

# 2020–2022 SELN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# NEW YORK

OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

SELN member states  
as of June 2022



## Building the Infrastructure

NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) developed new resources and significantly enhanced existing services to offer a full array of employment and vocational services to assist individuals in building careers, developing work skills and obtaining competitive employment in the community. During the last 7 years, the trajectory of the number of individuals employed increased steadily as OPWDD built a new infrastructure.

- ❖ New vocational services, community based prevocational services and Pathway to Employment (career planning service) and substantial improvements to supported employment services (SEMP) and the Employment Training Program (intensive SEMP services).
- ❖ Increase person-centered career planning, vocational training, community based vocational experiences, quality job matches, staff training, accountability, and adjust funding levels.
- ❖ Discovery services to identify skills, abilities, and interests assuring jobs match skills and employer needs.
- ❖ Community Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment and the Employment Training Program for activities that lead to development of a career and vocational plan including benefits planning.
- ❖ Phase out segregated employment services (sheltered workshops) with a final closure date of June 30, 2021. As OPWDD phased out segregated employment, individuals transitioned to community-based options through person-centered planning.

## Weathering the Storm

During the health emergency, supported employment services were approved for individuals who lost jobs or were furloughed. Because typical job development was not an option for most of 2020, the authorized services primarily focused on Discovery activities and experiences to prepare a career plan for future job matches. Providers kept staff working and today, OPWDD continues working with providers to assist individuals in regaining lost employment and increasing employment outcomes.

By March 2022, approximately 87% of individuals regained and obtained jobs compared to the 2018 competitive integrated employment outcomes. In addition, the Innovations in Employment Supports training series for supported employment and vocational services staff moved to 100% remote classes in May 2020. In 2021, Innovations in Employment Supports delivered 276 classes to 4,124 attendees. Three new classes were developed which include

## Employment for Individuals With IDD

Statewide Snapshot



**7%**

**Small Group Employment**

**93%**

**Individual Employment**

**4%**

**Had multiple jobs**

Data Source: OPWDD March 2022 Provider Reported Quarterly SEMP Report

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Office for People with  
Developmental Disabilities

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**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)

A Case Study in Discovery, Technology for Virtual Vocational Services and Demonstrating the Benefits of Supported Employment to Businesses in addition to the full series for employment and vocational services best practices.

## Upgrading Systems and Leveraging Resources

Utilizing systems change and quality improvement strategies, OPWDD continues to analyze outcomes, streamline processes, refine policy, collect stakeholder feedback, and upgrade services to meet the everyday needs of the agencies and staff providing employment and vocational services.

Future goals include:

- ❖ Assisting service providers to offer the full array of employment and vocational services so individuals can build careers and move into employment. This includes working with day habilitation programs to build in flexibility so individuals can seamlessly transition to vocational and employment services either full or part-time.
- ❖ Increase career-specific, vocational training opportunities to give New Yorkers with I/DD opportunities to compete in a more technical and skilled labor force. OPWDD will improve job readiness skills training curricula and related staff training across all employment, day and vocational services.
- ❖ Offer web-based, participatory staff trainings and promote various initiatives to address workforce challenges.
- ❖ Analyze current landscape and how job development techniques have changed with the pandemic, available social media, and increased technology usage.
- ❖ SELN staff have been valuable and productive partners with OPWDD in researching options and improving systems to increase employment outcomes in New York.

