



State Employment Leadership Network

Technical Assistance Overview

Benefits of SELN Membership

SELN member states have access to direct state specific-technical assistance throughout the twelve-month membership year. Requests for assistance vary widely across states and may shift during the membership year as governmental priorities, culture, economy and timing impact strategic goals and other initiatives. Often the more challenging aspect is deciding which priorities to address in a time of limited resources and narrowing the work to just a few areas. The SELN project team and individual member states negotiate the most realistic and achievable activities based on your state's emerging priorities and goals each membership year.

Systems change is different in every state, and the project team builds a familiarity with each member to help guide suggestions for the most beneficial activities and resources. The changes become part of a continuous quality improvement process, and those improvement processes guide each state's technical assistance.

Employment systems change is different in every state and, to be effective, must be an active part of a state's larger continuous quality improvement process. These examples illustrate the variation in requests from member states.

To effectively engage, the SELN project team builds a familiarity with each member to help guide suggestions for the most strategic activities and resources. Candid exchanges between the SELN project team and state-level teams develop a richness and diversity that generates knowledge to be shared with others. These exchanges also enhance the SELN project team's ability to make cogent recommendations to federal partners on behalf of member state systems.

Ten Examples of SELN Member Technical Assistance Events

1. Leadership, Policies, and Goals

General tasks and activities related to a set of concepts or topics in systems change work.

- › Develop Request for Proposal (RFP) language in states and recommendations for how to word public proposals, such as when seeking applicants for grant funds to pilot new employment-related activities.
- › Analyze other states' service definitions for comparison purposes, and to help with writing new definitions.
- › Suggest accurate terminology to show the relationship of certain funding issues to other systems work (e.g., a policy on "post-eligibility treatment of income" as reflected in home and community-based waiver applications).
- › Develop legislative briefs and data snapshots addressing integrated employment status in states and background information on the national landscape regarding employment of people with disabilities.

2. Training and Technical Assistance, Including Workforce Development

States need a strong, competent workforce to increase the number of individuals who are successful in individual, integrated jobs. State policies and programs cannot be successful when people in the field are unfamiliar with new service delivery models and support strategies.

- › Build a slate of nationally known training providers to help increase the professional competencies of paid staff, and facilitate interviews with each organization on the list. Assist the state with selecting one provider to develop a customized employment-training program for in-person and online instruction for staff across the state.
- › Provide in-state training to increase the understanding of the value and key role support coordinators play in assisting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to become gainfully employed.

4. Provider-Level Organizational Change

The SELN project team engages with groups in states who are assisting service providers to realign business practices to support delivery of high-quality community-based employment services.

- › Support three providers who received a Money Follows the Person grant to work through a strategic assessment, participate in day-long site visits to discuss employment goals, and coach the agency in development of a realistic organizational change plan.
- › Identify provider organizations that have successfully shifted from traditional community programs, and host presentations by them for SELN members and their provider networks.

3. Interagency Partnerships and Collaboration

State IDD agencies must form effective relationships with other state and community partners to help systems and people achieve employment goals. Discussions are focused on the key questions to help make a shift toward individual, integrated employment across state partners.

- › Assist states to bring together families, businesses, vocational rehabilitation (VR), education departments, health services, and other state agencies to discuss new or renewed employment initiatives.
- › Work with the member state to revise existing memorandums of agreement or understanding, or to create new ones representing the key roles of systems partners.
- › Convene a leadership summit to discuss with senior state leadership roles and responsibilities within the state's human service systems.
- › Facilitate meetings between IDD staff and VR staff to address key systems challenges, and then share takeaways and resulting actions.

5. Communication Strategies

The SELN project team guides state agencies to plan and implement communication initiatives promoting community employment.

- › Discuss and determine the audiences and goals of marketing initiatives. Based on these decisions, develop and evaluate marketing collateral.
- › Help develop and host an online survey to collect feedback from stakeholders on Employment First initiatives to inform a state's communication plan.
- › Work with a cross-agency team to guide development of a marketing strategy in response to recommendations from the governor's task force.
- › Create marketing materials for targeted audiences.

6. Financing, Contracting, and Funding Realignment

The SELN project team assists member states with identifying funding-related barriers to achieving integrated employment outcomes and developing funding and contracting strategy.

- › Plan and host day-long discussions with key participants about how current funding strategies and methodologies need to be modified in support of integrated individual employment.
- › Work in partnership with the SELN member state to ensure sequenced funding across systems is well understood and federal regulations are clarified in support of the state's employment goals.
- › Analyze and help develop a detailed plan to realign resources to reflect employment as the preferred outcome of day and employment services.

8. Services and Service Innovation

- › States must structure and align services that facilitate and deliver best practices for employment supports to all individuals with developmental disabilities.
- › Provide technical assistance in writing service definitions, developing support strategies, and creating policies that support stated employment goals.
- › Write a specific employment section for a state's individual support plan guidelines, to be implemented by case managers as they lead team meetings.
- › Present on service-related topics and innovations to a variety of audiences, including employment working groups, sub-committees, conference attendees, and family groups.

7. Performance Measurement and Quality Management

The SELN project team guides member states in development and implementation of employment outcome data-collection processes, and discusses the benefit and utility of such systems.

- › Analyze state-specific data over a set of identified sources to provide a more detailed consideration of what the reported results really mean and possible steps to improve outcomes.
- › Design web-based platforms to make data broadly available across several states. SELN staff can build and manage the web-based display and management tool, or work with a state's existing data management structure.
- › Discuss employment outcome data goals with a state's management information systems staff. Discuss the data's unique qualities and features, the differences between employment services data and outcome data, and how these forms of data relate to other data collected by such a system.
- › Consult on the integration of employment outcome data into existing data and management information systems.
- › Develop data-related summaries and recommendations from provider-level data, sample individual provider report templates, and wage and hour report data.

“ In the past year, with the multitude of new opportunities to advance Employment First efforts, the technical assistance and guidance from the SELN has been invaluable with building a system which empowers individuals with ascending to new heights in employment.

—Duane Shumate, Missouri

9. Online Events

The project team delivers customized online events to member states.

- › The SELN hosts each event, providing all technological needs, and coordinates with the state's SELN lead contact on marketing and event logistics.
- › Field experts are recruited as presenters and work with SELN team members to design content that demonstrates innovative and emerging practices in service delivery and addresses key challenges in the requesting state.
- › Examples of past topics include provider capacity-building, benefits planning and work incentives, the role of employment, supporting and engaging families, and rural and urban transportation strategies. These can be organized as one-time events or an ongoing series for a specific target audience.

10. Public Forums

SELN provides technical assistance to states to develop public dialogue, often using forums to do so. These events showcase best practices in community employment and offer networking opportunities to people working in the field. SELN coordinates with the state lead to select a planning committee, determine topics, identify locations and scheduling, develop an evaluation and data-collection plan, recruit guest speakers, and establish the agenda.

- › Run regional employment forums that showcase best practices in service delivery and provide networking opportunities for local, area, regional, and state staff working in the employment field. Events can be duplicated around the state.
- › Plan statewide employment events to facilitate the sharing of diverse perspectives related to employment systems change in a respectful way that is sensitive to the state's current culture.



**State Employment
Leadership Network**

www.seln.org

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.



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