



**STATE EMPLOYMENT LEADERSHIP NETWORK ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT**  
**MEMBERSHIP YEAR 2018-2019**



# Accomplishments Report 2018–2019

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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.



# NASDDBS

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



**W**e bring the membership year to a close each June and celebrate the past 12 months' achievements through this annual report. States are asked to describe their work, taking a moment to recognize where progress has been made. There is always more to do, but this regular cycle of acknowledging the benefit of the past year's investments is important in our long-term work.

A recurring refrain this year has been "keeping our eyes on the prize" and we have reflected on what the "prize" really is these days. Regulatory changes in the last five years have impacted how our human service systems are operating. While there are many beneficial aspects of the changes, the sheer volume and scope of culture, programmatic, and business models shifts have sometimes muddled the focus or made describing the goal more challenging.

Our 2018 annual meeting theme, "Refining Our Employment Goals," reinforced the importance of being clear about what you are seeking to achieve, and consistently communicating it across all channels.

The "chapters" throughout this report describe the activities and topics viewed as priorities across our network of 25 member states. This body of work reflects how states committed to improving integration and inclusion goals are staying focused and on target. It is the concerted effort of key state staff and partners who keep the work on track in spite of the many "unplanned demands of the day."

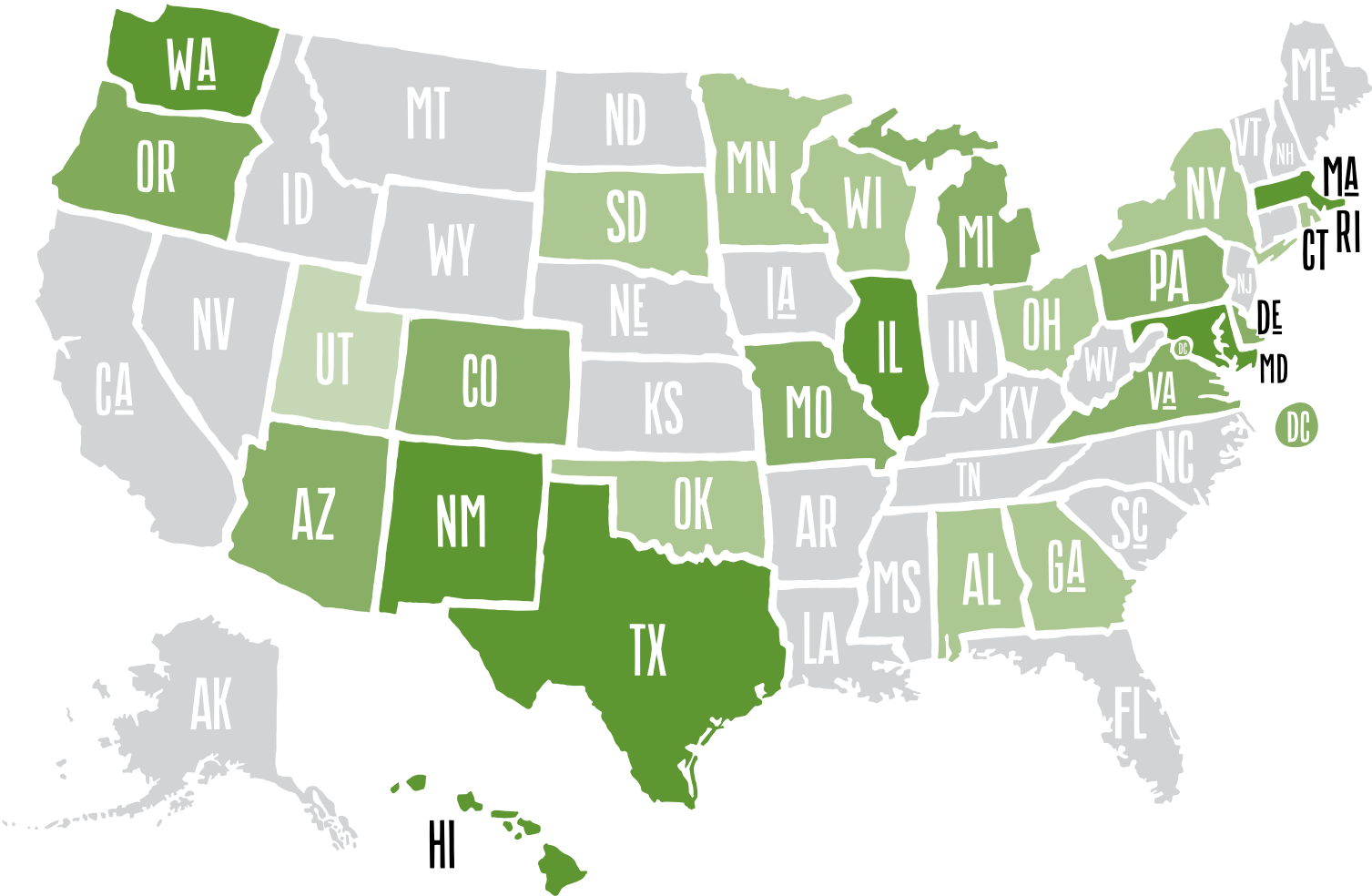
We encourage you to read the following pages to identify one or two areas of interest to pursue. Contact information can be found at the end of the report and online ([www.selnhub.org](http://www.selnhub.org)), and our state colleagues welcome hearing from you about their work.

The SELN was formed to improve opportunity and increase the number of individuals with developmental disabilities achieving integrated employment and community life outcomes. It is only through our combined efforts that we will achieve that goal.

Suzanne Freeze, ICI

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS

# SELN MEMBERS JULY 2018–JUNE 2019



<div>6</div> <div>states</div> <div>12+ years</div>	<div>9</div> <div>states</div> <div>8–11 years</div>	<div>9</div> <div>states</div> <div>3–7 years</div>	<div>1</div> <div>state</div> <div>1st year</div>
Hawaii Massachusetts Maryland New Mexico Texas Washington	Arizona Colorado DC Delaware Michigan Missouri Oregon Pennsylvania Virginia	Alabama Georgia Minnesota New York Ohio Oklahoma Rhode Island South Dakota Wisconsin	Utah

The SELN is a membership-based network of state intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) agencies committed to making changes in their service systems and improving integrated employment outcomes. During the 2018–2019 membership year, staff from the ICI and NASDDDS delivered technical assistance and support to 25 state agencies.

Throughout the membership year, states engage in policy and practice discussions to strategically address service system changes and the barriers arising with such shifts. The network experience provides member states with a forum to talk through common questions or barriers, and share resources.

The Employment 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 effective at enabling states 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.

## 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.





### **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.

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**When agencies get better in isolation the impact is isolated.  
We need to get better together.**

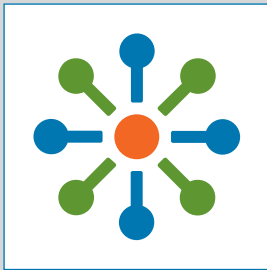
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**– Johnny Collette, Assistant Secretary Office of Special Education and  
Rehabilitative Services United States Department of Education**



The SELN exists to support member states and to bring awareness of new ideas for future innovations. The SELN project team, in partnership with all member states, routinely collects information on what is impacting systems change activities, and generates opportunities for discussion and resource-sharing. We bring the knowledge learned from working with states and engage with a variety of external partners such as staff from federal agencies to brainstorm and inform development of new regulations. Network events provide an opportunity to scrutinize what is working and why, and provides a trusted source for examining future systems change investments. Network debates and exchanges inform today's strategies, influencing critical decisions at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

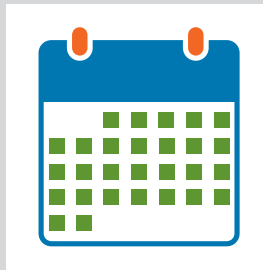
### Core events and ongoing activities form our network's backbone.



