

# State Employment Leadership Network

## Accomplishments Report

netWORK

Membership Year 2011-2012



# From the Project Managers



In the past year, the State Employment Leadership Network has strengthened despite the economic turbulence we face as a nation. High unemployment rates persist, affecting all Americans, but particularly those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The message at the core of our work remains clear: individual integrated competitive employment is an attainable goal for anyone who seeks it. The message of “employment for all” is a challenging one as politics, culture, and timing affect systems change efforts in states. It is a time of reinvention for many state systems. The core services of the past few decades may no longer meet the needs of those seeking supports, and limited resources mean that state systems must revisit how each dollar is spent and what it represents.

Many SELN states recognize that they cannot move from where they are today to where they need to be in five to ten years without a respectful, informed, and deliberative systems change process, guided by a concrete plan. A state’s strategic implementation plan becomes an invaluable tool, whether it focuses on shaping state-level policies, developing provider system capacity, improving communication internally and externally or managing data to inform system improvements.

How does this strategic planning relate to the concept of “one person, one job” and improved employment outcomes? To the SELN Project Team, states’ strategic plans are our focus when supporting network activities and delivering targeted technical assistance for each member. It boils down to aligning state systems to open up more opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

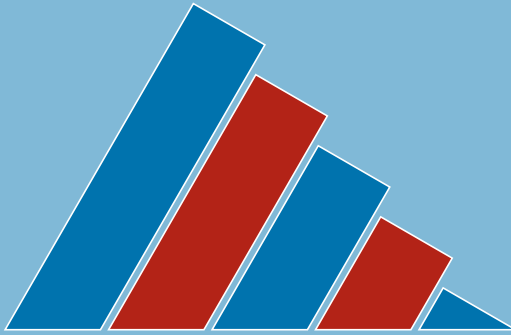
With these systems in place, citizens are supported and can become fully participating, contributing, and valued members of the workforce, making their community whole. We know the gold standard of full employment for all can be challenging to attain. But it is critical to acknowledge what full employment means for your state, and to commit the time and resources needed to get there.

Thank you for all your efforts to make integrated employment a reality for people disabilities.

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS

Suzanne Freeze, ICI

# State Employment Leadership Network Accomplishments Report 2011–2012



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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 and the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston.



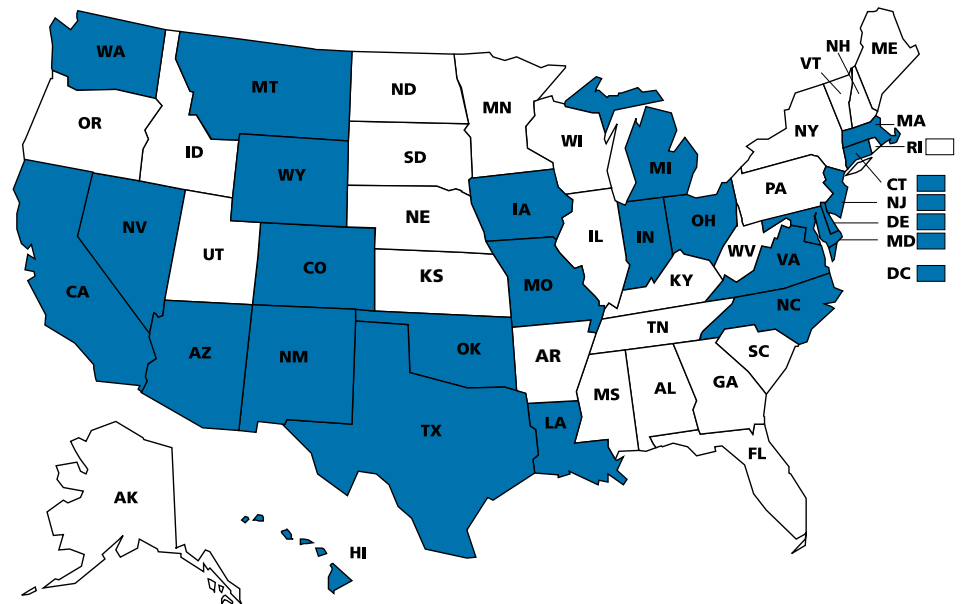
[www.seln.org](http://www.seln.org)

# About the SELN

Launched in 2006, the SELN supports states in improving integrated employment outcomes. The SELN is a membership-based network of state intellectual and developmental disability agencies committed to making changes in their service systems.

SELN members meet regularly to connect, collaborate, and share information and lessons learned across state lines and system boundaries. Participating state agency staff build cross-community support for pressing employment-related issues and policies at the state and federal levels. States commit to work together and to analyze key elements in their systems to improve the integrated employment outcomes for their citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

## SELN Member States 2011–2012



With the membership year running July 1 to June 30, each state focuses over twelve months on a customized work plan unique to its circumstances. The SELN supports states to develop, implement, and sustain integrated employment outcomes for people with IDD.

The SELN provides a forum for states to:

- Dialogue on common questions or barriers
- Use data to guide daily systems management
- Share strategies that work
- Inform federal policy

The 2011–2012 membership year concluded with 25 member states.

# What is Employment?

States have many variations on what is considered “employment.” Clarifying and defining what this term means is one of the key issues states must tackle. It impacts many other decision points and affects other systems issues such as rates, provider capacity building, and the developmental disability agency’s role in collaboration with other state partners.

Our work is guided by the philosophy that employment is simply an individual working at a job in a local business, earning the prevailing wage for that position or industry alongside peers that do not have disabilities. The business is not owned by the support organization (provider); it is a business in the community where anyone can apply for jobs, and the majority of the people employed at that business do not have disabilities.

Our goal is for individuals to acquire jobs within the general workforce that matches their interests, in which they can use their gifts, skills, and talents. In integrated employment settings, employees with disabilities can build relationships with coworkers without disabilities, and can gain more control over their own destiny.

**As a network, states benefit from hearing what’s already been tried, what works, and what should be on the radar for a strategic direction.**

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## Employment Success

**We have learned from people with disabilities that, when they are employed within the general workforce, their quality of life becomes richer. Their own sense of self-worth becomes clearer and stronger, and they expand their personal networks of friends and colleagues, becoming more fully accepted and valued within their communities.**

The SELN’s work is motivated by people with disabilities standing up and demanding greater opportunities for economic self-sufficiency, with employment the key to making that happen. Ending poverty and exclusion are the essential drivers of systems change, and this change begins with individuals and families.

All around us, we see people with disabilities working successfully in competitive community jobs. Those people, and their impact in their communities, provide reinforcement for the SELN’s work across states all over the country. In this report, you will find examples of how member states have made changes to their employment systems in order to achieve measurable results.

