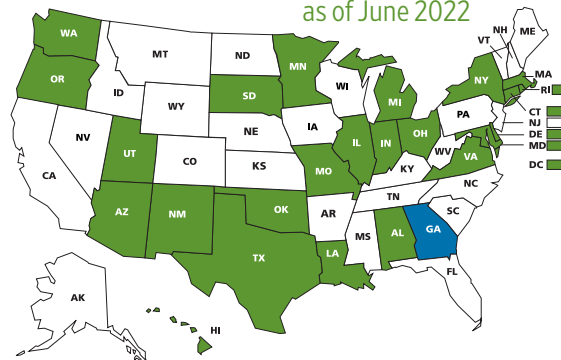
State-Funded Supported Employment Services Transformation Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) initiated several enhancements to the way state-funded Supported Employment (SE) services are implemented by consolidating SE services delivered under state funds. With this paradigm shift, DBHDD has ensured efficiency and quality in service delivery while embracing the true spirit of competitive integrated employment (CIE) in all state-funded SE services. One enhancement was the capability to refer job seekers on the DBHDD Planning List to a service provider to receive initial SE job development and supports rather than going through vocational rehabilitation to obtain employment. DBHDD Policy 02-301 (State-Funded Supported Employment Services Funded by CIE Funds) was drafted and implemented to provide guidance for supporting individuals to find employment as well as to maintain their existing employment in the community. Another enhancement was assigning DBHDD Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) staff and Navigators to work on the person-centered referral process to facilitate informed choice regarding CIE for individuals on the DBHDD Planning List. Despite the pandemic, the state of Georgia is seeing an upward trend in CIE for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). During this time, an opportunity emerged for DBHDD to refocus the delivery of state-funded resources from facility-based services to SE.

### Progress through Partnerships

DBHDD, in partnership with Wise and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), developed and implemented three on-demand training courses to provide information to assist staff in beginning the employment conversation with individuals seeking services. The training is available online for System Navigators, Intake Coordinators, GVRA Counselors, and other staff assisting individuals to access I/DD services. Topics include: overview of CIE, CIE success stories, DBHDD and GVRA processes, starting the employment conversation, Social Security work incentives, conversation practice, person-centered information and planning, systems navigator roles, connecting the dots, and resources.

DBHDD and GVRA have re-established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between agencies to enable collaboration and to facilitate of information sharing and development of referral processes to streamline the delivery of services. The goal of our collaboration is to maximize CIE resources and opportunities for

SELN member states as of June 2022



## Employment for Individuals With IDD

Nationwide Snapshot



**11%** In an Individual Job



**\$10.46** Average Hourly Wage



**26.3** Average Hours Worked For 2 Weeks

Data source: In-Person survey, National Core Indicators Project, 2020–2021. For more information, visit [www.nationalcoreindicators.org](http://www.nationalcoreindicators.org).

**GEORGIA**  
Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

**DD State Agency Director:** Ronald Wakefield  
**SELN Lead Contact:** Christine Gudgin  
**Email:** [Christine.Gudgin@dbhdd.ga.gov](mailto:Christine.Gudgin@dbhdd.ga.gov)



## State Employment Leadership Network

UMass Boston



NASDDDS  
 National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

The SELN is a joint program of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.

[www.selnhub.org](http://www.selnhub.org)

individuals with I/DD. SE providers dually contracted with DBHDD and GVRA will provide seamless service delivery to ensure continuity of services as individuals transition from initial to extended job supports. GVRA has become a vital partner in the work toward Georgia's CIE goals.

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month Recognition Event

DBHDD's Supported Employment Regional Gardens partnered with the Georgia Chapter of the Association of People Supporting Employment First (GAPSE) to hold Georgia's inaugural National Disability Awareness Month (NDEAM) SE celebration, "Work "Works" for Everybody". We held the celebration virtually on October 28, 2021. Speakers from the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), Georgia Municipal Association, Association of County Commissioners of Georgia, Georgia APSE, DBHDD, and GVRA presented on the importance of SE in Georgia. We presented several awards, including Employee of the Year, Employer of the Year, Employment Advocacy, Rock Star Employment Agency, Rock Star Employment Specialist, and the Legacy Award. The celebration was a huge success and plans are underway for the NDEAM 2022 event.

## The Employment Framework

Member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key informants to participate in discussions and workgroups to determine a state's course of action. A direct member benefit is access to guidance that can lead states to a better understanding of priorities while setting that course. The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, is used to guide the SELN's strategy for system improvements. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

## Elements of a High-Performing Employment System

This graphic demonstrates the factors that, when working together, can lead to better integrated employment outcomes. It is the dynamic interplay of all the elements that can lead to long-term systems change.

### Leadership.

Clear and unambiguous commitment to employment in individual community jobs at all levels in the system.

### Strategic Goals and Operating Policies.

Employment is supported by program goals and operating practices.

### Financing and Contracting Methods.

State resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices support integrated employment.

### Training and Technical Assistance.

Investment in the development and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce.

### Interagency Collaboration and Partnership.

Building relationships to remove barriers to employment supports.

### Services and Service Innovation.

Service definitions and support strategies are structured and aligned to facilitate the delivery of employment supports.

### Performance Measurement and Data Management.

Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes.