**BUSINESS MEETING**



**ANNUAL IN-PERSON MEETING**



**MONTHLY NETWORK MEETINGS**



**ONLINE COMMUNITY**



**WRITTEN AND ONLINE PRODUCTS**

- A business meeting to gather input from state leads and state agency directors to set the agenda for the upcoming membership year
- The annual in-person meeting with state contacts and teams to network and explore policy and implementation challenges and success
- Monthly network meetings to provide ongoing opportunities to dialogue on important topics
- Participation in the SELN Hub online community
- Routine development of written and online products

A key benefit of SELN membership is the opportunity for states to explore issues impacting progress and exchange informational resources. A tremendous amount of systems change decisions are playing out differently given states' political, cultural, and financial infrastructure, as well as the timing of such moves. Many state contacts regularly reach out to those they have met through SELN events, asking and answering each other's questions and sharing important lessons learned.

Over the past 12 months, the SELN has focused on states' building capacity across three significant themes:

- **THEME 1. Provider transformation and organizational change**
- **THEME 2. Case manager competency development**
- **THEME 3. Alternative funding and payment options**

The following pages detail how network and state activities have related to these themes.



## THEME 1: Provider Transformation and Organizational Change

Many providers are proactively changing the focus of service delivery away from segregated options (such as facility-based settings) to prioritizing stronger integrated employment and community inclusion as service outcomes. State systems recognize the core role provider organizations play in ensuring individuals are supported and achieving their goals.

The state's role is to engage in decisions which establish provider network stability. Many member states are assisting providers to engage in business and program transformation processes.

### Annual Meeting: Provider Transformation—Moving the Needle

States identified organizational change and targets for performance improvements as top priorities at the meeting. They shared strategies in use to support provider agencies in developing a vision for community-based services. Staff from Colorado and Delaware presented on the role their agencies are playing to strengthen provider networks as community-based options expand.

**"The annual meeting gets us out of our own bubble (in our state) and helps us gain a different perspective on what we should be doing."**

**—Brenda Stoneburner, Michigan**

### October Network Meeting: Establishing a Culture of Informed Choice

Informed choice and supported decision-making play an important role in empowering people to choose employment and engage in a community-based life. Individuals must possess the correct information to make decisions that are right for them and their families. Provider organizations are in a position to assist individuals and families by providing needed information and many opportunities for answering questions or addressing concerns.

## THEME 2: Case Manager Competency Development

States are building the capacity of case managers to assure individuals and families have the information needed to make informed decisions. These decisions relate to new opportunities for employment and community life engagement. Member states are sharing and learning new strategies for increasing case manager knowledge, skills, and accountability in areas like cross-agency collaboration, person-centered thinking and planning, employment services and supports, and strengthening leadership capacity of case managers and supervisors. See infographic on page 8 for details.

### The SELN Guidance for Conversations: Identifying and designing multiple pathways towards rewarding employment

### Online SELN Shorts series: Case Managers: Guides on The Pathway to Employment

## THEME 3: Alternative Funding and Payment Options

As a part of service delivery reform, funders and policymakers are exploring alternative funding and payment options for home and community-based services. States are investing time to understand how these efforts impact employment, and the relationship to day services systems change.

### Annual Meeting: CMS' Innovation Accelerator Program

The Innovation Accelerator Program (IAP) supports states in making new payment and service delivery reforms to improve care and health for Medicaid beneficiaries. Attendees learned how and why the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) is funding this work across the country.

### December & January Network Meetings: CMS' Innovation Accelerator Program

Building off the annual meeting discussion, the network explored more details on what CMS and states are learning from the IAP investments and the role of alternative payment models in national and state service delivery reform. States described IAP activities such as development of a driver diagram outlining key forces at play and discrete projects being pursued to test new strategies.

*Katherine Griffith, CMS; Stacy Collins and Lori Horvath, OH DODD; Duane Shumate and Wendy Witcig, MO DDD*





## February Network Meeting: Alternative Payment Models and Service Delivery Reforms Synthesis

In contrast to traditional models of payment (e.g., fee for service), alternative payment models, such as value-based payments, can enhance the level of quality for individuals and systems. As states recognize the need to rebalance and rebase Medicaid rates to achieve new outcomes, alternative payment options are being considered. **A key outcome to date of the IAP efforts and alternative payment activity is that states must recognize what data, information, and quality management efforts are needed to fully pursue new value-based funding options.**

## SELN Hub: Alternative Funding and Payment Methods Resource Compendium

White papers, frameworks, evaluations and other resources from reputable sources are available to Hub users. Members can ask questions in a discussion forum that accompanies the resource page.

### Alternative Payment Models framework

<http://hcp-lan.org/workproducts/apm-factsheet.pdf>  
<https://hcp-lan.org/workproducts/apm-refresh-whitepaper-final.pdf>

## Additional Areas of Focus

### September Network Meeting: Ethnicity, Disability, and Employment

Culturally responsive employment services, policies, and practices improve outcomes for individuals with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

*Derrick Willis, Iowa UCEDD; Laura Ritterbush, Goodwill of Western Missouri and Eastern Kansas*

### March Network Meeting: Tiered Standards Approach

The Tiered Standards Approach is a purposeful and staged approach to systems reform and delivery. States are turning to this strategy to help them comply with new federal laws.

### April Network Meeting: Outcome Measures for Community Participation

New measures are being developed to assist states with determining the impact of investments in employment and day supports.

*Mary Lou Bourne, NASDDDS  
 Renata Ticha and Brian Abery, UMN RRTC*

### May Network Meeting: Technology First

Technologies reduce the need for direct care because they provide individuals with greater independence. States can reallocate unused funds to other necessary services, meaning that direct care workers are able to take on new roles.

*Shaun Wood, Senior Project Manager, WiSE  
 Val Huhn, Director, Missouri DDD  
 Kyle Corbin, Technology Project Lead, Ohio DDD*

CATEGORY 1 FEE FOR SERVICE - NO LINK TO QUALITY & VALUE	CATEGORY 2 FEE FOR SERVICE - LINK TO QUALITY & VALUE	CATEGORY 3 APMS BUILT ON FEE-FOR-SERVICE ARCHITECTURE	CATEGORY 4 POPULATION-BASED PAYMENT
	<b>A</b> Foundational Payments for Infrastructure & Operations (e.g., care coordination fees and payments for HIT investments)	<b>A</b> APMs with Shared Savings (e.g., shared savings with upside-risk only)	<b>A</b> Condition-Specific Population-Based Payment (e.g., per member per month payments, payments for specialty services, such as oncology or mental health)
	<b>B</b> Pay for Reporting (e.g., bonuses for reporting data or penalties for not reporting data)	<b>B</b> APMs with Shared Savings and Downside Risk (e.g., episode-based payments for procedures and comprehensive payments with upside and downside risk)	<b>B</b> Comprehensive Population-Based Payment (e.g., global budgets or full percent of premium payments)
	<b>C</b> Pay for Performance (e.g., bonuses for quality performance)		<b>C</b> Integrated Finance & Delivery Systems (e.g., global budgets or full percent of premium payments in integrated systems)

### June Network Meeting: Collaborative Implementation of Research-Based Strategies through Career Pathways

Career Technical Education (CTE) programs provides secondary and post-secondary students with academic and on-the-job experience to prepare for the current and future workforce. CTE also offers additional access to meet graduation requirements and enter a career pathway.

*Dale Matusevich, Education Associate, DE, Department of Education;  
 George Tilson, consultant*

### SELN Working Document: A Tiered Standards Approach

The term “tiered standards” refers to a beneficial, gradual approach to structuring major service system changes. The working document was generated to describe this approach and what action to take a more creative and innovative approach to addressing current investments in funding and services.

### SELN Working Document: Employment First Resource List

The SELN provides a comprehensive listing of the status of Employment First policies, laws, and initiatives occurring in the states. View the list on the SELN Hub.