# The Employment Framework

SELN member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key partners to participate in employment-related discussions and workgroups. The objective is to assist each state in determining a course of action that will improve employment outcomes among people receiving supports.

A direct member benefit is access to guidance that can lead states to a better understanding of priorities while setting that course. The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, guides the SELN's strategy for system improvements. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

## ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

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 can lead to long-term systems change.



Hall et al (2007)

# Employment Outcomes: Making it Happen



**The SELN supports states formulate and achieve employment goals that lead to systems change. The following approaches and expectations are the hallmarks of SELN member states as they strive to improve integrated employment outcomes.**

## **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 champions for employment.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATING POLICIES.**

Employment is identified as the preferred outcome in state developmental disabilities 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 individual integrated community jobs is emphasized and supported through the state's resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices.

## **TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

High-performing employment systems invest in the development and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce, building the skills of job coaches and developers, supervisors, and key employment staff.

## **INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP.**

Building relationships with key state and local agency partners, such as vocational rehabilitation, education, mental health, and the state Medicaid agency, removes barriers to employment supports as people transition from one funding stream to another.

## **SERVICES AND SERVICE INNOVATION.**

Service definitions and support strategies are structured and aligned to facilitate the delivery of employment supports to all individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the intensity of their needs.

## **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.

# Data Trends Show the Impact of Network Activities: Marking Progress

The National Survey of Employment and Day Services serves as one benchmark of a state's performance and investment. For this annual survey, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston requests each state IDD agency to report the number of individuals participating in integrated employment services. While participation in services is not a direct measure of participation in employment, these data help us understand trends and provide a measure of state investment.

Focusing on individual integrated employment outcomes clearly communicates priorities. As states begin to focus on collecting outcome data they are better able to determine the impact of expenditures.

**By supporting integration, inclusion, and self-determination, we promote environments and opportunities for individuals to have as typical a work experience as possible.**

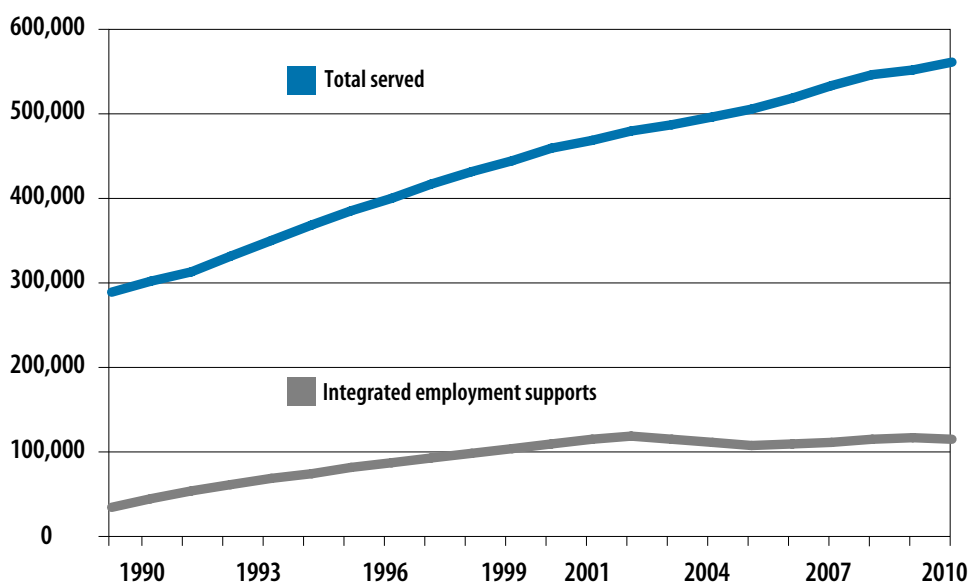
## TREND 1

**States continue to fund an increase in overall day and employment services more rapidly than integrated employment services.**

As shown in chart 1 below, the number of individuals who participate in any employment or day supports has increased steadily since the 1980s (total served), reaching an estimated 566,600 in 2010. Participation in integrated employment services, however, has not grown at the same rate and, beginning in 2001, national growth of integrated employment participation has stalled. Both of these increases are the result of specific resource and strategy decisions. But many states are questioning the impact of those decisions and whether they reflect the direction stakeholders want and budgets can support.

*[Note: Due to the way data is reported, day services include both community-based and facility-based supports including non-work or day habilitation and facility-based work or prevocational options. Integrated employment includes both individual employment and group supported employment services.]*

**Chart 1: Total served in day and employment services and total receiving integrated employment services**



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2010, [www.statedata.info](http://www.statedata.info)

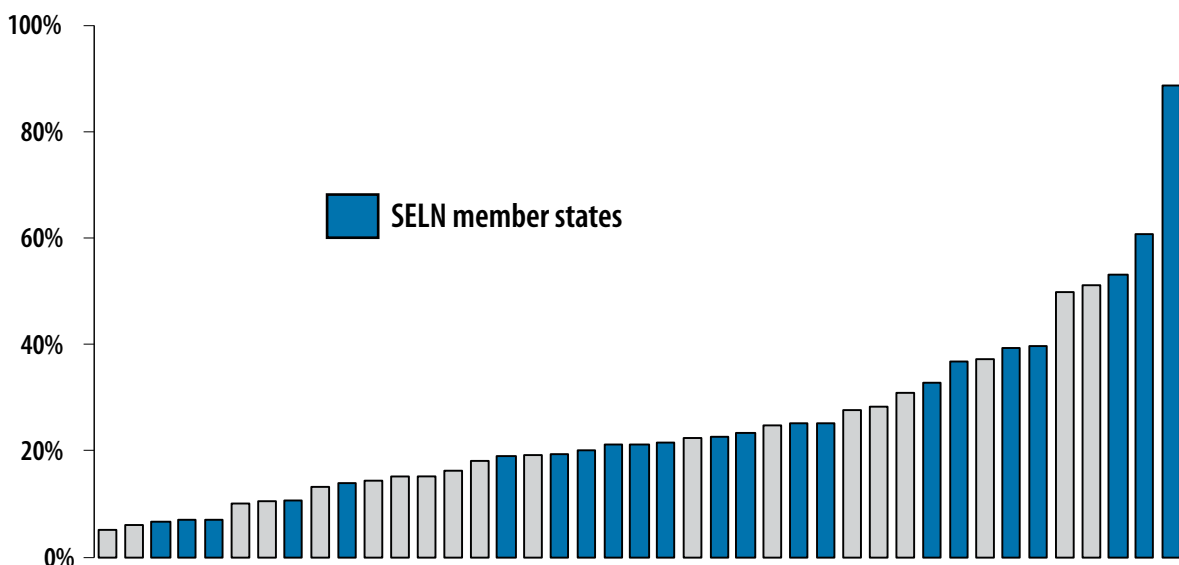
## TREND 2

### States across the country represent a diverse set of experiences.

Despite the long-term national reliance on day supports as reflected in chart 1, an increasing number of states are sustaining integrated employment as a priority outcome of services. These states provide models for policy, strategy, and the management of services. The SELN Framework for Employment (referenced on page 3 of this report) is based on case studies of higher-performing states. Analyzing how certain states fund and support integrated employment assists other states to energize and inform their systems change efforts.

