



Initiatives and Activities to Improve Integrated Employment Outcomes



State Employment Leadership Network

**Accomplishments Report
2020–2022**

Accomplishments Report 2020–2022

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State Employment Leadership Network

The SELN is a place for states to connect, collaborate, and create cross-community support regarding pressing employment-related issues at state and federal levels for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The SELN was launched in 2006 as a joint program of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston.



www.selnhub.org



Every day presents an opportunity for you to live your values and stretch towards your aspirations.

-Leadstar, 2022

For decades enormous changes have taken place throughout the intellectual and developmental disabilities' systems in our country. Ripples created during the last two+ years in particular are felt today and will continue having an impact into the future. The volume and types of changes in such a short period of time means rapid decisions about what gets done and what is on hold until later. This juggle is not always comfortable but is necessary in priority-setting and takes place every day across the country.

Renewed strength and focus for improving integrated employment outcomes remain a constant and we couldn't be more invigorated. In this snapshot of our 2020-2022 activities, you will see the many ways we work together to move the needle, trends through data and stories, and the richness of experiences in our network member states.

As a team we have strengthened our resolve to assist state systems. We will continue to meet you where you are today, and to walk alongside you. Please share this report and the compilation of state profiles, and always stay in touch on ways the SELN can be of assistance.

Suzanne Freeze, ICI

Wesley Anderson, NASDDDS

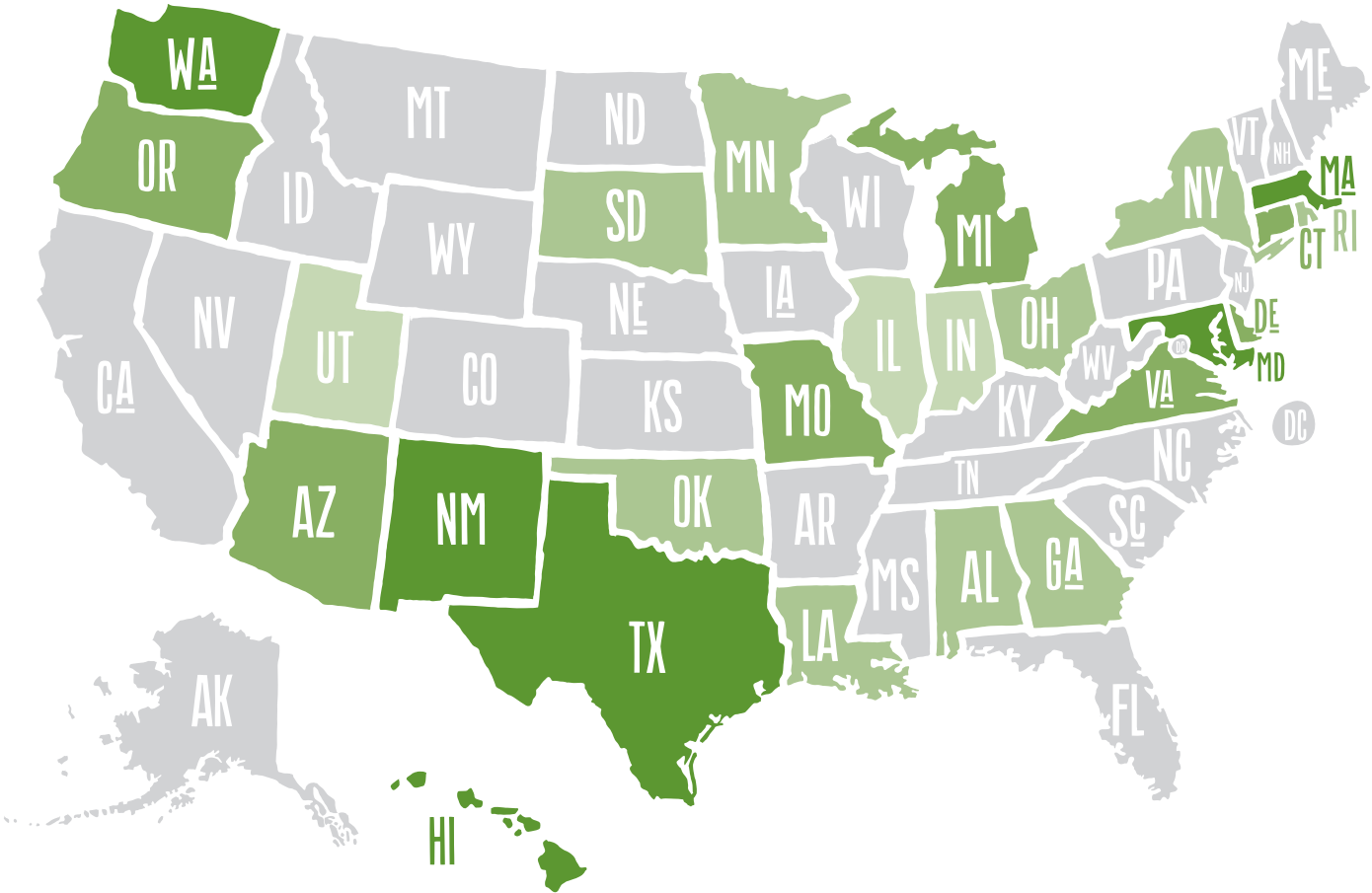
MISSION

In coalition with state IDD agencies, the SELN seeks to transform employment policy, strategy, and expectations to increase the number of individuals with IDD engaged in their communities and working in competitive integrated jobs in the general workforce.