## GUIDANCE FOR CONVERSATIONS

A tool to help individuals identify and design pathways towards rewarding employment

### GUIDED CONVERSATIONS HELP PEOPLE

PROCESS  
INFORMATION



DRAW  
THEIR OWN  
CONCLUSIONS



MAKE THEIR  
OWN DECISIONS



### THREE SECTIONS



STARTING THE  
CONVERSATION



FOCUSING ON THE  
DESTINATION



CAREER  
SUCCESS

**34**

probing questions and  
conversation starters

**30**

suggestions for  
action planning

**3**

worksheets

### SAMPLE PROBING QUESTIONS

How would earning more money change your everyday life?

What makes you feel important or proud?

What is the best part of your job?



## SELN Shorts: The 30-Minute Series

Innovative approaches used to help individuals overcome work challenges



**6**

case managers  
videos  
sessions



### Case Managers from:

Washington DC  
Missouri  
Minnesota  
Ohio  
Oregon  
Pennsylvania

**QA** with **200**  
participants

### TOPICS:

homelessness, lack of job experience, mistreatment,  
unfair dismissal, fear of the unknown, family dynamics

### Quotes:

*"I appreciate how the case manager went the extra mile and knocked out the issues presenting road blocks to reach the ultimate goal."*

*"She's the kind of case manager I hope to be."*

*"The story was a great example of how good case management takes time, creativity, and effort to develop/maintain a quality job placement."*

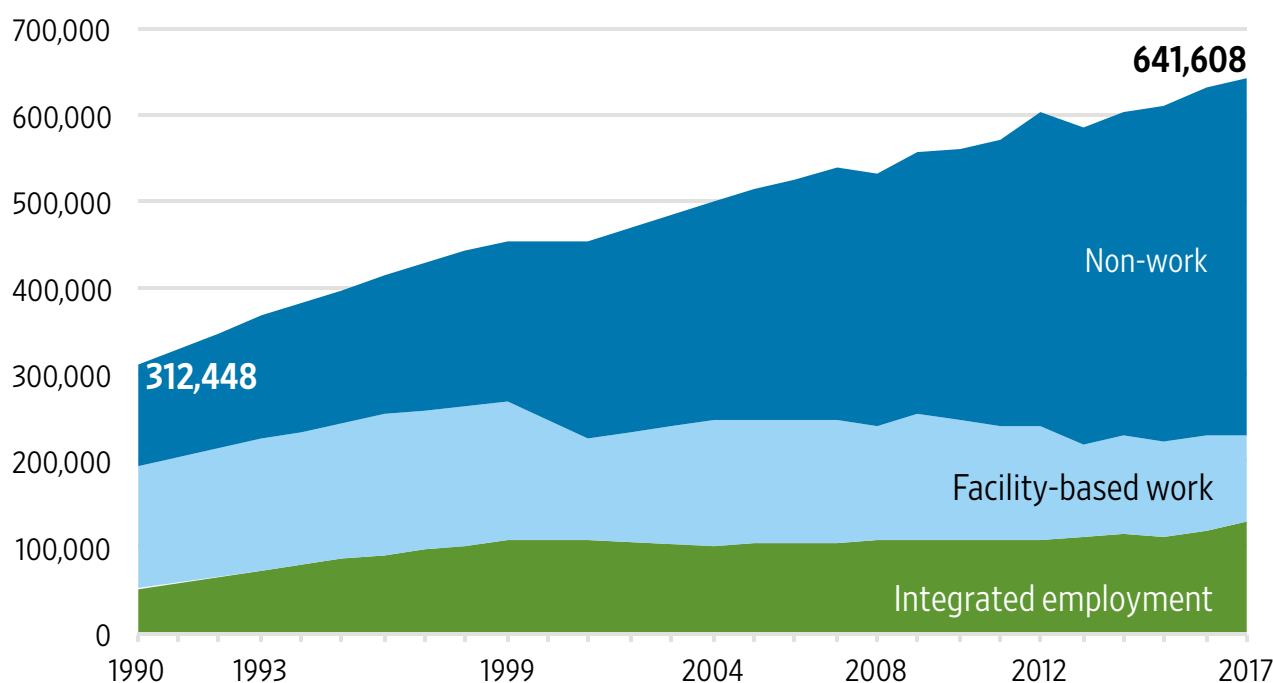
# WHAT'S DATA GOT TO DO WITH IT?



A popular saying in our field is, “If it gets measured, it gets done.” Key metrics can be used to demonstrate that people with IDD want to and can work in the community. Data informs changes in state agency policy and practice, helps to motivate providers to make changes that strengthen their integrated employment services, and mobilizes individuals with disabilities and other advocates to request change.

A core tenet of the SELN is that state IDD systems **MUST** have a robust service and outcome data system, capable of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on individual and systems-level data. The systems should include a strategy for sharing the resulting information with a wide range of partners within an ever-active quality management loop.

**Chart 1: Number in Day and Employment Services**



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2017

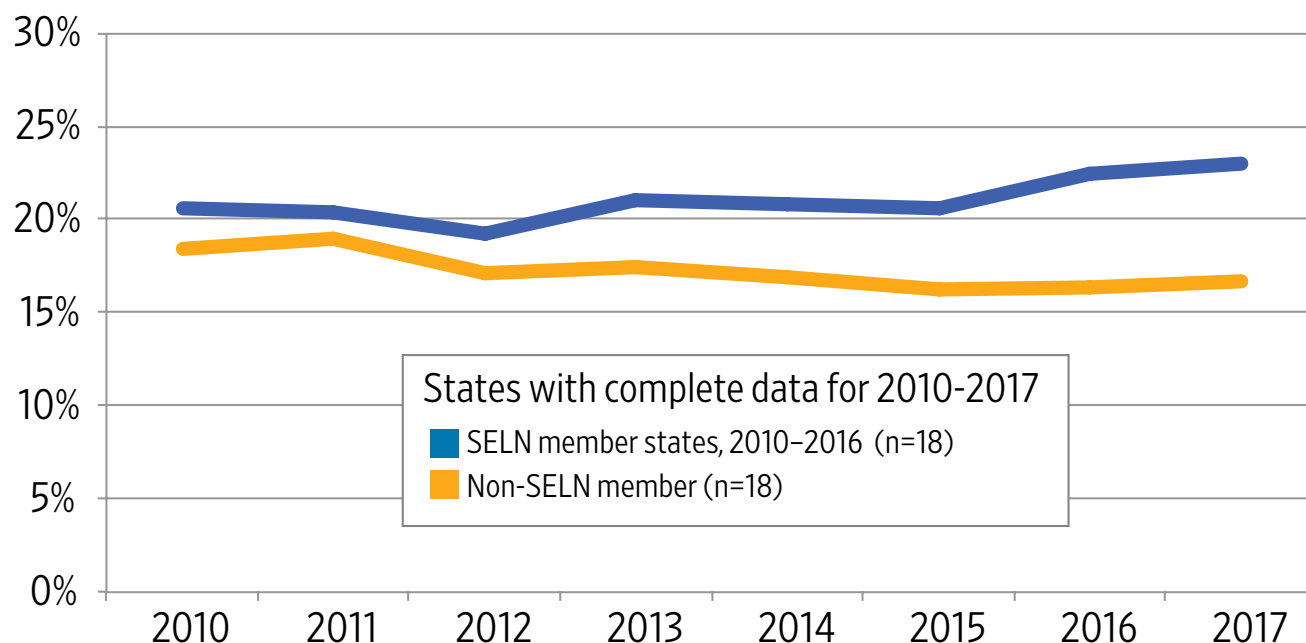
The SELN analyzes national data to understand how services and outcomes for people with IDD are changing. National estimates suggest there has been modest growth in the number of individuals receiving integrated employment services since 2012. In contrast, the number of individuals receiving non-work services has continued to rise faster than other day or employment services, while the number participating in facility-based work continues to decline.

This chart illustrates how three categories of supports have changed over time: non-work services, facility-based work, and integrated employment. 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.