While most states are only able to report service data and not outcome data, much can be learned from the range of investments. Chart 2 below illustrates the range of individuals receiving employment services across states. The bars represent the different percentages of individuals receiving employment services by reporting states\*. The darker blue bars represent state members of the SELN (as of June 30, 2012). It is important to note that each state is working at the pace of their own commitment and leadership in this arena. Each bar below represents a range of experiences and investment in integrated employment services. It is critical that states continue to support the desired outcome of individual integrated employment over time to see real change in their system. Network members are focused on increasing the number of states across the country able to report employment outcome data including type of job, hours worked, and wages as a strong measure of systems change efforts. Outcome data is the most direct measure of whether people are actually working as a result of the service investment.

**Chart 2: Percent of individuals receiving employment services**



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2010, [www.statedata.info](http://www.statedata.info)

## TREND 3

**The number of individuals in integrated employment services is increasing in SELN states showing focus and commitment has an impact.**

The data on employment and day services suggest that maintaining a clear focus on employment as a priority does make a difference. Over the past six years, the percent of individuals in SELN member states participating in integrated employment services has increased compared to non-SELN states.

Chart 3 below illustrates the changes over the past six years. During this period, the reported percent of individuals in integrated employment services grew from 32.1% to 36.4% for SELN states, and dropped from 19.9% to 18.4% in 2010 for non-SELN states.

**Chart 3: Percent participating in integrated employment services, 2004 to 2010**

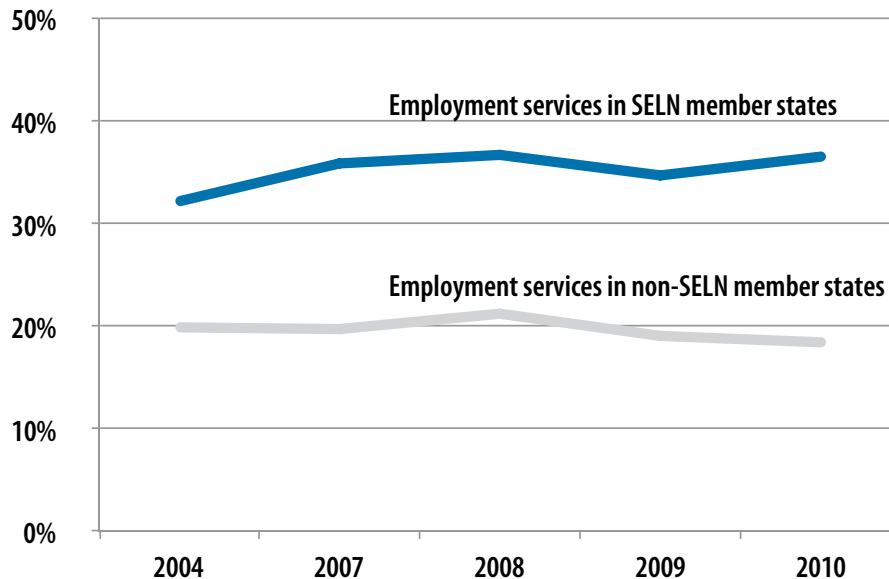


Chart reflects states with complete data between 2004-2010. SELN n=12 states. Non-SELN n=15 states.  
Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2010, [www.statedata.info](http://www.statedata.info)

## SUMMARY

While these trends illustrate that states differ in investment and support for integrated employment services and outcomes, progress can still be made across many facets of a system. States experiencing success:

- Take a long-term, planful approach
- Invest resources in the desired outcomes
- Provide consistent leadership and guidance
- Track outcome data to guide decision-making

# Continuing to Advance: SELN Member State Initiatives and Accomplishments



**As we consider what recent data reveals about systems change around the country, the real story lies with each state's efforts. SELN member states sign on for a rigorous review of their current system. Their ongoing and focused activities to shift priorities and outcomes are captured in the summaries that follow.**

## ARIZONA


The Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), through the generosity of the Arizona DD Planning Council, joined the SELN in January 2012. DDD has since completed the new member process including: finalizing a comprehensive self-evaluation tool; distributing the Strategic Employment Assessment Supplemental Survey to a wide range of stakeholders (255 completed surveys, 182 partial surveys); an initial site visit in April; and the final Findings and Observations report.

Pursuant to its membership in the SELN, Arizona renewed its commitment to employment as a priority by significantly changing the responsibility of their director of Program Services, allowing her to focus almost entirely on employment. In addition, the Division increased the number of field personnel to nine staff likewise dedicated to employment initiatives.

Expansion of employment services and supports has been a consistent element in the State Agency Annual Network Plan; however, competing priorities made it difficult to reach desired outcomes. In conjunction with its cadre of dedicated personnel and the membership of its newly created Employment Leadership Committee, DDD will use the Project Team's findings, observations, and recommendations to develop a detailed work plan including the key outcomes, goals, and action strategies to be pursued over the next year and beyond to improve the employment outcomes for its program participants.

A recent resource has been added to the "tool box" available to Division staff, families, and advocates with the recent release of Arizona Disability Benefits 101 (AZ DB101). The website provides tools that support Arizona citizens with disabilities to make informed decisions about going to work. AZ DB101 assists individuals with planning for employment while learning how work and benefits go together. AZ DB101 also identifies specific resources to assist the user in taking the next steps to moving forward with a formal plan. This phenomenal resource was one of the projects developed by Arizona's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant administered by the state's Medicaid agency. The Division was a member of the DB101 planning group and remains a member of its ongoing advisory committee.

The Division continues to play a leadership role in the Arizona Community of Practice on Transition (AzCOPT), currently serving as the chair of its leadership committee. The AzCOPT Leadership Team includes DDD, Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services, RSA/VR, Office of Children with Special Health Care Needs, Department of Health Services/Behavioral Health Services, Youth Action Council of Arizona, family support



services, and the Tribal 121 VR programs. AzCOPT is an active member of the IDEA Partnership’s National Community of Practice on Transition.

As a “community of practice,” AzCOPT is a collaborative of state agencies and stakeholder groups who have come together around the shared interest of improving school and post-school outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities. Community members meet to address transition issues including meaningful youth involvement , post-secondary education options, outreach to child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health systems and supports, healthcare, and transportation.