VISION

SELN will be a catalyst for systems change to ensure opportunities and access to competitive integrated employment and community engagement for all individuals with IDD.

SELN MEMBER STATES—CURRENT



6
states
15+ years

Hawaii
Maryland
Massachusetts
New Mexico
Texas
Washington

7
states
12–14 years

Arizona
Connecticut
Delaware
Michigan
Missouri
Oregon
Virginia

9
states
8–11 years

Alabama
Georgia
Louisiana
Minnesota
New York
Ohio
Oklahoma
Rhode Island
South Dakota

3
states
4 years

Illinois
Indiana
Utah

HIGHER-PERFORMING FRAMEWORK



The Higher-Performing Framework, 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 to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems. 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 leads to long-term systems change.



ELEMENTS OF HIGHER-PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

Leadership.

Clear and unambiguous commitment to employment in individual community jobs, from top leadership through all levels in the system. Local and state-level administrators are identifiable as champions for employment.

Strategic Goals and Operating Policies.

Employment is identified as the preferred outcome in state IDD policy, and is supported by program goals and operating practices that are clearly designed to achieve that objective.

Financing and Contracting Methods.

The outcome of employment in integrated community jobs is emphasized and supported through the state's resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices.

Training and Technical Assistance.

Investment in the development and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce. Skill-building emphasizes an expectation for employment across job coaches and developers, supervisors, key employment staff, case managers, job seekers including young adults who are still in school, and families.

Interagency Collaboration and Partnership.

Building relationships with advocates, families, businesses, civic groups, and key state and local agency partners (vocational rehabilitation, education, mental health, state Medicaid agency), with the goal of removing barriers to employment supports.

Services and Service Innovation.

Service definitions and support strategies are structured and aligned to facilitate the delivery of employment supports to all individuals with IDD regardless of the intensity of their needs. Non-work supports encourage individuals to become involved in typical adult life activities, building employment skills, such as community service and volunteering opportunities.

Performance Measurement and Data Management.

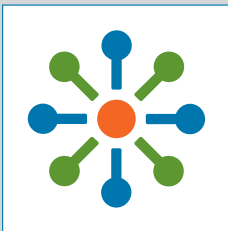
Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes. Information is gathered on key indicators across employment and other related systems and is used to evaluate and track results, inform policy, and improve provider contracts and service agreements. Data are shared with other state agencies to report results and improve quality.



A key benefit of SELN membership is the opportunity for state IDD systems to explore issues beyond their state boundaries, to network, and to exchange informational resources. The SELN provides a platform, as the engine of change, to cultivate cross-systems changes. The aim of the SELN is to work with states to more effectively improve system structures and increase opportunities for individuals with IDD to enter competitive integrate employment regardless of support needs. The SELN serves as a trusted advisor, sharing advice and guidance on key strategic decisions to improve employment outcomes and increase community-based options for individuals during their non-work time.

A critical aspect of providing technical assistance to SELN member states includes hosting conversations of significance. Our technical assistance focuses on sharing the knowledge and resources most needed to improve community-based integrated employment. During the 2020-2022 membership years, our member states experienced the same unexpected changes as our country at large. Our SELN work pivoted to support member states on how to keep momentum going toward employment outcomes.

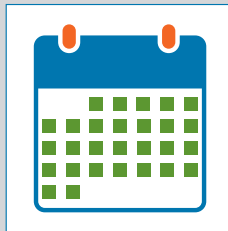
Core events and ongoing activities



BUSINESS MEETING



ANNUAL MEETING



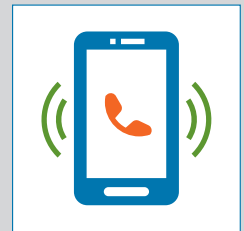
MONTHLY NETWORK MEETINGS



ONLINE COMMUNITY



WRITTEN AND ONLINE PRODUCTS



RECURRING CALLS

- » Annual business meeting with state leads to set upcoming membership year agenda
- » Annual meeting with member states to network and explore systems change
- » Monthly network meetings to share relevant and timely discussions and resources
- » SELN Hub online community to access active dialogue and posted materials
- » Routine development of written and online products
- » Recurring calls with member state teams on strategic priorities (typically monthly)

**“If you always do what you’ve always done,
you’ll always get what you’ve always got.”**

– Anonymous



2020 – 2022 Network Meetings

2020

September 2020 Network Meeting

Tapping the Hidden Potential – Self Advocates and Technology Use

Traditionally when considering expanding technology use, we often limit thinking to traditional “assistive technology”. As people seek more flexible support options and demand for different approaches has risen, many people have found success with remote and virtual options. For people with disabilities, technology has filled a void and has opened new opportunities.

