

State Employment Leadership Network
Accomplishments Report
Membership Year 2007-2008



netWORK

From the Project Managers

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As the current State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) membership year comes to a close we are pleased to share this compilation of our activities and accomplishments.

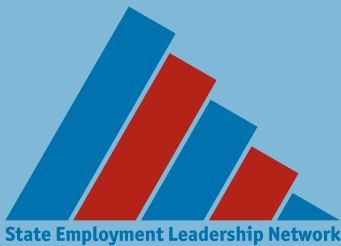
This year's sixteen member states converged as a cohort, of like-minded professionals, seeking ideas and energy to face the employment-related challenges. While we look to trends for information about the future, a true network is emerging; equipped with customized resources to tackle today's issues.

Common refrains of "real work for real pay" can be heard all across our great country, and the SELN is working hard to help state developmental disability agencies be strong partners in local integrated, competitive employment efforts.

SELN activities are well underway for a busy third year which kicked off July 1st! With a common vision of transforming systems to benefit individuals, our Project Team, on behalf of all state members, is thrilled to share a record of the past year and we welcome you to join us on this journey.

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte
NASDDDS SELN Project Manager

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The State Employment Leadership Network was launched in 2006 as a joint program of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston (ICI).



VISION

**TRANSFORM SYSTEMS SO
PEOPLE GET REAL JOBS**



Decades of research have demonstrated the economic and social value of integrated employment for adults with substantial, lifelong cognitive and developmental disabilities. Being employed on a full- or part-time basis not only enhances an individual's sense of self-worth and improves his or her economic well-being, but also frequently reduces service costs—sometimes dramatically. Employment also establishes essential community connections that allow the individual to function as a contributing, valued member of the community. However, although the positive outcomes of integrated employment are clear, the movement away from traditional segregated day program services has been slow in many states.

SELN is a cross-state cooperative venture of state ID/DD agencies committed to improving employment outcomes for adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities.

The Network has supported the sixteen member state ID/DD agencies to enhance their capacity to develop, implement, and support effective integrated employment initiatives and to improve employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

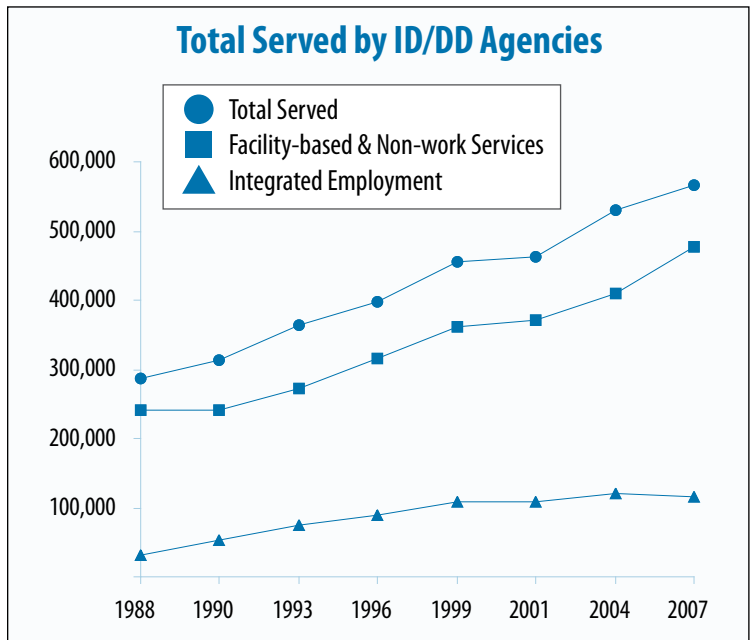
SELN's mission is to work collaboratively and get people jobs by:

- maximizing available state and federal resources
- developing more effective employment systems
- using data to guide daily program management
- improving system performance at all levels
- sharing resources for systems change