Our overall purpose is to facilitate collaboration among the various supports and services available to students and young adults as they move into their adult lives. More specifically, we provide guidance to all staff across the collaborative, working with transitioning students to better create “linkages” through and after transition. We also introduce parents and students to what they might expect during and after transition.

The Leadership Committee meets monthly and is currently chaired by DDD. AzCOPT has developed a training curriculum that gives trainees an awareness of key supports and services available both during secondary education and after a student exits high school. The statewide group has supported the development of two local communities of practice and hopes to support more across the state. The group has begun to look at the state’s Indicator 14, Post-School Outcome data to determine barriers to better outcomes and assist local groups in examining the same.

The Division has been a co-sponsor of the state’s annual conference on transition, The Division is a member of the planning committee, offers conference sessions, and is a vendor. The Arizona conference has annually reached capacity with over 800 participants at last year’s event.

The Division recognizes it has much to do to improve opportunities for competitive, integrated employment, not only for its youth and young adults but also for those adults currently not competitively employed. We look forward to taking full advantage of the rich resources available from the SELN membership at large, as well as its project and support staff, as we move to create systems change at the state level.

*Arizona*

*Linda Tasco, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Sherry Klein, Acting Assistant Director*

**Pursuant to its membership in the SELN, Arizona renewed its commitment to employment as a priority by significantly changing the responsibility of their Director of Program Services, allowing her to focus almost entirely on employment.**



## CALIFORNIA

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) maintains as a priority initiative the improvement of employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities. To increase the number of individuals employed in integrated competitive employment, DDS participates as a member of several collaborative efforts, provides monitoring and technical assistance to supported employment and work activity program service providers, and has sponsored statewide webinar training for regional center and service provider staff. In addition, DDS continues its efforts with the Sacramento Unified School District to provide internship opportunities to young adults as they transition from high school to adulthood.


During this fiscal year, DDS has continued to work with longstanding partners such as the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). DDS has established and strengthened partnerships with newer partners such as the Employment Development Department (EDD) and the Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). These partnerships have a focus on changes in statewide policy and practice to remove barriers and improve the environment in which the work is done to assist consumers to achieve their career goals. These collaborative efforts serve as models to be duplicated at the local level. One project was the development of employment related topics for four statewide webinars. The webinars were implemented by the SELN Project Team and were well received throughout CA.

The primary collaborative effort of this year has been implementation of a federal grant to improve transition to employment for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities. This collaborative team includes ARCA, the CCCCO, the Department of Education (CDE), DOR, Disabilities Rights California, EDD, the Family Resource Centers Network of California, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), self advocates, and the leadership of the Tarjan Center at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The team has developed a mission and vision statement and is working towards the release of project funds to local areas in two phases. The first phase will be to identify strategies to assist youth to achieve integrated competitive employment. Entities using these strategies will be identified as mentors, and will be critical in phase two by helping other areas develop similar approaches. California has pockets of excellence with champions who are achieving success. The project aims to identify the reasons behind this success and replicate the process in other communities.

DDS participates in collaborative partnerships, including the following:

- SELN participation to improve employment outcomes and develop national alliances.
- Community of Practice, an effort of DOR and CDE to improve transition processes for students exiting high school.
- The ARCA Employment Subcommittee, a team of regional center staff working on removing barriers and providing information to other staff assisting consumers to achieve their career goals.

- 
- The SCDD Employment First Committee, a statewide effort lead by the SCDD towards improving integrated competitive employment for individuals with developmental disabilities.
  - Talent Knows No Limits, the effort led by DOR to increase hiring of individuals with disabilities into state service.
  - State Independent Living Council, which establishes policy and develops the state plan for independent living that guides the work of the independent living services network throughout California.
  - California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (formerly known as the Governor's Committee), which works towards improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

In addition, DDS staff meets regularly with state-level partners at DOR and CDE to discuss issues identified by people working in the field. The purpose of these meetings is to create consensus in addressing these issues on a statewide basis and to communicate solutions to local regional center and DOR staff. DDS staff also review trends in regional centers' purchase of services for the purpose of monitoring changes in policy and practice and sharing current and emerging trends with workgroups.

DDS Work Services Section (WSS) staff have revised and reinstated monitoring and technical assistance to supported employment and work activity programs. DDS staff revised the program review tool and clarified the monitoring activity; field-tested the tool and process; and fully implemented the revised tool and process beginning in November 2011. WSS completed 15 monitoring visits from November 2011 through May 2012. WSS staff has completed monitoring of seven service provider agencies in northern California, three service provider agencies in southern California, and five service provider agencies in central California.

**DDS participates as a member of several collaborative efforts, provides monitoring and technical assistance to supported employment and work activity program service providers...**

Finally, DDS has continued its partnership with the Sacramento Unified School District Special Education Program. This partnership provides students ages 18–22 an opportunity to gain work experience while completing their education. Twelve students work as interns doing light data entry, scanning, mailing, assembly of materials, and organization of conference room space. This program gives students an opportunity to experience clerical support work, develop soft, and prepare for applying for state employment.

As a member of the SELN, the WSS has participated in monthly web meetings and received technical assistance as requested. These supports streamline the efforts in CA, and help build relationships with other states struggling to achieve similar employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

*California*

*Denyse Curtright, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Terri Delgadillo, Director*



## COLORADO

The Colorado Department of Human Services/Division for Developmental Disabilities (CDHS/DDD) joined the SELN in July 2011 with support from the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. The CDHS/DDD has developed a comprehensive work plan to implement the focus areas identified in the SELN Findings and Observations Report. The CDHS/DDD is working with the Colorado DD Council and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to implement the work plan. The initial phases of implementation focus on communication, messaging, leadership, and interagency collaboration.

In addition to the work related to the SELN, the CDHS has identified improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities as a strategic goal submitted to the governor's office. The CDHS monitors Supported Employment data monthly, and the DDD is using this data to inform policy and identify technical assistance and training needs. This performance measurement process has identified trends amongst agencies with higher percentages of Supported Employment recipients, as well as those with lower percentages. This allows CDHS/DDD to tailor the type of training and technical assistance based on each community's unique circumstances.

The CDHS/DDD is involved in many other activities and initiatives to increase employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. As a member of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant committee on employment, the CDHS/DDD is training case managers on benefits planning, creating video vignettes, and hosting trainings on topics such as AmeriCorps opportunities. The CDHS/DDD presented at two conferences on employment services and is preparing for a third presentation on increasing employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities at Colorado's Inaugural Aging & Disability Services Summit. Additionally, on July 1, 2012, the CDHS/DDD concluded a three-year project to end Medicaid reimbursement of sheltered work services.