- » SELN Project Team

November 2020 Network Meeting

Merging Service Definitions with Funding Methodologies – Part I

Post-annual meeting, network member states began a series of detailed discussions on what service-related changes are needed and how those related to current and future funding methodologies. Part I focused on outlining what is actually changing in service design and why.

- » SELN Project Team, Kamisha Heriveaux, Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS)

December 2020 Network Meeting

Merging Service Definitions with Funding Methodologies – Part II

Post-annual meeting, network member states began a series of detailed discussions on what service-related changes are needed and how those related to current and future funding methodologies. Part II focused on exploring the term ‘modalities’ and why that distinction matters as remote and virtual options have emerged.

- » SELN Project Team

2021

January 2021 Network Meeting

Merging Service Definitions with Funding Methodologies – Part III

Post-annual meeting, network member states began a series of detailed discussions on what service-related changes are needed and how those related to current and future funding methodologies. Part III focused on funding issues, what is allowable and billable, and what funding methodology aligns with new service design.

- » SELN Project Team

February 2021 Network Meeting

Federal Legislative Update and Impact on States

- » Dan Berland, NASDDDS, Julie Christensen, APSE, David Hoff, ICI

March 2021 NASDDDS’ webinar

Status of Employment for the IDD Population

Network members were invited to participate in a NASDDDS-hosted event on the status of employment for people with I/DD. The focus included: Pandemic-related impacts, using data to inform support choices, and ensuring person-centered approaches are maintained during times of intense change.

- » NASDDDS



April 2021 Network Meeting

Keeping our Eyes on the Prize

States taking action during the public health emergency had to get creative. Network member states have focused on what actions get us closer to our employment related goals and what lessons learned are driving changes. The meeting discussion summarized action steps for state IDD agencies to identify opportunities to increase worker independence, strengthening the use of natural supports, and maximizing technology.

» SELN Project Team

May 2021 Network Meeting

Navigating the Path to Fully Reopening Services: Assuring Quality in Provider Standards

Strengthening provider networks to be best positioned to assure high quality in-demand services is a priority in all states. Three member states shared strategies and hosted breakout groups to answer two questions: “What provider qualifications should be in place and why?” and “Does your state already include those qualifications in rules/standards/policies or are formal changes needed?”.

» Kathleen Walker (MD), Duane Shumate (MO), Tracey Cunningham-Martins (RI)

June 2021 Network Meeting

Determining network member state needs to address workforce challenges

Pandemic-related issues exacerbated an already stretched human services’ workforce. Our meeting discussion provide the space to explore early ideas from member states on issues such as “do we have the right people doing the right things”, how the temporary federal ARPA funds can be tapped for workforce needs, and in addition to emphasizing competencies, what infrastructure changes should be addressed.

» SELN Project Team

September 2021 Network Meeting

SELN eLearning Course and Full Launch

An overview of the SELN eLearning course for case managers was shared with members. The information included descriptions of the four modules, the use of interactive exercises and quizzes and awarding of completion certificate. States were asked to begin composing plans to implement roll out of the course.

» SELN Project Team

November 2021 Network Meeting

Addressing Redesign and Refocus

The November 2021 network meeting served as a synthesis point from the annual meeting discussions, including acknowledgement that our service systems are facing redesign needs heavily influenced by two years of restrictions and limited options, ongoing workforce challenges, and provider capacity issues.

» SELN Project Team

December 2021 Network Meeting

Making Strategic and Sustainable Investments to Address Workforce Challenges

Continued discussion about the 30-year workforce challenges leading to low quality services and poor outcomes for people receiving supports. Member states face important decisions to



determine viable action steps including how to use federal ARPA funds, validated skill standards and career ladders, and coalition building at the state level (labor, education, employers, elected officials). Provider qualifications particularly for a specialization in employment were highlighted.

- » Amy Hewitt, University of Minnesota
- » Joe Macbeth, National Association of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP)

2022

January 2022 Network Meeting

Supporting Provider Transformation

Moving to a business model that focuses on individual supports and emphasizes employment and community life engagement outcomes requires changes to culture, infrastructure, human resources, and supports. Conversation focused on how state systems are approaching the business model changes required to meet new goals with an overarching question: How are states supporting providers to develop new business models that emphasize employment and community life engagement?