How the Data Motivates Network Activities

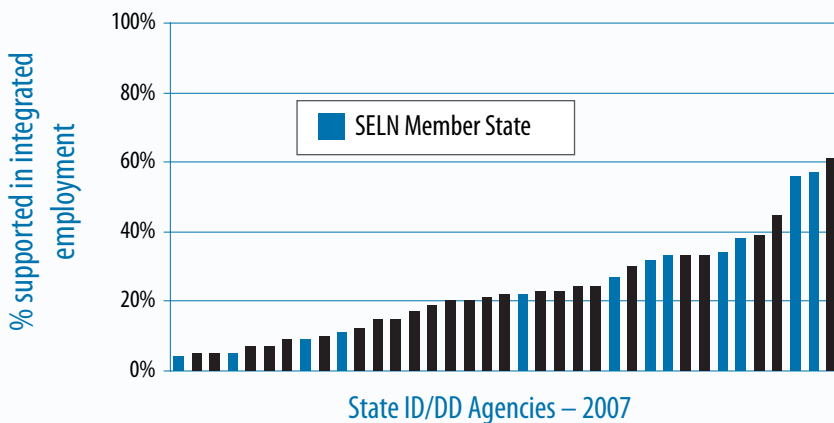
While over the past 20 years the number of individuals with developmental disabilities supported in facility based and non-work programs increased steadily, the number of individuals supported in integrated employment has remained essentially flat since 1999 (see figure on right). The system of day and employment services for people with intellectual disabilities still favors facility-based service options.

Integrated employment includes both individual employment and group supported employment and facility-based settings include both facility-based work services and facility-based non-work services.



Source: ICI ID/DD Agency Survey

State success in Integrated employment varies widely



Source: ICI ID/DD Agency Survey

Despite the lack of progress on a national level, states' success in enabling individuals with ID/DD to achieve integrated employment outcomes varies significantly from one part of the country to the next. The figure to the left demonstrates the impact of state policy, strategy and culture on employment opportunities.

Systems changes happen slowly over time and the Network members are committed to tackling the important issues impacting employment outcomes across the country.

SELN helps states enhance their capacity to develop, implement, and support effective integrated employment initiatives designed to improve employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The goal is real jobs for people.