*Colorado*

*Lori Thompson, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Barbara Ramsey, Interim Director*

**This performance measurement process has identified trends amongst agencies with higher percentages of Supported Employment recipients, as well as those with lower percentages.**

## CONNECTICUT

In the past year, the CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has focused on working collaboratively with the Department of Rehabilitative Services to improve employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities who are served by both agencies. A pilot project for students is currently underway. This pilot is being implemented by staff from the Department of Education, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, and DDS. The intent of this pilot is to develop best practices that can be replicated by all schools in CT so that greater numbers of students with



intellectual disabilities transition from high school directly to a competitive job.

A formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Rehabilitative Services has also been created. This agreement requires that central office executives from each agency meet at least two times a year to share data, discuss outcomes, and plan strategies to enhance joint services provided to people with intellectual disabilities. The MOU also requires that regional staff from both agencies meet at least quarterly, that joint training occurs on a regular basis, and that an infrastructure is developed so that questions and concerns are addressed jointly in a timely manner.

CT DDS has developed a variety of new marketing materials and has put all of this information on a new employment website: <http://1.usa.gov/NxdpGV>.

Training on all of this material is ongoing. Three regional Job Developer Networks have also been developed. Training and technical assistance is provided to job developers who participate in the regional networks by the APSE CT chapter and by the Department of Rehabilitative Services Ticket to Work staff.

CT DDS continues to improve its rate and reimbursement systems to strengthen employment outcomes among people with IDD receiving support. The funding incentives that were created last year continue to be refined and improved.

With funding provided by the Connecticut Department of Social Services Connect-Ability Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, CT DDS was able to create a benefits guide: “Real Work for Real Pay: A Benefits Guide for Individuals Served by DDS.” Over 300 DDS stakeholders attended trainings on the benefits guide material.

*Connecticut*

*Robin Wood, SELN Lead State Contact*


*Terrence Macy, Commissioner*

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

The District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) made substantial progress this year in advancing a statewide Employment First agenda. DDA and DC’s vocational rehabilitation agency, DC Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), both part of the DC Department on Disability Services (DDS), worked together with a stakeholder group to draft and introduce an Employment First vision: “DC expects that all people of working age will work and earn the prevailing wage, in the career path they choose.”

DDA, along with RSA, has continued to reach out to youth with disabilities and their families to provide information and support as they prepare to transition into employment and adulthood. DDA and RSA staff have been active in DC’s Secondary Transition Community of Practices, which has been implementing a statewide strategic plan to

**This agreement requires that central office executives from each agency meet at least two times a year to share data, discuss outcomes, and plan strategies to enhance joint services...**



promote employment outcomes and continuing education for youth with disabilities. They also have partnered with DC Partners in Transition on youth transition forums for youth with disabilities and their families, teachers, and service providers.

Also, DDS supported Project SEARCH, through which we had sites in the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, the Interior, and Health and Human Services. More than one third of the Project SEARCH participants will have secured federal jobs by the end of the summer from this year's cohort, which is the best federal hiring outcome to date for these DC sites.

DDA revised their HCBS Waiver Service Definitions and rate structure so as to create incentives for employment and to promote employment/community inclusion outcomes. To support providers and DDA staff in promoting Employment First and encouraging the transition to community employment for people receiving services, DDS/DDA has provided training and technical assistance to both groups.

With support from DC's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, DDA is providing technical assistance to DD employment service providers who want to promote better employment outcomes, and to day or pre-vocational program providers who want to offer supported and/or customized employment. DDS also is sponsoring an Employment First Training of Trainers, through which 25 staff from eight community service provider agencies and from DDA, RSA and the Money Follows the Person grant are learning to become trainers (on topics like customized employment) and are implementing what they are learning in their organizations.

These staff also have agreed to form a trainer's network and to build a Community of Practice in which their colleagues can participate. Additionally, DDS is working with APSE to re-activate the DC APSE chapter, which will provide additional support for promoting positive employment outcomes in DC.

During the past few years, DDS supported the creation of a Work Incentives and Benefits Planning Network, so that benefits counseling and support could be available to SSA beneficiaries who are job seekers and/or employed. Nine people from a variety of organizations, including DDA and RSA, have successfully completed the CWIC certification training and are part of the network. Benefits planning in DC can be funded through RSA, DDA's new HCBS waiver program, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Ticket to Work Program. Also, members of the Benefits Network will continue to provide overview training on work incentives and benefits planning to DDS, Department of Health Care Finance (Medicaid), DMH, provider agency staff, people with disabilities, and families.

*District of Columbia*

*Rebecca Salon, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Laura Nuss, Director*

**DDA revised their HCBS Waiver Service Definitions and rate structure so as to create incentives for employment and to promote employment/community inclusion outcomes.**



## DELAWARE

The Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) in partnership with the SELN continued working with the established stakeholder group to improve the quality of services in Delaware. This past year, Delaware maintained continued focus on these system improvements in spite of leadership changes.

Delaware continues to invest in and emphasize linking youth and young adults to the world of work and continuing education to expand their opportunities for career development. Delaware's Early Start to Supported Employment is "A Program to Create Seamless Transition for Students Needing Supported Employment Services for Job Success." The success of these efforts has been due to the strong partnership and collaboration among state departments for developmental disabilities, education, and vocational rehabilitation. This past year a guidebook was developed to assist youth and their families to navigate the often complex world of transition out of the school system.

After more than a year of working with a temporary rate for Individual Supported Employment, a permanent rate and a new billing process expanding service options were implemented in response to extensive data collection and analysis. As the fiscal year drew to a close, work began to redefine service options for the upcoming waiver revision.

*Delaware*

*Marissa Catalon, SELN Lead State Contact*


*Jane Gallivan, Director*

## HAWAII

In January 2011, the Department of Health's Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) implemented a pre-vocational and group employment pilot project that operated until December 2011. Information provided by the SELN Project Team assisted DDD in developing the compensation for group pre-vocational activities to be delivered by the two waiver provider agencies participating in the pilot.

The pilot addressed benefits planning prior to employment and independence in transportation once employed. Lessons learned included: 1) identifying problems in obtaining services from the Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and Services for the Blind; 2) recognizing the importance of conducting regular meetings with the waiver providers and the division to share ideas and discuss problems; and 3) defining the activities for reporting.

**Delaware continues to invest in and emphasize linking youth and young adults to the world of work and continuing education to expand their opportunities for career development.**



Employment-related services were approved by CMS for DDD's five-year waiver renewal application. These incorporated lessons from the pilot, experiences of other states, and SELN input.