- » Patricia Sastoque-Maryland Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Administration
- » Casey Burke-Illinois Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Division
- » Donna Bonessi- Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
- » Rebecca Sexton-Oregon Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

March and April 2022 Network Meeting

Preparing for HCBS Final Settings Rule and Exploring Compliance and Beyond

The March and April meetings focused on tools and strategies states are considering to both uphold new expectations for community life engagement and reduce isolation and segregation. States are also determining needed action to address requirements in the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule across employment and day services through a holistic redesign approach.

- » SELN Project Team

May 2022 Network Meeting

Let's Talk Funding Realignment

The network discussed the SELN Funding Realignment in State IDD Systems document with the goal of determining which states are prioritizing funding-related changes and why. Examples of previous funding guides were shared to highlight important characteristics (State Intellectual and Developmental Disability Agencies' Funding Rates for Employment and Day Services and State Employment Practices: Funding for Employment Services) to drive systemic change and improvement in employment outcomes.

- » SELN Project Team

June 2022 Network Meeting

National Core Indicators (NCI) for Employment Systems Change

The June 2022 call focused on the NCI project and related surveys, including what data is collected and how it is used. SELN will continue conversations about how NCI data can be maximized in employment systems change activities nationally and by state.

- » Laura Vegas-Project Director of National Core Indicators for NASDDDS



2020 – 2021 Annual Meetings

October 2020 Virtual Annual Policy Meeting: *Staying the Course*

Across the country the pandemic had a major impact on the system of supports to people with IDD and families, provider networks, partner systems, and state agency staff. While much has been impacted, progress toward greater integrated employment outcomes is still possible, and happening in many states including temporary measures and changes requiring federal approvals. Lessons learned since March 2020 factored heavily into the meeting discussions.

State IDD Agencies Supporting Provider Network Partners

- » Brian Benshoof, MRCI - Minnesota
- » Tami Reuter, MRCI - Minnesota
- » Sherry Beamer, SEEC - Maryland
- » Mike Petrick, SEEC - Maryland
- » Susan Klingel, The Arc of Madison County - Alabama

Impact of the pandemic on transition-age youth

- » Branda Matson, Washington
- » Megan Burr, Washington
- » Casey Stone-Romero, New Mexico
- » Charlene Chavez, New Mexico

October 2021 Virtual Annual Policy Meeting: *Employment-A New Day*

Year two of a virtual policy meeting provided network member states with expanded use of new approaches to ensure service options met the needs of those seeking support. We discussed employment’s “new day” and the confluence of opportunity, demand and capacity. States are expanding what is offered, assuring flexibilities and revisiting service design. States are also recognizing provider capacity needs, the workforce challenges and how to innovate business models to match our service system of the future.

The Federal Landscape and Discussion with Partners

- » Katy Neas, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education
- » Ralph Lollar, Director, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Division of Long-Term Services and Supports, Disabled and Elderly Health Program Group, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- » Alison Barkoff, Acting Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging, Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Addressing Workforce Challenges

- » Amy Hewitt, Senior Research Associate, Director Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota
- » Joe Macbeth, President/Chief Executive Officer, National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, Inc.



Hub Stats

The SELN Hub is a closed, online community hosted for member state contacts and partners. Hub users can talk candidly, building relationships and strengthening the overall network. During the past two membership years, the Hub has continued to be a central point for discussing important issues, promoting SELN events, and sharing timely resources. The Hub offers 24/7 access to centralized, relevant information. All state leads are required to be members and we encourage as many other state team members to join as possible to share in the learning and exchanges.



New resources regularly added or updated.

Examples include:

- » Process Mapping for Continuous Quality Improvement
- » Moving Employment Forward Post-Covid-19
- » Employment and Employment Supports: A Guide to Ensuring Informed Choice for Individuals with Disabilities
- » Many state-specific materials

40 new forum posts and most viewed topics:

- » Community Life engagement services and definitions
- » Small Group Supported Employment as “prevocational” and how that relates to Vocational Rehabilitation
- » How states are focusing on competitive integrated employment, inclusion and integration in their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) plans
- » Metrics used to measure employment success
- » State Developmental Disability agency organization charts

HUBGROUPSPACES

Hub Group Spaces exist within the larger Hub community to help users engage in more targeted conversations. Each group space houses resources, discussions, and messaging on a specific topic or activity in one location rather than dispersed throughout the main Hub. In April 2022 a new group space, SELN: Supporting a Vision for Employment eLearning, was introduced. This group space was created to support states in sharing ideas on how to implement and apply the eLearning course in their state. This group has welcomed 18 members representing 10 different states. The most viewed topics included how states were rolling out the eLearning course and discussion questions created by a case management agency in Michigan.



APRIL 2022

Supporting a Vision for Employment eLearning introduced

18 members representing 10 different states

Most viewed topics

How states were rolling out the eLearning course

Discussion questions created by a case management agency in Michigan



Supporting a Vision for Employment

The SELN launched a new eLearning course emphasizing the critical role case managers play in ensuring access to competitive integrated employment.