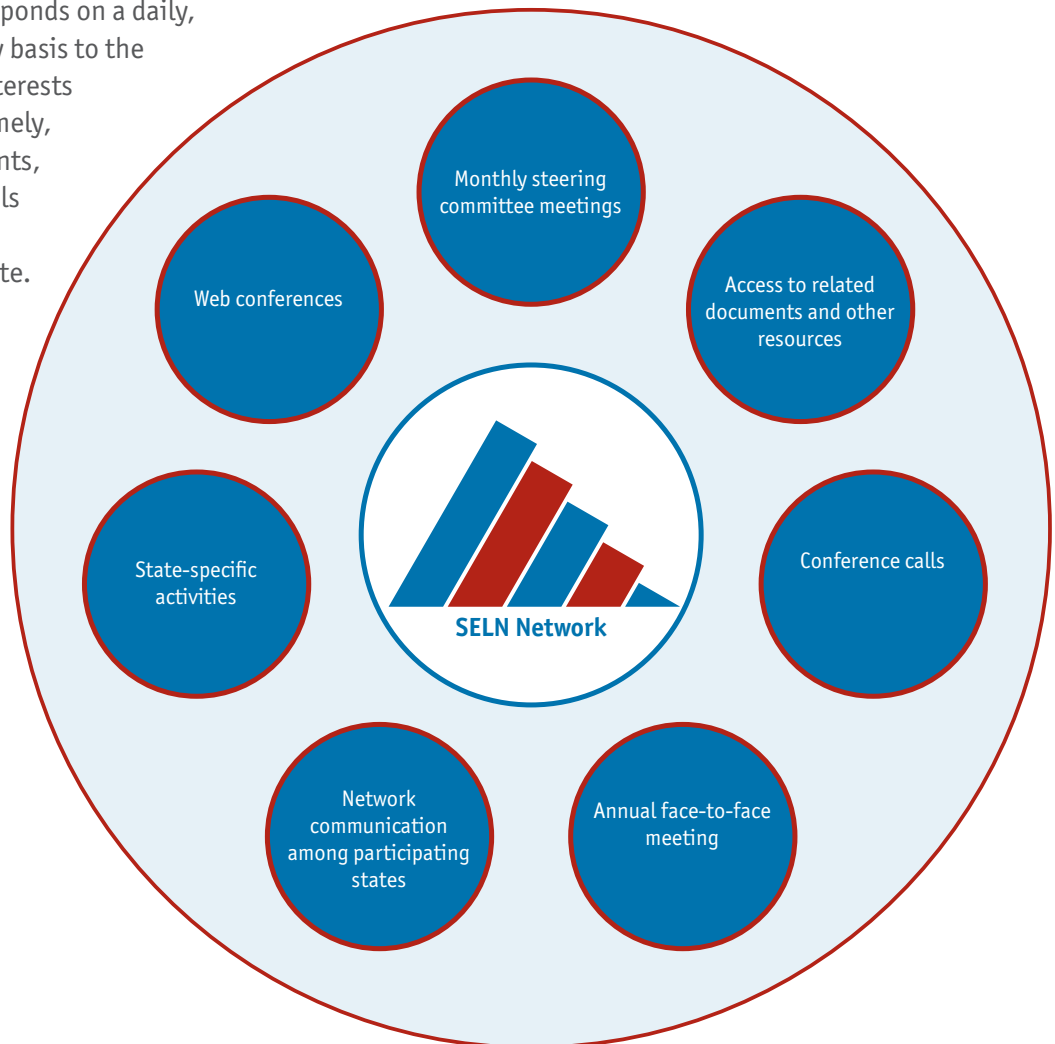
The Network

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

Network meetings and activities provide a forum for member state officials to come together to discuss common issues and concerns, analyze emerging challenges and develop effective strategies for resolving key operational barriers.

Specific Network activities and products are driven by the members' individual and collective interests. Technical assistance and support is furnished a variety of ways including: web conferences, teleconferences, monthly member meetings, access to technical documents and other resources, direct discussion with content experts, and onsite/face to face meetings.

The Project Team responds on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis to the evolving member interests hosting relevant, timely, and informative events, and sharing materials which can be used immediately in a state.



SELN—State Activities

The SELN is focused on promoting new connections within each state so ID/DD agencies can better partner with other service systems, share costs, and maximize resources. States are prompted to plan and implement real steps toward improving their employment outcomes.

Why are these actions important? They represent a state's commitment to change, ensuring that individuals can get and keep good jobs. Although some are small steps, others are giant leaps, and all represent people with a drive to improve employment in their respective state.

The resulting awareness can catapult employment-related work beyond the ID/DD agency and onto the state's workforce investment radar, into existing business networks, and the federal policy arena. Additional linkages include state Medicaid Infrastructure Grants (MIGs) and other supported employment organizations, which all grow in multiples when the state ID/DD agency takes a leadership role and makes a commitment to promoting real individual, integrated employment outcomes.

Support available through the SELN begins with each state's preparation of a comprehensive self-assessment. This process helps identify the current status of a state's system of employment supports including policies, regulations, funding methodologies and operational practices that both support and hinder the achievement of integrated work outcomes. The SELN Project Team produces a *Finding and Observations Report* identifying strengths, needs, and opportunities for the state to consider in further developing its employment services. In response, each state prepares a detailed work plan identifying the areas that it intends to address through participating in the SELN.

Technical Assistance, information and resource-sharing are organized around an employment framework derived from ICI's case study research and represented here by theme:

- Strategic Goals and Operating Policies
- Leadership
- Financing and Contracting Methods
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Interagency Collaboration
- Services and Service Innovations
- Data (Employment Performance Measurement), Quality Assurance, and Program Oversight

State Activities

How the Project Team supports a state's goals:

- Completed site visits in new member states to assist with a comprehensive strategic employment system assessment.
- Prepared *Findings & Observations Reports* outlining strategies and recommendations for change.
- Assisted states to develop change strategies and implement state work plans.
- Provided technical assistance to state teams based on their unique requests and needs.

Examples of state and project team activities by employment framework theme:

Strategic Goals and Operating Policies

- Facilitated discussions of employment policy directives with seven member states.
- Added employment as a core service in a department's waiver document.
- Removed an employment disincentive by policy revision allowing individuals with developmental disabilities access to the Medicaid Buy In.

Leadership

- Received Commissioner approval and support for a new, strategic Employment Workplan.
- Facilitated multiple teleconferences between states so administrators could discuss the importance of strategies for developing an employment first policy and collaboration among agencies.
- Hosted work plan and strategy sessions with providers and other stakeholders in five states to jointly frame statewide employment goals.