The new employment services that started in November 2011 assist waiver participants in preparing for, obtaining, and sustaining paid employment at or above the state's minimum wage or in developing their own microenterprise. The new employment supports include pre-vocational and employment services in individual or group settings.

So far, eleven providers have been selected and oriented to implement pre-vocational and vocational services. For each service (pre-vocational, individual employment supports, group employment supports), activities must be provided within specified timeframes. For example, within 30 days of receiving an authorization for pre-vocational services, the provider is expected to conduct an employment assessment. The provider then has 30 days after the assessment to perform benefits counseling.

To implement the new employment services, the DDD has developed new procedures for its case managers. All participants receiving employment services will be first directed to DVR to be assessed for employment services. If DVR determines a waiver participant is eligible for services, then the DVR counselor and DDD case manager will coordinate employment services. This process prevents duplication of services. Finally, the DDD will be reviewing and monitoring the waiver providers on a regular basis.

In collaboration with the University of Hawaii Center on Disability Studies (CDS), DDD providers have been able to access resources from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). With MIG funding, CDS has conducted training in benefits planning for case management staff and service providers. The MIG has also provided resources to conduct one-on-one counseling sessions with families to help them understand the impact of paid employment on individuals' benefits, including SSI, SSDI, and Medicaid. Current projects include examining the viability of Medicaid Buy-In and improving funding for supported employment services.

The DDD continues to provide staff support to the Arc in Hawaii in the second year of a three-year grant from the Walmart Foundation. Staff from DDD conducts presentations at project high schools to introduce potential waiver participants to DDD services and discuss eligibility criteria. The purpose of the Arc/Walmart grant is to connect individuals receiving special education services with employment options for their future as one way to achieve a greater quality of life.

*Hawaii*

*Michele Tong, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Jeff Okamoto, Acting Chief*

**The new employment services that started in November 2011 assist waiver participants in preparing for, obtaining, and sustaining paid employment at or above the state's minimum wage or in developing their own microenterprise.**



## INDIANA

Indiana was one of the first states in the nation to promote Employment First as an outcome for individuals receiving disability services; this grassroots activity is now fully embraced by state leadership. Indiana's Bureau of Developmental Disability Services (BDDS) has engaged in several employment-focused initiatives across the state in recent years. With a partnership role in development of the Cross-Disability Employment First work plan with Medicaid Infrastructure Grant support, and along with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), a focused Employment First initiative is underway in five sites across the state.

**BDDS continues to be focused on systemic changes that will increase the state's capacity to support individuals in integrated employment.**

During 2012, BDDS, in collaboration with various stakeholders, developed a strategic plan to further develop and implement Employment First practices throughout the state system. BDDS continues to be focused on systemic changes that will increase the state's capacity to support individuals in integrated employment. Through a close working relationship with BRS, additional work is being considered to: develop alternatives to sheltered work, including career planning as an element of pre-employment services; reinforce the need for competency-based skills by making training available to any staff interacting with individuals pursuing integrated employment; revise service definitions to support intended employment outcomes; and generate performance measures which lead to making data available to state personnel, case managers, families, and job seekers.

*Indiana*

*Natasha Howard, SELN Lead State Contact*


*Shane Spotts, Director*

## IOWA

Iowa is in its third year of SELN membership and has seen much activity in these three years. Using the SELN Findings Report, Employment First, and ongoing SELN technical assistance, Iowa has been able to make progress toward improving employment outcomes statewide.

Iowa was one of six states to be awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Developmental Disabilities under the Projects of National Significance: Partnerships in Employment Systems Change grants. The grant is providing the state with additional resources to support system collaboration and targeting systemic improvements to enhance employment opportunities for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Iowa was also selected to participate in the Employment First Leadership State Mentor Program awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.



The Mental Health and Disability Services division of the Iowa Department of Human Services has continued implementation of its updated Olmstead Plan for Mental Health and Disability Services, wherein expanding competitive employment opportunities is a strategic priority. The SELN Findings and Observations Report has been incorporated into the Olmstead Plan.

Beginning with Fiscal Year 2012, the Department of Human Services was charged by the state legislature to recommend a comprehensive system redesign of Iowa's mental health and disability services system. This legislation and subsequent recommendations were solidly grounded in Olmstead principles and the work on employment and community inclusion. The observations and potential actions identified in the SELN Findings and Observations Report, along with grassroots Employment First efforts, were integral to the Iowa Olmstead Plan.

During the 2012 legislative session, a comprehensive redesign of the mental health and disability service system in Iowa was adopted. This legislation includes the development of a regionally based system, the integration of Olmstead principles, and a requirement to report outcomes. This redesign provides the opportunity to impact core services and funding mechanisms that focus on Olmstead principles of maximum community inclusion and participation. The significant work being done reflects the commitment of key state departmental leadership and stakeholders.

Iowa used technical assistance from the SELN to facilitate several days of meetings for employment stakeholders. At the meetings, participants came to consensus on a common set of data elements: hours worked and gross wages earned across job settings. This is expected to help move the state from a "process" orientation to an "outcome" orientation. This collection of outcomes data will allow Iowa to compare its results with other states and track employment outcomes over time.

Support for collecting these data elements is being embedded in various collaborative efforts, including mental health and disability service system redesign, and the implementation of the grant awarded to Iowa by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Employment Partnership to improve transition for youth and young adults.

In collaboration with Iowa's many projects, SELN is also providing assistance in retooling the financing structure for employment services. The focus is on revising reimbursement rates to create incentives for integrated employment, and developing flexible funding mechanisms, such as a cooperative agreement between Iowa Medicaid and vocational rehabilitation services, to fund employment services seamlessly for workers with disabilities, across systems.

*Iowa*

*Lin Nibbelink, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Rick Shulz, Division Administrator*

**At the meetings, participants came to consensus on a common set of data elements: hours worked and gross wages earned across job settings.**

## LOUISIANA

During the 2011–2012 year, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) continued working with the Employment First Consortium to guide OCDD through the transition process. The group continues to meet on an ongoing basis.

During the latter part of 2011, OCDD hosted 10 “listening sessions” around the state to gather input related to employment from individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members, provider agencies, support coordinators, and various other groups. Each regional listening session featured individuals with ID/DD who are currently employed. An online survey was offered to gather feedback for those who were unable to attend the listening session in their region. The information gathered from the forums and survey is being taken into consideration as OCDD employment policy is being developed.

OCDD provided initial training regarding employment to OCDD regional staff and support coordinators. In December 2011, OCDD partnered with other stakeholders to host an Employment First summit that put a spotlight on employment for individuals with ID/DD.

During the beginning of 2012, OCDD appointed an employment contact person in each region. We also began gathering baseline data from vocational and employment providers. In addition, OCDD has been working with partner agencies, such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Louisiana Department of Education, to begin cross training among agencies. Finally, we have begun developing memoranda of understanding with these agencies to facilitate data sharing.