Improve teamwork and collaboration

- » Engaging Activities
- » Sample scenarios prompt reflection
- » Short video clips animate information
- » Frequent knowledge checks
- » Final quizzes and certificate of completion

Four Modules | 26 Lessons

1. Employment Foundations
2. Employment Pathways
3. The Employment Process
4. Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation

I think this course was very helpful. It should be included as a part of Case Management 101 or new Hire training. It helped highlight what my role as a case manager should be in the employment process and really clearly defined VR's role. I appreciate how it also demonstrated how VR and case managers can work together for the greater good of the individuals we get to work with and support.

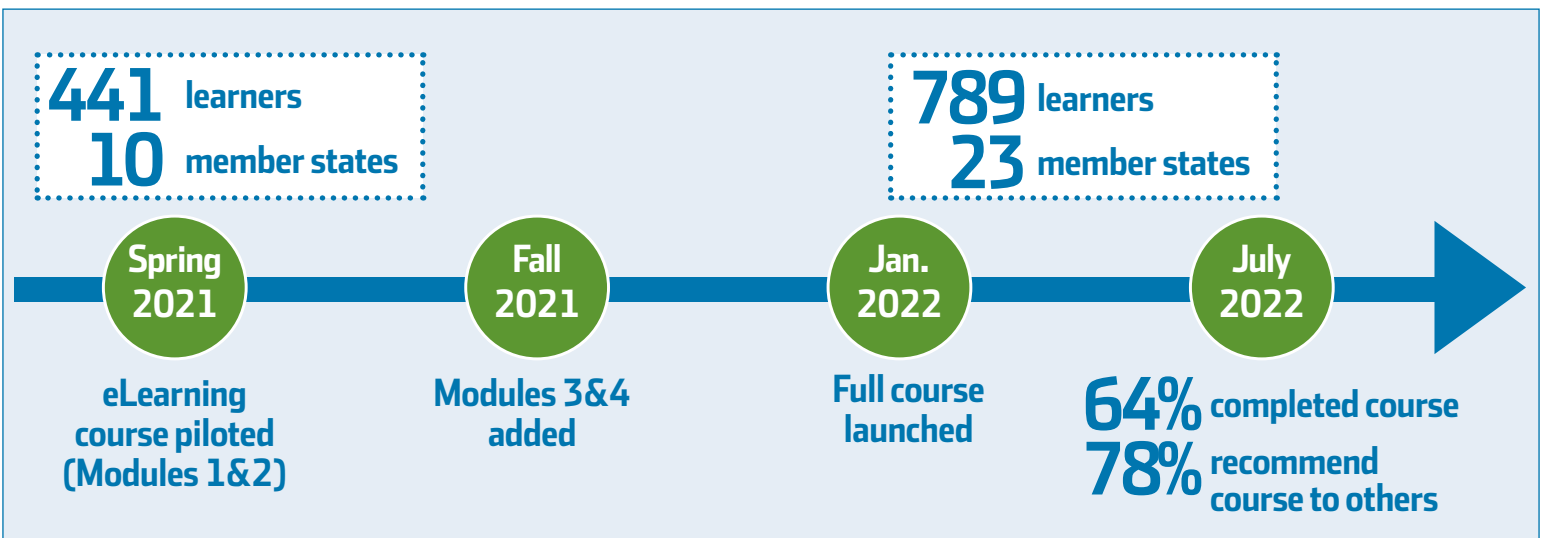
– Connecticut learner

The information presented has allowed me to enrich my knowledge to better support clients and partners. The material and format was very effective. The varying interactive questions, presentation was engaging. It is the most effective presentation of a self-pace continuing education course I have taken. Thank you.

– Washington learner

The presentation of this course and the content were spectacular.