Work with SELN states in the last five years reflect clearer distinctions between what does and does not count as “employment.” The more detailed definitions of individual integrated employment are leading to services and outcomes previously counted as integrated employment now being reclassified to other service types.



**Chart 2: Percent in Integrated Employment Services**



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2017

The graphic above illustrates the percent of individuals receiving integrated employment services in states across the country. Data from the Institute for Community Inclusion's National Survey of State Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Agencies' Employment and Day Services is collected annually on the total number of individuals who received integrated employment services funded or monitored by the state IDD agency. Integrated employment services primarily capture services to maintain paid integrated employment and also job development services that or those services that are intended to directly result in paid integrated employment.

SELN member states (the blue lines) show an overall improvement in the number of individuals receiving an integrated employment service. By comparison, non-member states show an overall decline in the percent of people receiving employment services. Throughout this report we examine myriad investments in systems change. SELN member states reflect improvement as illustrated in this chart, given significant commitment of resources toward improved outcomes.

## Data Users Group (DUG)

Since 2013, the DUG has engaged members in discussions about states' strategic access to and use of service and outcome data. In May, Jean Winsor and Agnes Zalewska (ICI) met with the DUG to share an overview of ICI's National Survey of State IDD Agencies' Employment and Day Services and StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes. Survey data describes the nature of day and employment services for individuals with IDD. Though the annual survey is not required, 46 states participate and illustrate how this field is progressing or demonstrating unmet needs. Survey discussions with SELN member states inform future changes and expand survey staff knowledge of policy changes impacting future data collection efforts.

**Visit [statedata.info](http://statedata.info) for the latest trends in member state performance in work.**

# WHAT'S DATA GOT TO DO WITH IT?

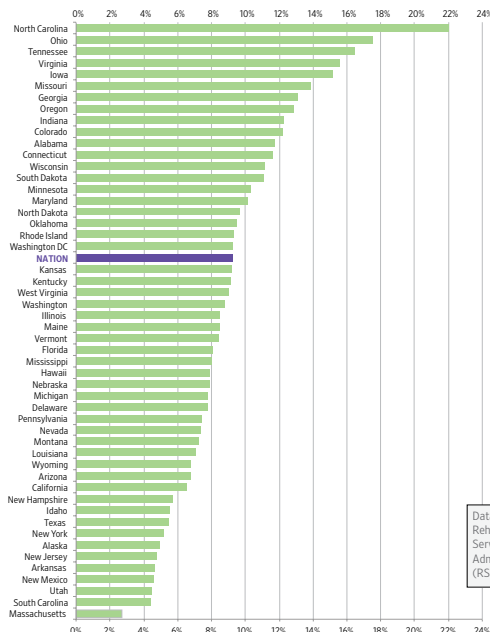


Systems change takes consistent and long term effort; it is hard work with no singular or easy solution. Clear and easy to understand pictures of different data points can help change expectations about employment for people with disabilities and express the urgency for systems change. Examples from StateData.info highlight the significant connection between employment and poverty, the need to support individuals who receive SSI cash benefits access employment services, and encourage interagency collaboration.

## States Vary in the Percentage of People with Intellectual Disabilities Who Apply to Vocational Rehabilitation and Progress to Service

## Individuals with a Cognitive Disability Are More Likely to Be Unemployed and Live in Poverty

### Closures From Vocational Rehabilitation: How Many Are Individuals With an Intellectual Disability?



### Individuals With a Cognitive Disability Are Less Likely to Work and More Likely to Live in Poverty

#### WORK



#### POVERTY



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2017

## The Total Number of Individuals Served is Rising Faster

## SSI Beneficiaries with Intellectual Disabilities are Unlikely to Work

### EMPLOYMENT SNAPSHOT People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2017

#### RECEIVING SERVICES

641,608

IN AN  
EMPLOYMENT OR  
DAY SERVICE

130,402

IN AN INTEGRATED  
EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICE

20.3%

IN AN INTEGRATED  
EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICE

Data Source: The National Survey of State Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Agencies Employment and Day Services 2017. For more information, visit [www.statedata.info/bluebook](http://www.statedata.info/bluebook).

#### WORKING

20% IN INTEGRATED  
EMPLOYMENT

##### INDIVIDUAL JOBS

15%  
IN AN  
INDIVIDUAL  
JOB

26.2  
AVERAGE  
HOURS  
WORKED  
FOR 2 WEEKS

\$233  
AVERAGE  
WAGES  
FOR 2  
WEEKS

##### GROUP JOBS

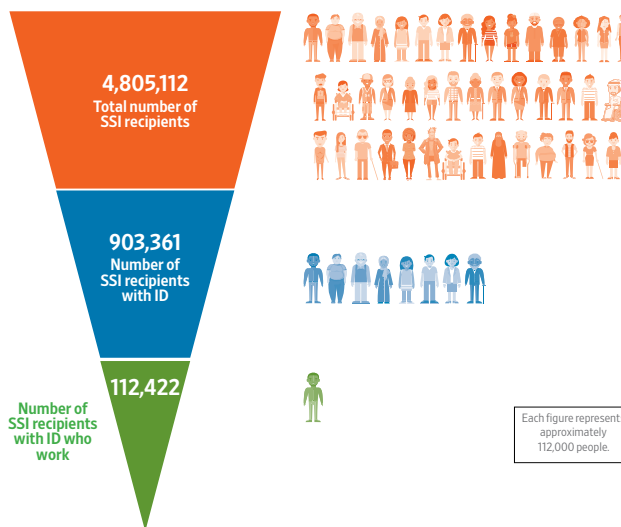
5%  
IN A  
SMALL  
GROUP  
JOB

24.8  
AVERAGE  
HOURS  
WORKED  
FOR 2 WEEKS

\$140  
AVERAGE  
WAGES  
FOR 2  
WEEKS

Data Source: In Person Survey, National Core Indicator (NCI) Project, 2016-2017. For more information, visit [www.nationalcoreindicators.org/resources/reports/](http://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/resources/reports/)

### SSI\* Beneficiaries with Intellectual Disabilities are Unlikely to Work



\* Supplemental Security Income

Data Source: Social Security Administration (2017)





## ALABAMA

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) continued to invest in provider transformation efforts over the past twelve months. Engaging with national consultants, DDD invited all provider organizations to apply for technical support to transform business practices and operations. This initiative selected 11 new agencies to participate in a DDD-funded pilot project. The pilot process entails completing a self-assessment of current employment and community life options, followed by the development of a transformation plan. The external consultants provide ongoing guidance and recommendations. The initiative began in 2013 with the support of the Office on Disability Employment Policy.

To reinforce the transformation efforts, DDD hosts monthly online events focused on topics related to the provider level transformation activities. The events are recorded and made available online. All provider agencies are routinely encouraged to attend; access is not restricted to the pilot initiative organizations.

DDD is also using newly **hired regional employment resource specialists to ensure local staff are available to work with providers, individuals, families, and other public support systems.** These staff are key to sharing information to help others understand state and federal regulations. While promoting community-based outcomes, the resource specialists are also engaging with providers to assist in implementation of the transformation plans.

## ARIZONA

Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities collaborated with multiple agencies to sponsor training on competitive integrated employment. Participating agencies included:

- Arizona Dev. Disabilities Planning Council
- Institute for Human Development /Northern Arizona University
- Association of Providers for People with Disabilities
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

The training was designed to help service providers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and support coordinators better understand the process of job development and supportive

competitive employment. A panel of individuals with disabilities, along with their job coaches and employers, discussed their work experiences.

DDD and RSA/Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) **created a Supported Employment Pilot Program to identify barriers to a coordinated, seamless, and timely referral of individuals to VR** for supported employment services. Through collaborative work between the agencies, and the participation of individuals and families, the pilot program streamlines the referral process. As a result, the number of individuals referred to VR has more than doubled from the previous year.