During this next year, OCDD will continue the efforts listed above and will also be hosting another employment summit. We will continue to develop employment teams in each region as well. OCDD will continue with training to the support coordinators and will develop an employment manual for their use. We will be adding an employment section to the plan of care so that employment will be addressed formally. OCDD will also be working closely with providers to ensure that they are receiving training and technical assistance in the areas of community employment and that they are on the right path.

OCDD has made great strides in the area of employment and has also developed a five-year implementation plan that will increase individual employment outcomes in Louisiana.

*Louisiana*

*Rosemary Morales, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Laura Brackin, Assistant Secretary*

**OCDD hosted 10 “listening sessions” around the state to gather input related to employment from individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members, provider agencies, support coordinators, and various other groups.**



## MARYLAND

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) continues to work on key systems-change priorities. The Employment First committee, chaired by DDA and Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), meets regularly to collaborate on system improvements in delivery of employment services. A regulations workgroup has reviewed and is finalizing proposed changes to DDA regulations in support of Employment First. Recommendations from the Employment First committee are being used in the development of a new supports waiver. In addition, DDA issued a guidance that allows providers be more flexible in regards to supported employment. DDA is also developing recommendations for edits to the state's employment service rates and structures by gathering information from other states' experiences.

The organizational change peer network, funded through the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, continues to support agencies as they build organizational capacity to offer customized employment services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Quarterly meetings are held to facilitate information sharing, knowledge building, discussion, and strategic thinking among the members.

DDA and Division of Rehabilitation Services, with support from MDOD, are working toward aligning state and local systems, and guidance has been drafted to further align funding.

*Maryland*

*Dave Benjamin, SELN Lead State Contact*


*Frank Kirkland, Director*

## MASSACHUSETTS

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) cross-stakeholder statewide planning team and work group (comprised of providers, family members, and DDS area and regional staff) continue to work on implementation of the Strategic Plan for Employment. As a blueprint for planning, the recommendations that have been developed serve as the focus of ongoing efforts to promote and support increased integrated employment opportunities.

The Employment First policy adopted in 2010 has provided the public policy message that integrated employment is to be the first option considered for individuals with developmental disabilities. The policy has also been the foundation for changes to the procurement of employment services and the development of standard rates. An exciting initiative has been a joint project with self-advocates to develop a peer-to-peer training program to promote

**DDA and Division of Rehabilitation Services, with support from MDOD, are working toward aligning state and local systems, and guidance has been drafted to further align funding.**



employment and provide individuals with information about the steps they can take to be more active in their job search. This past year, with support from DDS and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong provided “Explore, Prepare, Act” trainings to more than 300 self-advocates.

This past year, DDS required all providers of center-based work programs to submit plans describing how they will transform their programs in the next five years to make the shift from sheltered work services to integrated employment services. Concurrently, all of the DDS area offices have been required to develop plans to further the goal of increasing community employment and reducing the reliance on center-based work programs. DDS continues to work in partnership with providers to support capacity and organizational development. Providers who were able to access technical assistance focused on organizational change strategies supported by DDS and the Institute for Community Inclusion and funded by the Work Without Limits project.

In partnership with the SELN, DDS continued to host well-attended regional forums on promising practices in the areas of job development, employer engagement, and organizational change strategies in the move from facility-based work to integrated employment services. Work is also underway to collaborate more effectively with VR, with a specific focus on young adults transitioning from school to adult life. This collaboration involves improving access to VR funds for initial employment supports, with DDS providing long-term supports post-placement.

DDS continues to focus on the expansion of the Employment Outcomes data collection system. Currently a well-established point-in-time approach that collects employment status once a year, the system is being expanded to include real-time placement data. This addition to the data system has been piloted with five provider agencies and will be rolled out in September 2012.

*Massachusetts*


*Margaret Van Gelder, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Elin Howe, Commissioner*

**An exciting initiative has been a joint project with self-advocates to develop a peer-to-peer training program to promote employment and provide individuals with information about the steps they can take to be more active in their job search.**

## **MICHIGAN**

The peer mentor pilot, developed in conjunction with the Developmental Disabilities Council, now has graduates working in several local community mental health systems. One individual accepted full-time employment with fringe benefits and is moving toward self-sufficiency. A Medicaid modifier is now in use to track the level of this work across the state.



The SELN Project Team again visited Michigan and met with key partners to discuss how to increase collaboration and efficiencies to achieve increased employment outcomes. This, combined with ongoing efforts to implement better data tracking to shape change, will lead to a pilot with five or six local Community Mental Health Service Programs through December 2012. The goal of the pilot is to create a preferred statewide employment tracking tool.

**The goal of the pilot is to create a preferred statewide employment tracking tool.**

An Employment First policy or similar initiative is still being considered. Each leadership council agency member showed support of Employment First as Michigan sought funding. Other related actions in Michigan may also complement this initiative in 2012.

In January of 2011, Michigan was selected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as one of fifteen states awarded a contract for the development of an integrated care plan. Individuals with some of the most complex needs are currently subject to episodic and fragmented care as they navigate two programs with distinctly different rules. The proposal presented was developed following an extensive stakeholder process. Download a PDF of the proposal: <http://bit.ly/LKSd0X>.

Michigan's proposed integrated care model covers all Medicare and Medicaid services and benefits, including inpatient, outpatient, and primary care; skilled and custodial nursing facility care; behavioral health and developmental disabilities services; hospice; home health care; other community-based long-term supports and services; durable medical equipment; and prescription drugs. The goal is to offer high-quality, seamless, cost-effective care through a coordinated, person-centered delivery model that meets the unique needs of all people who are dually eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. When fully implemented, Michigan's program will integrate services and funding for more than 200,000 people.

*Michigan*


*Joe Longcor, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Lynda Zeller, Deputy Director*

## **MISSOURI**

In 2012, Missouri's Division of Developmental Disabilities completed the development of an employment data collection system in their Customer Information Management and Outcome Reporting system. The system collects data on type of employment, wages, number of hours worked, and type of employment services being provided.

In 2011, a division directive made career planning and job development mandatory in Individualized Support Plans. While the directive pertains to people between the ages of 16 and 64, the state is in the process of decreasing



the age to include youth as young as 14. A service plan monitoring process ensures compliance with the directive.

The Division's 11 employment coordinators are partnering with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as members of 38 Community Transition Teams (CTTs) across the state. The CTT projects support schools in providing comprehensive transition programs for youth with disabilities. This includes facilitating a seamless transition to full community participation upon exit from high school.