Financing and Contracting Methods

- Organized and facilitated detailed discussions of resource allocation and rate-setting practices with SELN member states.
- Established a strategic work group to evaluate the current reimbursement methodology for employment services.
- Facilitated a rate-setting meeting in one state with representatives from another state, to gain the perspective of their rate changes and how those lessons learned could be applied in the hosting state.

Training and Technical Assistance

- Initiated planning with a state training director to discuss ideas and strategies for integrating necessary employment –related values & information in existing training programs, and what new opportunities need to be created.
- Launched a Community College Certification curriculum for Employment Specialists.
- Established job development mentors and focused on improving outcomes and cost-effectiveness of services in collaboration with the state’s Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG).

Interagency Collaboration

- Updated the Vocational Rehabilitation/Developmental Disability Employment Basics booklet through MIG partnership.
- Developed an interagency workgroup with the state’s VR agency to work on improved coordination in delivering employment services.
- Initiated a ‘pilot’ project in a local office to engage a state’s VR agency in cost sharing the services.

Services and Service Innovations

- Collaborated with Business Leadership Networks (BLN) and other stakeholders to model and market employment of individuals with disabilities in hospital and banking settings.
- Customized jobs for people with intensive support needs.
- Promoted customized employment through micro-enterprise and self-employment, to raise awareness of need for pre-vocational service options (other than sheltered workshops) and the need to revise the pre-vocational services definition.

Data (Employment performance measurement), Quality Assurance, and Program Oversight

- Shortened the time period between the request for data, collection and analysis, and getting reports back to providers and local managers.
- Met with key stakeholders and agreed on the parameters of a new employment outcome data system.
- Completed new data gathering tools for employment.
- Gained departmental support to re-establish a concrete employment outcome distinctly focused on employment to track employment data such as wages, hours, and types of jobs, and conduct annual satisfaction surveys with individuals that address employment.
- Provided focused technical assistance to five states to improve their data collection and display systems.

Network-wide Activities

The SELN Project Team also manages network-wide activities. Members receive a variety of products on a regular basis and can access a rapidly expanding library of resources on the members' only website.

Documents and Resources

State Employment Practices: Funding for Employment Services

As a response to member states' requests for additional analysis on rates, reimbursement, and funding, a series of Funding Summaries was written and designed to shed light on the complexities as well as successes experienced across five states (Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Tennessee). The summaries were distributed in a report format entitled, *State Employment Practices: Funding For Employment Services*.

SELN Data Notes

Data Notes explore unique and thought-provoking data analyses, prompting additional work to consider in the member states.

SELN Working documents

- *Questions and Answers on State Employment First Policies*
- *Performance-Based Provider Incentives for Achieving Integrated Employment Outcomes*
- *State Approaches to Prioritizing Employment: Understanding the Catalysts and Context that Underlie Successful Integrated Employment Services*
- *Building a Data System*
- *State Employment Definitions*

Website (www.selnmembers.org)

Major updates were made to the members' website, including the Home and About SELN pages which are accessible to the general public (without login privileges).

Listserv mailings

Regular listserv mailings to Network members with information on new website posts, event invitations requests for information from other member, and resources.

Webconferences

July 10, 2007

Data Display Options Available to SELN Member States. John Butterworth from ICI described the data display services available to a state for use with existing data collection in their system.

August 28, 2007

Massachusetts' Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) Data Use. Margaret Van Gelder from DMR provided an in-depth look at DMR's collection and use of data in Massachusetts, what reports the employment teams use on a regular basis, and how they are expanding and improving the system.

September 13, 2007

Washington State's Commitment to Employment. Linda Rolfe, Jane Boone, and Stuart Torgerson from Washington State provided rich insights in to the last twenty-five years+ of process, moving from employment as a nice idea, to the robust policy and implementation activities at work in their state and challenges they face in changing times.

December 18, 2007

Secondary Data and StateData.info. Frank Smith from ICI described the data sets available to the general public on www.statedata.info that can supplement or guide strategic initiatives at the state level, and examples of data requests SELN members may make.