A second training was provided to agency staff, providers of service, and individuals and their families to foster a better understanding of the need for systemic change and transformation, including the need to change attitudes about competitive integrated employment for individuals with significant disabilities. A community employment service provider presented on how job developers conduct person-centered discovery to facilitate the job search process and partner with employers to create customized jobs for people with disabilities.

DDD and RSA/VR expanded on a data-sharing project for individuals dually enrolled in both agencies' programs. A staff person was hired to expand the project by continuing to track DDD members referred to VR for services, ensuring accuracy of the data, analyzing data, identifying trends and barriers, and streamlining the referral process between the two agencies. The DDD and VR data will be used to improve communication, conduct problem solving to eliminate barriers, and support members in achieving their employment goals.

## COLORADO

This year, Colorado made many advancements around supported employment services and systems.

Colorado's Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) implemented new training and certification requirements for supported employment providers. The state provided funding to reimburse providers for trainings or certifications. The requirements will help ensure that supported employment services are delivered with high quality. This project also



included the development of new data collection systems that will allow mean wage, mean hours worked, and type of employment to be tracked for Home and Community-Based Waiver members.

A new required training was established for case managers on supported employment that covers ways to discuss employment with individuals and their families, how to support individuals to use both Medicaid and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) services, and how to support individuals with benefit planning. Trainings on customized employment and case management were also implemented. 30 providers were trained in customized employment and participated in a pilot program designed to increase the use of a customized employment model around the state.

Colorado improved work across multiple departments by updating a memorandum of understanding, creating an interagency agreement with DVR, and partnering with the Department of Education to sequence supported employment services between the agencies and Medicaid. CO improved sequencing for adults between DVR and Medicaid and is currently designing and creating an incentive-based supported employment pilot with DVR, being led by Medicaid, which will use the current sequencing model.

The state legislature provided funding to **create an Office of Employment First**, which will be housed at the UC Denver University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

### DELAWARE

Delaware has continued to engage youth between the ages of 14 and 25 to plan and achieve their individual employment goals through Pathways to Employment (P2E), one of the state's Medicaid programs. Compliance of Delaware's Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance with P2E standards has increased over the last year, reaching above Medicaid standards in all program performance measures.

During the past year, enrollment in P2E has increased, and **more than 400 individuals are currently enrolled**. Delaware Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDDS) contributes this growth to enhanced collaboration with partnering agencies, specifically the Department of Education and local education agencies. There has been an

increase in outreach, with local school districts hosting informational events in conjunction with DDDS for the P2E program.

Additionally, DDDS collaborated with the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of the Visually Impaired, targeted case management vendors, parent representatives, and provider representatives to revamp the Division's Early Start to Supported Employment process, creating a manual for families to better understand services and how these agencies work together. Delaware has also seen an increase in participation at the Annual Transition Conference, with nearly 850 in attendance. The state has **expanded communication with contracted providers through frequent meetings to discuss any concerns or issues**.

This year, DDDS launched the use of the LifeCourse Tools with state case managers. In 2017, the LifeCourse Tools were launched with a targeted case management vendor who supports individuals living at home with their families or in their own home in the community. The newly expanded use of the LifeCourse Tools aims to strengthen support for more individuals as they move toward integrated employment and living their "good life."

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District of Columbia Department on Disability Services (DDS), in partnership with RCM of Washington, created a Direct Support Professional (DSP) Academy, to develop a career path and create high expectations for employment for young adults with disabilities.

RCM piloted the DSP Academy, aimed at providing DC transition-age youth with the skills and certifications required for front-line disability services work. The DSP Academy provided participants exposure to a variety of career paths within the Health & Human services sector and offered the short-term option of securing employment as a DSP post-graduation.

This inaugural cohort was special because three quarters of participants had a documented disability. This was an intentional effort to **explore peer-to-peer mentoring as a strategy for workforce diversification**. It also demonstrated the District's adherence to the principles of the Employment First movement. Participants were compensated for their



participation in the academy, with funding from either the Rehabilitation Services Administration or the DCPS Career Bridge internship program.

Participants gained essential job readiness skills and completed coursework that included health and wellness, CPR/First Aid, and crisis prevention intervention, all of which are required by DC's Developmental Disabilities Administration. Participants also designed and implemented field projects, leading lessons for a group of local self-advocates and facilitating a local book club for people with disabilities. The participants graduated on May 30 and are now qualified to be DSPs in the District. **Two students were offered full-time employment** with RCM of Washington, with the opportunity for more students to be employed by multiple providers.

### GEORGIA

The goal of Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) is to re-establish Georgia as a high-performing employment system supporting individuals with IDD in competitive integrated employment. The work with SELN over the past several years culminated with a one-day planning session at which participants and state staff identified system collaboration, capacity, and outcome data as priorities. DBHDD contracted with WISE (formerly the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment) to provide training and technical assistance toward these goals.

Led by WISE, Georgia held its inaugural Supported Employment Forum in March 2019. The 2-day event culminated with the **formation of a state-level leadership team and 6 regional grassroots teams called Gardens of Change**. These teams will play a key role in building a statewide Employment First network.

The state-level leadership team now includes over a dozen agencies, programs, and other state employment leaders. WISE and SELN provide this group with a national perspective. The group meets monthly to devise strategies to meet the state's employment goals. The Gardens of Change **teams also meet monthly to share plans and receive technical assistance on expanding employment opportunities in their regions**.

WISE conducted training for 60 job developers in May 2019, and will offer additional in-person trainings in September 2019 and February 2020,

in conjunction with monthly webinars. WISE partnered with Georgia APSE and conducted webinars for 82 participants in April 2019 and 283 participants in May 2019, to build awareness of Employment First. The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, in collaboration with the University of Georgia's Institute on Human Development and Disability, began plans to conduct customized employment training for service providers in fall 2019.

### HAWAII

Hawaii continues to improve its waiver services so that individuals with IDD have access to competitive, integrated employment. Ongoing technical assistance and training are being conducted with waiver employment services providers and the Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division's (DDD) case management units to strengthen discovery, career planning, job development, and job coaching.

DDD is working to ensure that its new IT system, INSPIRE, supports integrated competitive employment. INSPIRE can capture data about the customer life trajectory and supports to enhance employment services. **While INSPIRE's primary users are DDD case managers, the goal is to use the new system to engage individuals with IDD, their families, and waiver agency providers.**

This past year saw increases in stakeholder attendance on Oahu for the quarterly transition meeting, a collaborative effort since 2016 with the following agencies:

- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services
- Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa
- Hawaii Disability Rights Center
- Waiver agency providers, and others

The group is working on expanding its quarterly meetings to share and discuss programs, activities, and the needs of each island.

The state legislature will co-sponsor the second annual reverse job fair this October to assist individuals with IDD in obtaining entry-level jobs. The state legislature's support of this event for the second year strengthens Governor Ige's proclamation of last October as Disability





Employment Awareness month and endorses Hawaii's designation as an Employment First state. **The Hawaii Employment First Taskforce meets monthly to advance employment opportunities for individuals with IDD** and hopes to have an Employment First Executive Order signed by Governor Ige.

Project SEARCH is continuing to provide internships this fall. Kaiser Permanente's Moanalua Medical Center will welcome three new student interns with efforts to expand the program to the Leeward (West Oahu) District. Since the program began last August, six students have interned at Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific and graduated, followed by six student interns at Embassy Suites and Hokulani Waikiki, both owned by Outrigger Hotels and Resorts. Five of the 12 are employed while two other interns are being interviewed for jobs.

### MARYLAND

This was a critical transition year for the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) as it moved toward full functionality of the state's Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) system. The DDA is also preparing for **phase-in of new pay-per-fee employment services and rate structures in July 2020**. Two of the agency's biggest capacity-building initiatives involve case management and provider capacity.

Maryland's targeted case management system, known as Coordination of Community Services (CCS), continues to transform service delivery in the state. CCS staffers facilitate the person-centered planning (PCP), monitor plan implementation, and provide documentation in LTSS.