– Michigan learner



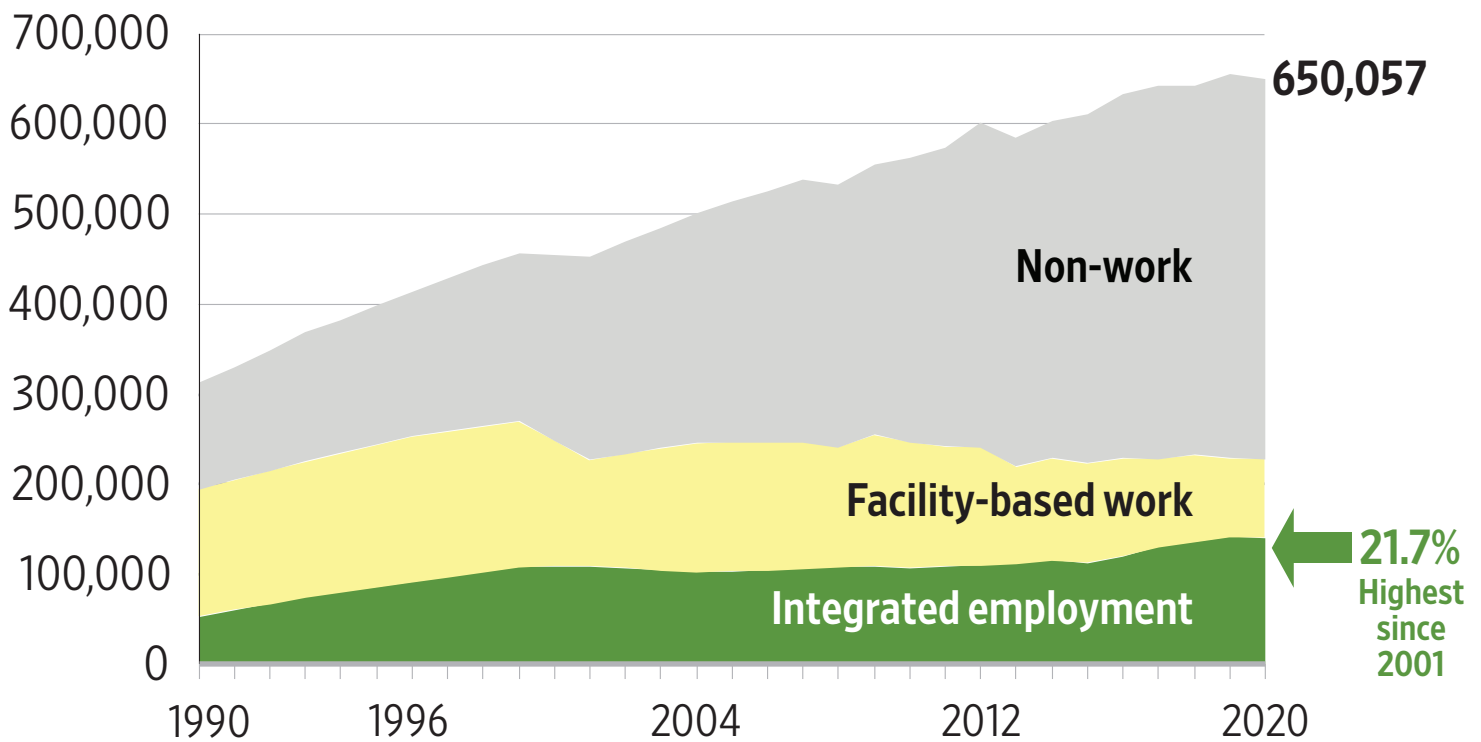
Quality Management and Future Plans

The SELN project team uses a continuous quality improvement process to assure the course is relevant and regularly updated. Input is gathered from learners who complete the course, primary contacts in member states, and through analysis of state of the art case management practices to give richness and diversity in our reference sources.



Chart 1: Number in Employment and Day Services

This chart illustrates how three categories of supports have changed over time: non-work services, facility-based work, and integrated employment. Our member states focus on those services as indicators of the shifts taking place in our field. We study the influences of changes in policy, training, organizational change, leadership, strategic goal setting, funding methodologies, and collaborative partnerships. Our research is possible only with individual and system-level data from state systems across the services reflected in this chart. Integrated employment services have reached 21.7% of all services – the highest mark in our national survey since 2001.