February 14, 2008

Funding for Employment Services, Focus on Connecticut. David Hoff from ICI and Peter Mason from Connecticut Department of Developmental Services highlighted Connecticut's experiences with rate changes over the last few years and gave participants a chance to delve further in to how those changes were made, including formulas, methodologies and implementation issues as revisions are made.

April 10, 2008

Funding for Employment Services, Focus on Florida. Allison Hall from ICI and J.B. Black and Sylvia Peacock from Florida's Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) described how the agency worked to fulfill the Five-Year Employment Initiative using a funding methodology that promotes community employment options.

Teleconferences

SELN Network meetings, comprised of key staff from the participating states and the SELN Project Team, occur each month. Each meeting featured a particular *State Practices & Challenges* discussion, where states share new initiatives, strategies, and common questions as a group. Key resources referenced by the member states are then shared individually with states and through the members' website.

July 2007

Discussed how various state ID/DD agencies interface and collaborate with federal Medicaid Infrastructure Grants (MIGs).



SELN—Network-wide Activities

September 2007

As new members, representatives from California and Louisiana shared why the state joined the Network and highlighted current employment-related activities.

October 2007

Discussed the use of waiver funding to improve employment outcomes, including state strategies to support employment goals developed in accordance with waiver requirements, perceived barriers, paying employers and use of incentives.

December 2007

Learned how the Wisconsin Job Development Mentors Project and the Wisconsin Job Developers' Network website are evolving and the importance of these two outcomes to direct support staff in improving employment for individuals.

January 2008

Discussed how California's Department of Developmental Services uses data from Worker's Compensation to obtain a picture of the economic impact of wages earned and spent by people with ID/DD in California.

February 2008

Reviewed Washington state's *Report to the Legislature, Individual Employment Support Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities* and how the results will be used to inform future policy and service development.

March 2008

Shared ICI's Report to Wisconsin on *State and International Efforts to Reform or Eliminate the Use of Sub-Minimum Wage for Persons with Disabilities* and how other states considering sub-minimum wage changes can learn from those experiences.

April 2008

Reviewed the SELN Project Team's working document *Question and Answers on State Employment First Policies* as requested by Massachusetts' Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) in the context of DMR's Employment Initiative.

May 2008

Discussed the interagency relationship between Colorado's Division for Developmental Disabilities and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation agencies which has led to implementation practices that are directly linked to successful employment outcomes for their citizens with developmental disabilities.

June 2008

Learned how New Mexico's Developmental Disabilities Supports Division in the Department of Health is working to align the Division's employment goals with stakeholder decisions including review of New Mexico's Path Plan and formal employment goals in their action plan.

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John Halliday—strategy, policy

Allison Cohen Hall—research

Alberto Migliore—research

Vanessa Montero—graduate assistant

Nick Shizas—strategy

Frank A. Smith—data analysis

David Temelini—media, publications, marketing

Cindy Thomas—policy, strategy

Alvaro Tobar—instructional technology

Jean Winsor—research

Member States & Contacts

1. CALIFORNIA

Margaret Anderson
Denyse Curtright
Victoria King

2. COLORADO (1/2008)

Allan Orlofsky
Jo Kammerzell

3. CONNECTICUT

Kathryn duPree
Beth McArthur
Robin Wood

4. DELAWARE

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Marissa Catalon
Warren Ellis
Margaret Haas

5. HAWAII

David Fray
Kevin Dierks
Calvin Ebesutani
Susan Miller

6. LOUISIANA

Kathy Klieber
Becky Palmer

7. MASSACHUSETTS

Margaret Van Gelder

8. MARYLAND (4/2008)

Michael Chapman
Colleen Gauruder

9. NEW MEXICO

Mikki Rogers (acting)
Judy Stevens
Cathy Stevenson

10. OREGON

Molly Holsapple
Mary Lee Fay

11. PENNSYLVANIA (4/2008)

Kevin Casey
Dana Olsen
Carmen Donegan

12. SOUTH CAROLINA

Stan Butkus
Jerry Junkins
Kathi Lacy
Janet Priest

13. TEXAS

Barry Waller
Adrienne Nevola

14. WASHINGTON

Linda Rolfe
Doug Washburn
Branda Matson
Jane Boone

15. WEST VIRGINIA

Pat Winston
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16. WISCONSIN

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Holly Fentress