To further improve CCS service delivery, the DDA awarded a contract to the Columbus Organization to help develop core training curriculum modules. These will eventually lead to an approved certification for each CCS who completes the series. The Columbus Organization is also assisting in the development of a training database platform that will eventually be maintained by the DDA regional offices, and will support review and analysis of CCS performance.

The DDA **provided hands-on programmatic and functionality training to all coordinators statewide and regional staff** on updated functionality to the LTSS system related to

the PCP service authorization. The agency is developing similar training for all providers who will be using a portal to approve services and bill in LTSS.

The DDA has worked closely with stakeholders and workgroups through the development of these resources, and is set to finalize day and employment policies and guidance at the end of summer 2019. These will provide guidance to providers prior to the phase-in of new services and funding structure targeted for July 2020.

### MASSACHUSETTS

During the past year, the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) issued a new procurement for the delivery of supported employment and community-based day support services to begin in FY 2020. This reinforced the state's commitment to Employment First, and provided **more specific service definitions, service delivery expectations, and expected outcomes**. It also ensures alignment with federal policy initiatives related to the Home and Community-Based Services Community Settings Rule and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. A review of rates for supported employment and community-based day support services also occurred, with new rates going into effect as of 7/1/19.

DDS has continued its work within provider organizations to promote the delivery of quality supported employment and community-based day support services. In-person trainings and webinars are offered to employment specialists, job coaches, and program managers. A new training curriculum was piloted, focusing on direct support staff working in community-based day support programs.

Provider technical assistance and consultation is also made available to assist agencies in their organizational transformation efforts. In partnership with the ICI, a statewide employment conference was held to share promising practices and innovative approaches, drawing about 300 attendees.

DDS offered several trainings on the Charting the LifeCourse framework through the Massachusetts Partnership for Transition to Employment project, which included representatives from schools, providers, state agencies, advocacy groups, families, and self-advocates. This project



is pursuing ways to integrate this framework into planning with individuals and families to promote expectations and experiences that will lead to employment.

### MICHIGAN

Michigan's Department of Health & Human Services/Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Administration (BHDDA) has made strides this year in aligning employment data across multiple state databases and agencies. To this end, BHDDA has:

- Clarified service definitions
- Addressed data quality
- Improved coding for data collection
- Revised the state-wide data management systems

Strengthening and expanding data on employment outcomes has been a priority for several years. Employment outcome data are embedded in the Behavioral Health Treatment Episode Data Set (BH-TEDS). BH-TEDS records are updated at intake and exit from services, and at least annually for individuals receiving long-term supports. During 2018–2019, Michigan developed detailed reports on employment outcomes and non-employment activities, identified outliers and gaps in the data, and worked with managed care organizations to improve reporting. By late 2019, Michigan will **publish employment outcome data on an open website to support Employment First planning and systems improvement.**

Concurrently, Michigan is revising and restructuring service definitions and provider qualifications to clarify the goal of each service, focus more clearly on pathways to competitive integrated employment, and achieve consistent definitions across waivers.

### MINNESOTA

Launched in 2018, the Minnesota Technical Assistance Project (MN-TAP) is a 2-year project funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. As part of the project, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, in partnership with the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, is providing technical assistance (TA) to 2 cohorts of provider agencies, each cohort

with 6 agencies. A total of 12 organizations will participate over the course of the 2 years. The goal of the TA is to help providers expand their capacity to support people with IDD in obtaining and succeeding in competitive, integrated employment.

Minnesota received state legislative approval for new employment services related to its Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services waiver, and will begin seeking federal approval to redesign day and prevocational services. The current day training and habilitation service will become day support services and will provide individualized opportunities for community-based training and support. **Prevocational services will become time limited.**

Through training and certification of benefit coaches, the Disability HUB Benefits Planning Network has been building a network of support professionals and stakeholders who understand the effect of work on public benefits, the importance of planning, and how to connect to the right resources and supports. Between July 2018 and June 2019, the Hub trained and certified 19 new benefit coaches.

In 2019, the Minnesota **legislature approved funding for DHS to complete a study on value-based payments for the disability waiver rate system.** Through October 2020, DHS will review federal guidance and payment structures in other states, and will engage stakeholders to deliver policy and payment structure recommendations to the legislature.

### MISSOURI

The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has continued to focus on comprehensive systems change and capacity building to expand employment outcomes. This has included **increasing the number of individuals authorized for waiver-funded employment services over the last few years** (from under 400 to over 1,000).

These increased authorizations have created the need to increase the capacity of providers to provide quality employment services leading to community employment. This is occurring through a multi-pronged approach. A primary component is Missouri's funding of dedicated technical assistance (TA) to providers. This TA consists of a needs assessment, development



of an action plan, and customized consultation and training to build provider capacity to deliver quality employment services.

As part of this capacity-building effort, a **Community of Practice has been developed for sharing of ideas and information among providers via monthly video calls and an online forum.** DDD also continues to make online training available to all providers to support capacity building, and to assist providers to fulfill the Division's training and mentoring requirements for new employment services staff. The Division has also revamped the portion of its website dedicated to employment services and supports, offering up-to-date resources in user-friendly formats.

Lastly, Missouri announced its [Technology First Initiative](#), to ensure that technology is fully considered as part of all supports and services. As it rolls out, building the capacity of service providers to incorporate technology in supporting the employment success of individuals in employment will be a core component of this initiative.

### NEW MEXICO

The New Mexico Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) continues to work closely with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) and the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability's Partners for Employment (PFE) collaborative as part of the Jackson Collaboration Project. The project offers vocational counseling to a targeted group of individuals with significant support needs—known as Jackson Class Members—with the goal of integrated competitive employment.

The three agencies share responsibility in taking a deeper dive into the interests, skills, and abilities of Jackson Class Members to provide them new experiences in the community tied to potential work outcomes and informed choices about employment. DDSD and NMDVR field staff work closely on regional teams. These teams meet monthly to discuss each case intensively, and provide one-on-one supports to explore new outcomes or expand employment options. They also review assessments to develop the foundation and direction for job development.

As a result of this collaboration, several Jackson

Class Members across the state have found employment or strengthened their existing employment or microenterprise. **This project sets the stage for a collaborative, team-oriented, systematic approach to supported employment services in New Mexico.**

In addition, DDSD and NMDVR staff have participated in training toward ACRE certification, and have worked with a national expert to incorporate discovery techniques and skills into their tool kit. An example of the increased collaboration between DDSD and NMDVR was the provision of individualized technical assistance through PFE to support an employment provider with training on systematic instruction (an evidence-based method to teaching tasks or activities). NMDVR and DDSD staff attended the systematic instruction training with the employment provider to ensure adequate implementation of on-the-job supports.

### NEW YORK

Beginning December 2020, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) **will no longer fund segregated employment services.** In 2018, OPWDD had 10,500 individuals enrolled in supported employment with 8,600 individuals working in competitive integrated employment.

To assist provider organizations to transform from sheltered workshops into integrated agencies, OPWDD is working with providers to create integrated, community-based, fiscally sustainable businesses to employ people with and without disabilities. 25 providers discontinued segregated employment services in sheltered workshops this year. Approximately 1,500 people have been transitioned out of segregated employment services and into other services, such as community prevocational services and supported employment.

New regulations expanded eligibility for community prevocational services. This year saw an increase in the number of individuals receiving these services, which focus on general employment skills, offer career exploration and experiences in different occupational categories, and develop an individual's strengths and interests in preparation for competitive employment.

During 2018, the Employment Training Program (ETP) served more than 1,000 people, including high school students. The ETP is designed to increase the number of businesses that hire indi-



viduals with developmental disabilities and to offer individuals an employment opportunity that might not otherwise be available. OPWDD pays the wages of each individual while they are learning the job, with the expectation that the business will then hire the person if they are a good fit.