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services, 2021

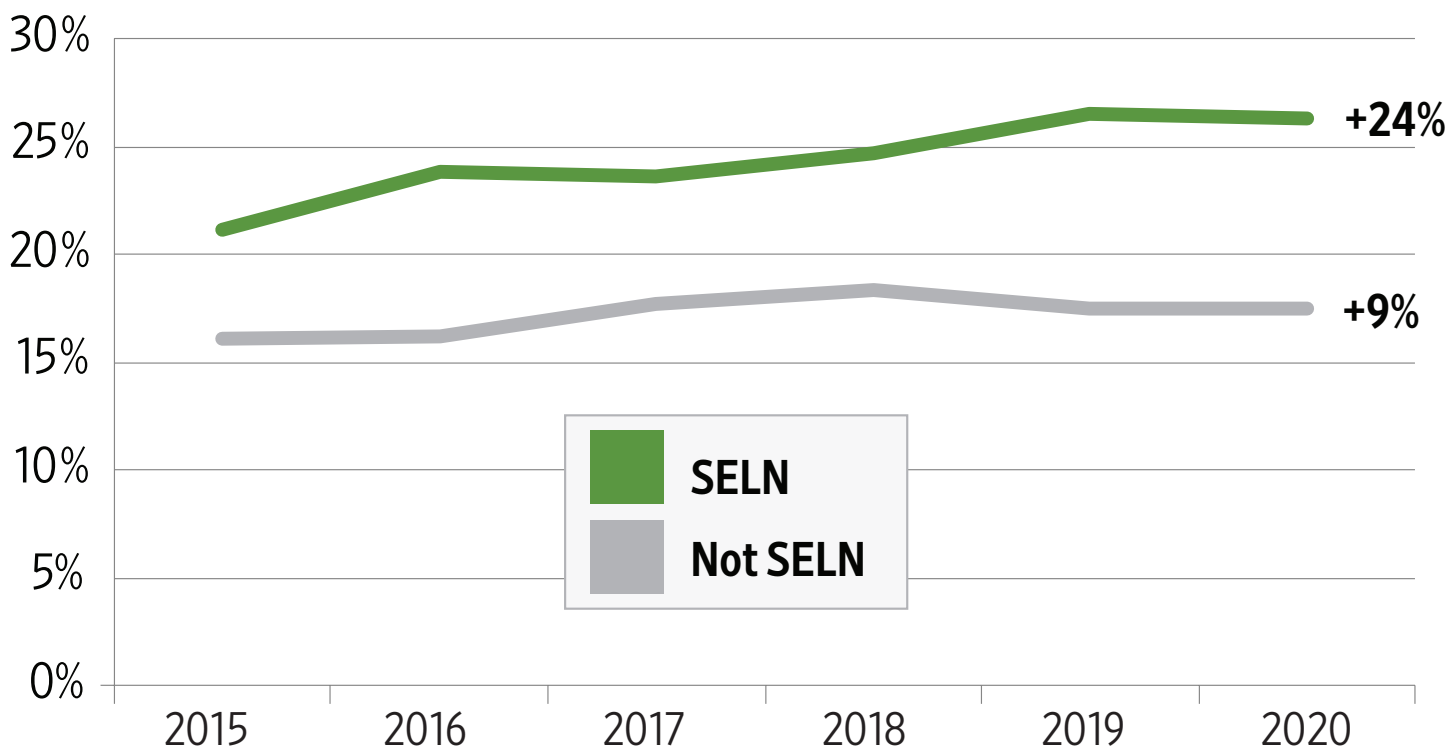
“If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing.”

—W. Edwards Deming



Chart 2: Percent in Integrated Employment Services

SELN states have consistently demonstrated higher levels of engagement in services that support integrated employment, and their investments have resulted in faster growth in participation in integrated employment. Between 2015 and 2020 26% of individuals who received a day or employment support in SELN states participated in integrated employment services, a 24% increase from 2015. Non SELN states only supported 18% in integrated employment services, a 9% increase since 2015.



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services, 2010-2021

States with complete data for 2015-2018

SELN current states (member 2015-2018) n=20

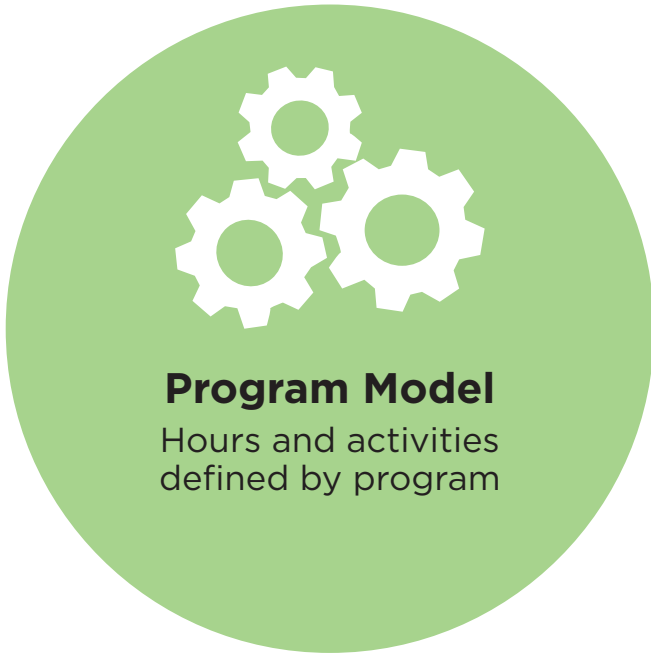
Not SELN n=22

Data Users Group (DUG)

Through DUG discussions, network member states engage specifically on strategic access to and use of service and outcome data. In April and May 2022, Jean Winsor and Agnes Zalewska (ICI) hosted DUG meetings to talk about the ICI's National Survey of State IDD Agencies' Employment and Day Services and StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes. One section of the survey includes service-related fields and the group looked specifically at how prevocational services for individuals with IDD are defined now and possible future changes. Extended discussion focused on how to: determine the quality of prevocational services, assess whether prevocational services lead to integrated employment outcomes, and assess the impact of requirements in the federal HCBS Settings rule on the use of prevocational services. The SELN will continue to engage with the StateData team and inform their work toward definition changes and survey updates.