OPWDD ran 375 training classes for 9,000 provider staff from more than 200 agencies. Classes help ensure providers fully understand OPWDD expectations for service delivery, Employment First, and person-centered planning.

## OHIO

Adult day and employment services have evolved rapidly in Ohio over the past few years. A range of practices are being used to make payments to individuals enrolled in waiver-funded adult day and employment services. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) expanded the focus of the payment in [Adult Day and Employment Services Work Group](#) in August 2018 to ensure systemic compliance with service and compensation standards. The work group consisted of 27 members including individuals served, families, advocacy organizations, providers, county boards, various other stakeholder groups, and DODD team members.

[The work group developed an agreed-upon framework](#) for aligning the vocational habilitation service with state and federal requirements. A major part of the work was to gather input from individuals, families, and providers across Ohio to ensure DODD developed a plan that took into account their multiple perspectives. The framework will be implemented in the summer of 2020.

## OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services' Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) is implementing a new strategy for collecting vocational data at the individual level.

Reviewing the previous system, DDS discovered:

- Lack of clarity in the field on what certain terms mean (which leads to incorrect or missing data)
- Data not being used to generate decision making at the local, area, or state levels
- Updates not regularly entered in the data system and no consequence for lack of

compliance

- When data is submitted, the inaccuracies and mistakes mean it can't be used for reporting.

The DDS employment workgroup, with staff from DDS and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, committed to new data system goals:

- Improve the ability to make strategic and programmatic decisions.
- Support quality management efforts at the state, area, and local levels.
- Move away from minimum requirements so people experience greater personal growth (e.g., fewer group supports and more individual experiences, provider agencies strive to help individuals achieve new stretch goals or earn higher wages).
- Share reports with a wider array of audiences, such as the state legislature, businesses, state staff, individuals, families, providers, and potential future funding sources.

DDS elected to test use of its client contact manager (CCM) system prior to considering the need to build a new system. DDS's main goal for the CCM was to increase case managers' understanding and reporting of each individual's employment status. The vocational fields in the CCM gather data on wages earned, hours worked, whether benefits are earned, and the type of job obtained. Data entered as of December was pulled for analysis. It was determined that additional technical support at the local case manager level is needed to improve accuracy, clarify the meaning of certain fields, and fine-tune report formats.

## OREGON

In 2018-2019, Oregon Employment First launched several new programs and initiatives aimed at increasing provider capacity to meet the growing demand for job services for people with IDD.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), in coordination with the Department of Administrative Services and the Oregon Department of Education, started the State as Model Employer program to remove barriers people with IDD face to working in state jobs. This program allows hiring managers in any state agency to direct-appoint a person with





IDD who is receiving services from the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) into pre-approved positions. The hiring manager can work with their local vocational rehabilitation (VR) branch to identify candidates who might meet the criteria for the position. Several programs at DHS have already hired employees through this process.

In January 2019, ODDS made funding available for a new employment provider mentoring program. The initiative pays qualified Medicaid agencies to give technical assistance to employment providers on topics such as discovery, job development, budgeting, and job development modeling. This program pays agencies to act as mentors for employment-related services, and supports providers in need of technical assistance.

To build capacity in underserved areas, ODDS set up a reimbursement program in 18 rural counties for Medicaid-enrolled provider agencies with employment endorsements. This makes trainings more accessible to agencies in those areas. Eligible organizations will be reimbursed for the registration costs of pre-approved online curriculum after the agency's staff completes the training and receives certification.

Finally, Oregon Employment First launched a new online tool: the [Employment Road Map](#). This tool acts as a sort of TurboTax for employment services, helping people with IDD and their families/team chart a customized course to a job with services and supports in their local area.

## PENNSYLVANIA

In February 2019, Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) released a joint bulletin with policy and procedural guidance for supports coordinators that streamlines navigation between the two service systems. The bulletin broadens previous guidance to include individuals with IDD or autism funded through sources other than a HCBS waiver, such as state- and county-funded services. In addition, it emphasizes that an individual should be referred for OVR services when they first express interest in employment. ODP and OVR **conducted training on these procedures for more than 250 supports coordinators and other professionals.**

ODP and OVR have entered into two

memorandums of understanding (MOUs). The first allows for pooling of resources to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes. Resources have been used to staff intellectual disability and autism (ID/A) coordinators in each OVR district office, and to train providers dually enrolled as both ODP and OVR employment providers. The second MOU allows for sharing of data between ODP and OVR. **OVR and ODP engage in data exchanges quarterly to assist in service coordination, use of benefits, and prevention of duplication of services.** The MOU also allows for ODP supports coordinators to have access to OVR's Comprehensive Workforce Development System and for OVR ID/A coordinators to have access to the ODP Home and Community Service Information System for shared consumers.

ODP and OVR have also worked closely on a training and networking event, Experience the Employment Connection (EEC). The EEC initiative strives to increase competitive, integrated employment through a statewide, interagency staff training approach. Involved agencies include the Pennsylvania Department of Education as well as the Office of Long-Term Living and Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services within the Department of Human Services.

## RHODE ISLAND

To assist individuals who want to increase their work hours, the Rhode Island Division of Developmental Disabilities within the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) developed a strategy for using each client's individual service plan (ISP) to help reach career goals.

BHDDH recently revised ISPs to include specific questions about vocational goals, desired types of employment, and the number of hours and days a person wants to work. If an individual is not working their desired number of hours with one employer, providers are encouraged to support them in seeking additional employment to achieve more hours.

To ensure providers maintain a strong focus on individualized employment supports, BHDDH is funding annual trainings with national experts. Once employment teams are trained and/or certified, the Division's employment specialist



provides ongoing technical assistance.

The Division is redesigning the Person-Centered Supported Employment Performance Program, which promotes integrated employment services **by linking the disbursement of funds to providers with performance goals, numerical targets, and implementation timelines.** This redesign will allow providers more flexibility to enhance their employment programs and engage in best practices, as well as to collaborate with other agencies and community partners.

BHDDH is looking to further develop a service delivery system and associated reimbursement arrangements to maximize opportunities for individuals with IDD to participate in integrated community-based activities and employment.

The Division contracted the New England States Consortium Organization (NESCO) to review best strategies for developing an optimal system of services and payments for individuals with IDD and complying with the HCBS Final Rule, and the 2014 Department of Justice Consent Decree. With NESCO's help, the Division will identify alternative payment methods and policy options to further incentivize a consumer-centered and consumer-directed use of services that are integrated and community-based.

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) regional trainings were held from October 2018 to March 2019 to provide initial and continued exposure to the CtLC framework and were attended by providers across the state, including 57 CHOICES case managers and Family Support 360 service coordinators. Each regional session included an overview and hands-on practice to create a vision for a good life using the concept of trajectory and integrated supports. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) created the Charting a Person-Centered Path to Employment framework, with the goal of building the capacity of case managers and service coordinators to facilitate employment planning by using both person-centered thinking and CtLC.

The South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is working with community support providers (CSPs) to provide training on customized employment. CSP staff who complete the 40-hour training, get online mentoring, and receive on-site technical

assistance will be approved to receive DRS funding for the provision of customized employment services. Providers will be reimbursed at a higher rate for the provision of customized employment.

South Dakota **Senate Bill 147 was enacted to establish a rate-setting methodology** for services delivered by community-based health and human services providers. The bill requires a comprehensive rate modeling analysis at least every five years. DDD has contracted with an outside entity to facilitate this comprehensive analysis. A stakeholder group has been established to assist with the analysis and the development of a work plan for rate rebase and/or remodel.

### TEXAS

Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) is providing training to managed care organizations (MCOs) on employment services in 13 locations across Texas. The training provides increased knowledge and understanding of funding systems for Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services, HHS long-term supports and services, and MCOs. The training walks MCO staffers through the employment process and how to **seamlessly sequence employment-related services throughout an individual's work life.** Topics include:

- Texas' Employment First policy
- HCBS Final Settings Rule
- Social Security Administration disability benefits and work incentive programs
- Employment services and billing under HHSC 1915(c) and 1115 demonstration programs
- TWC-VRS overview and relation to long term supports and services
- HHSC Employment Recruitment Coordinator statewide activities and video

In addition, evening sessions tailored for individuals and their families are being offered at several locations

HHS developed a video depicting the positive life changes that can occur for individuals with IDD employed in integrated settings. The video will be used as an educational tool for providers and families.

A community-based apprenticeship pilot project will offer paid internships for adult individuals



with IDD or those receiving behavioral health services. The 10-month pilot will provide transferrable skills for individuals seeking competitive, integrated employment. HHS will partner with local businesses and with two local IDD authorities.

Another 10-month pilot project will test the use of electronic tablets and assistive applications to increase individuals' independence and to enhance transition outcomes. The project's primary focus will be on transitions in the workplace, with secondary focus on home and other community settings.

The HHS Employment Guide is being updated and refreshed. The guide provides information on how to support and assist people with disabilities who are receiving HHS services to obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment.

HHS also is revising 13 web-based trainings for its staff related to employment.

### UTAH

Utah's Department of Human Services, Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) just **completed its first year of membership in the SELN**. This year's work included an October 2018 site visit and assessment from SELN staff and the development of DSPD's work plan for employment systems changes. DSPD's areas of focus have been and will continue to be as follows:

Developing a marketing and communication strategy in order to create the consistent message that employment is an expectation and a priority. The strategy will include actions supported by other state agencies, service providers, and case managers.

Reviewing DSPD policies and procedures to ensure there is a clear focus on employment as an intended outcome and priority goal across staff responsibilities. This work is being done in collaboration with the state Medicaid agency and includes the development of a routine timeline to ensure all DSPD policies and procedures align to support employment.

Reframing the services planning process to focus on helping individuals served by DSPD to build a vision for employment in the community.

Educating stakeholders on the opportunities that new payment rates and services definitions will provide for all people being supported by DSPD.

Action steps DSPD has engaged in to support these goals:

- Use of the Guidance for Conversations for employment and other services.
- Improvement to the person-centered planning processes.
- Detailed review of service availability and capacity building.
- Initial steps in renewing our State as a Model Employer Executive Order.

### VIRGINIA

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) has been busy this year expanding efforts around employment in collaboration with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Partnership for People with Disabilities (PPD).

DBHDS and the Special Education and Students Services (SESS) Division of VDOE entered into a memorandum of understanding effective July 1, 2018. The purpose of this collaboration is to advance employment initiatives and efforts on behalf of individuals with IDD, particularly elementary-age youth.

[SESS uses Virtual Job Shadow \(VJS\)](#), an online program that assists school divisions in the development of transition-focused individualized education programs for students with disabilities. Last year, SESS staff observed elementary-age youth with significant disabilities using VJS. Their assessment will be used to inform tools and additional features to improve VJS' accessibility and use.

A second collaboration with SESS focuses on career development and pathways. Career Clusters is a framework that helps **students investigate careers and design their courses of study to advance their career goals**. VJS features video profiles of students working, and this year, VDOE is coordinating the filming of persons with disabilities at work in local businesses.

DBHDS and DARS will be entering their second



phase of service expansion coupled with the development of a sustainability plan to ensure that all individuals eligible for customized employment have access to qualified employment providers.

Finally, DBHDS has collaborated with VCU PPD to deliver professional development opportunities on all elements of case management. Courses are available online along with a case management manual.

### WASHINGTON

This membership year, the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) focused on increasing the competencies of professionals working in employment services.

DDA offers **64 hours of core supported employment professional training** to prepare staffers to take the certified employment professional exam. This exam leads to a nationally recognized certification from the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE). 41 participants completed the training, 39 of whom are now ACRE-certified.

DDA supports the Mentoring Pilot Program, which increases provider capacity through training for employment specialists, such as building local capacity to deliver training in systematic instruction (SI). A cohort of 11 employment specialists received formal training and mentoring to properly deliver SI to individuals with IDD, and to accurately present the content of the SI seminar to peers.

DDA's case management data collection system, CARE, requires case managers to **document the number of hours each client enrolled in an employment service wants to work**. DDA releases a data report comparing the CARE requested paid work hours with the client's actual paid work hours. The report indicates the acuity level each provider is at as they support a client to reach their requested paid work hours.

DDA provides this report bi-monthly to counties that administer employment services. The counties then use the report as a tool for quality oversight and goal setting with the contracted employment providers.

### WISCONSIN

In January 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) implemented a pay-for-performance (P4P) initiative to improve outcomes of competitive integrated employment (CIE). This initiative focuses on process outcomes, which will incentivize managed care organizations (MCOs) to train staff on CIE and engage members in conversations about employment. The initiative allows **MCOs to train care managers with employment-based case management competencies to improve their knowledge** of employment services and the outcomes of CIE.

In October 2018, DHS launched Think Possible!, a webinar training series for service coordinators in DHS children's programs. This training helps service coordinators support children and families with developing and achieving the goal of CIE. The three-part training builds the case for CIE, provides information about supporting CIE, and explores how service coordinators can work with community partners to assist youth with achieving CIE.

In 2018, **Wisconsin became an Employment First state**. An interdepartmental workgroup, including DHS, the Department of Workforce Development/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DWD/DVR), and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), developed a joint plan to improve CIE outcomes statewide. Two sub-workgroups were established:

The service provider capacity workgroup includes staff from the state, MCOs, and IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct) consultant agencies, plus representatives from service providers. The end goal of this workgroup is to improve provider capacity and quality throughout the state.

The data integration workgroup includes state staff from DHS, DWD/DVR, and DPI. The end goal of this workgroup is to produce an options paper for leadership to choose and operationalize an interdepartmental data collection system.





We talk often of the Higher Performing Framework and taking an orderly approach to systems change. Sometimes states join the SELN expecting there is one way, or even a “best way” to achieve goals or address challenges based on addressing all aspects of the Framework. With the sheer number of new regulations alone in recent years, this is understandable.

Truth is – nothing could be further from reality. There is no “one best way” to tackle our biggest challenges. While the Framework is a model grounded in research with valuable insights for states, it is not a guidebook. Over the last 13 years, our network of member states has documented myriad approaches to create new systems and infrastructure based on the politics, culture, timing and finances of each state at that point in time.

Work in the IDD field for any length of time and your awareness of the legacy systems we have built becomes very clear. The practices of the past may appear simpler to maintain given the controversies of change. Dig deeper and you will see that the outdated practices represent a mismatch between those seeking supports, those funding supports and those administering supports at state and local levels. Many of those practices represented state of the art advancements at the time. Compare them to common day practices of society at large, our capacity to connect with one another, along with high expectations for human achievements, and you quickly see where we must act.

The SELN represents a set of states unified in the need for improved economic and social status of individuals with disabilities and their families through planful, focused, targeted, respectful and articulate ways. We aid states in developing a game plan, and in some cases rally support for building that plan when diverse opinions or leadership changes weaken resolve.

A life of dependence, lacking contribution to the greater good, is not a recipe for success. When states proactively get out in front, embrace quality management principles, and listen for guidance from those with similar experiences in this line of work, all outcomes can improve.

This report’s previous pages highlight where state systems are investing resources to put a stake in the ground. At a pace that can frustrate many, this oftentimes slow but deliberate work represents a tremendous belief in our goals for greater integration and inclusion. People are having new experiences in the community, engaging in meaningful ways, and often earning income equal to non-disabled peers through work they enjoy.

The state activities are important when they:

- ▶ Help individuals, families and communities craft a path out of poverty
- ▶ Change the trajectory of individuals and families’ lives for the better

Our work guides states on the best possible path through open communication and relationships built on trust and high expectations. We commend and thank the states who have engaged with the SELN to date and welcome others to join our journey.

Visit [www.SELNhub.org](http://www.SELNhub.org) for links for more information on the various state activities and projects.

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