WHAT WE HAVE



WHAT PEOPLE WANT



What we have versus what people want:

In each accomplishments report we seek to capture the deliberate and thoughtful work occurring in member states around the country. The last two years have stretched available resources and generated policy questions unlike any other time. Historically our human service program model for IDD services was based on residential needs and assumed people were out and about all weekdays, typically in groups. Today, expectations have shifted to individualized options across age groups, ethnicities, and geographies without restrictions to certain hours of the day or certain days of the week. Person-centered principles and self-determination lead to demand for responsive, holistic, and individualized approaches. Flexibility is needed in schedules, activities, settings and options.

Success is built upon:

- » The belief people can work
- » A clear pathway from non-work to work
- » A fundamental shift in how we approach supports
- » Strong accountability and oversight

The healthy tensions our state systems are experiencing will lead to new community-based options, responsive to individuals and families, and the redesign will represent the new thinking needed in publicly-funded services. Great outcomes lie ahead. Keep moving forward!



ALABAMA

Department of Mental Health

Bryon White, SELN Lead Contact
Terry Pezent, Associate Commissioner,
Division of Developmental Disabilities

ARIZONA

Department of Economic Security

Margaret Corcoran, SELN lead contact (2020-2021)
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COLORADO (2020-2021)

Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

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Bonnie Silva, Director, Office of Community Living

CONNECTICUT

Department of Developmental Services

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DELAWARE

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GEORGIA

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HAWAII

Department of Health

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ILLINOIS

Department of Human Services

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Allison Stark, Director, Developmental Disabilities Division

INDIANA (2021-2022)

Family & Social Services Administration

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Kyle Ingraham, SELN lead contact
Kim Opsahl, Director, Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Kelly Mitchell, Director, Disability & Rehabilitative Services

LOUISIANA

Office for Citizen with Developmental Disabilities

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MARYLAND

Department of Health

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Stephanie Jones, SELN lead contact (2021-2022)
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MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Developmental Services

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MICHIGAN

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MINNESOTA (2021-2022)

Department of Human Services

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Natasha Merz, Director, Disability Services Division

THANK YOU TO THE 2020–2022 STATE LEADS AND DIRECTORS!



MISSOURI

[Department of Mental Health](#)

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[Developmental Disabilities Supports Division](#)

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NEW YORK

[Office for People with Developmental Disabilities](#)

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Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (2020-2021)
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Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (2021-2022)

OHIO

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OREGON

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TEXAS

[Health and Human Services](#)

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Haley Turner, Associate Commissioner,
IDD and Behavioral Health Services (2021-2022)

UTAH

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VIRGINIA

[Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services](#)

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Division of Developmental Services (2020-2021)
Heather Norton, Acting Deputy Commissioner,
Division of Developmental Services (2021-2022)

WASHINGTON

[Department of Social and Health Services](#)

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Evelyn Perez, Director,
Developmental Disabilities Administration (2020-2021)
Debbie Roberts, Assistant Secretary,
Developmental Disabilities Administration (2021-2022)

**For current contacts, visit
www.selnhub.org/state-contacts**



Reflections from Rie Kennedy-Lizotte



It has been an honor to be part of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). Since 2007 when I first joined the Network, until my retirement in 2022 from the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), I gained wonderful friendships and a great deal of knowledge from colleagues across the country. Our shared pursuits included assuring state intellectual and developmental disability services fully support people in the general labor market and earning living wages. I am forever grateful for that.

The SELN community has played a major role in bringing national attention to employment systems. In particular our long history highlights the importance of alignment among our public labor, economic, education and health policies as well as our fiscal investments for all citizens with disabilities with equal opportunities and becoming wage-earning adults in their communities.

I commend all our state colleagues and partners for the tireless work sifting through the complexities of states systems simplifying links between an array of employment services and leveling the playing field for people with developmental disabilities to acquire and advance careers, gaining greater economic status through working age years.

The work of the SELN is far from finished. Leadership and persistence must remain vigilant in adapting state systems to new knowledge gained through research and practice.

I look forward to seeing the data that tells us that the percentage of working age people with disabilities (including those with significant disabilities) continues to rise and become equal to the percentage of non-disabled working in the general labor market in support of economy.

People with developmental disabilities are dependent on us to get it right.

The entire SELN community thanks Rie for her tenacity and drive during her tenure with the project team, 2007 -2022.

Special thank you to our peers with sincere wishes for a spectacular retirement from public service! Their work over the years has been invaluable to supporting people with disabilities to seek employment.

Arizona

Margaret Corcoran 2021

Massachusetts

Margaret Van Gelder 2021

New York

Lynne Thibdeau 2022

Oklahoma

Regina Chace 2021

Gay McMillan 2022

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Carrie McGraw—communications and events

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Megan Rose Sierra—fiscal administration

Regina Sisneros—DEI initiatives

Karol Snyder—administrative service

Laura Vegas—National Core Indicators

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David Temelini—marketing strategy, design

Alvaro Tobar—online technology and learning

Gavin Williams—fiscal administration

Agnes Zalewska—ICI annual national survey



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