Missouri was one of six states to be awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Projects of National Significance: Partnerships in Employment Systems Change grants. The goal of Missouri's Show Me Careers project is "to scale up and sustain evidence-based practices in Missouri that support seamless transitions to integrated employment." Missouri SELN project staff serve on the management group for this grant. A Show Me Careers consortium is comprised of leadership from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development, Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities, Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education, Missouri Developmental Disability Council, Missouri Division of Workforce Development, People First, and vocational rehabilitation.

The Missouri Business Alliance is a think tank created to increase job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The alliance is led by Ray McCarty, president of Associated Industries of Missouri. Other members include business representatives and community employment providers.

Additional successes:

- The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities has partnered with the Developmental Disabilities Council in the development of a web-based disability benefits calculator.<http://mo.db101.org/planning/>.
- The Division of Developmental Disabilities and Missouri vocational rehabilitation staff participated in a workgroup that developed a case coordination manual for field staff from both agencies.
- A DMH Employment Coordinator resource manual has been developed by the Division to promote consistency in policy, training, and project implementation across the state.

*Missouri*

*Nancy Nickolaus, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Bernie Simons, Director*

**In 2011, Missouri implemented a division directive making career planning and job development mandatory components in Individualized Support Plans.**



## MONTANA

The Montana Disability Services Division (the Division) joined the SELN in early 2011 and has worked to address concerns in the State Strategic Employment Assessment. Building a focused state work plan through key stakeholder input is reflective of the Division's strong interest in improving employment statewide, across both urban and rural settings. The Division is continuing to engage self-advocates and families in planning efforts to create strong external pressures and demands for increasing integrated employment opportunities and the expectation of work regardless of disability.

Within the existing system of supports, the Division, along with the Montana SELN Team, is considering systems change across several key areas. Possible changes include improving provider competencies, analyzing reimbursement methodologies, facilitating improvements in transition from school to employment or post-secondary education, revising service definitions, and measuring outcomes to inform performance management.

*Montana*

*Kelly McNurlin, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Jeff Strum, DD Program Director*


## NEVADA

During the 2010–2011 year, through support from the SELN and the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDS) continued our progress towards improving integrated employment outcomes.

One recent achievement is the Nevada Customized Employment Collaborative Project. This project is the result of a memorandum of understanding between the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Division of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED). The purpose is to secure community-based competitive employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Through the project, person-centered job developers spend time with the job seeker and their team to collect information via video. They then develop a video portfolio resume, filled with interviews and footage of the job seeker's skills. A representative portfolio is also developed to show potential employers the strong fit between their business's needs and the job seeker's skills. Several community-based assessment sites were also developed. With the project's success, BVR has agreed to extend the contract into 2013 and increase the amount of funding for successful closure. More information on this project and success video can be found on the NCED website ([nced.info](http://nced.info)).

**Building a focused state work plan through key stakeholder input is reflective of the Division's strong interest in improving employment statewide, across both urban and rural settings.**



Approval was given by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to amend the Nevada Home and Community Based Waiver for people with intellectual disabilities. The amendments will create more flexibility to craft our own service definitions and to modify CMS core employment definitions to include a new service definition for career planning. Training on employment topics will continue to increase competency and best-practice knowledge before implementation.

Two statewide webinars were held during this period to increase awareness of improving employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The webinars included updates on national issues in regard to employment, activities within our state and local communities, and career exploration community summer camps to improve transition outcomes for youth. The webinars were well attended, and we will be inviting participants to join work groups around employment issues. Additionally, we are creating a statewide employment planning team to ensure collaboration, partnership, and ongoing commitment to promoting and supporting integrated employment opportunities.

*Nevada*

*Rosie Melarkey, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Jane Gruner, Deputy Administrator*

## **NEW JERSEY**

The New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) joined the SELN in July of 2011 as part of a continued endeavor to improve employment outcomes for all people with disabilities in the state. During this initial year as a member, a leadership team within the DHS has been established. This team includes representation from the New Jersey Divisions of Developmental Disabilities, Disability Services, and Mental Health and Addiction Services, along with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

These representatives coordinated the online survey of stakeholders, self-assessment, and site visit from the SELN team. Completing this State Strategic Employment Assessment provided New Jersey with the opportunity to receive employment-focused input and feedback from people with disabilities, family members, providers, training entities, employers, and state agency personnel. This led to the nearly finalized “Findings and Observations Report” developed by the SELN team.

Now that New Jersey has received the “Findings and Observations Report,” the leadership team will be extended to include representation from the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Department of Education

**... person-centered job developers spend time with the job seeker and their team to collect information via video. They then develop a video portfolio resume, filled with interviews and footage of the job seeker's skills.**



(DOE), and the process of developing a work plan will begin.

In April 2012, Governor Christie announced New Jersey's Employment First Initiative, stating "competitive employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred post-education activity for people with any type of disability." In addition to impacting the services and supports offered and provided by the DHS, DOE, and Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the raised expectation resulting from this initiative will be incorporated into the work plan as it is developed in the upcoming months.

*New Jersey*

*Jennifer Joyce, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner*

## **NEW MEXICO**

New Mexico's persistent emphasis on building system capacity to support its citizens with significant disabilities in employment has been strengthened through the implementation of regional Employment Leadership Networks (ELNs). Each ELN has conceptualized and sponsored local events to highlight career successes of people with developmental disabilities and to recognize employers who hire them. The ELNs continue to meet and address both statewide and local issues pertaining to increasing integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities in their locales.

New Mexico's Developmental Disabilities Supports Division continues to employ resources from the state's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to sustain a comprehensive system-wide employment training plan. Building a sustainable, competent workforce is seen as a critical element in the systems-change work in the state. A curriculum to enhance the competency of employment staff, including a mentorship component, has been implemented. The curriculum is delivered in multiple formats (web-based, classroom, etc.) to accommodate different learning styles and to ensure statewide access.

*New Mexico*

*Marc Kolman, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Cathy Stevenson, Director*

**In April 2012, Governor Christie announced New Jersey's Employment First Initiative, stating "competitive employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred post-education activity for people with any type of disability."**

**Building a sustainable, competent workforce is seen as a critical element in the systems-change work in the state. A curriculum to enhance the competency of employment staff, including a mentorship component, has been implemented.**



## NORTH CAROLINA

The North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) serves as the lead agency for the SELN in North Carolina in partnership with the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR). The DMH/DD/SAS is uniquely structured to promote policies and to provide employment services, consistent with the evidence base and best practice, across the target populations of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, as well as mental health and addictive disorders.

**... our biggest achievement has been the engagement of new partners within the Division of Medical Assistance, the Department of Public Instruction, and our Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations.**

Upon joining the SELN in October 2011, the DMH/DD/SAS developed partnerships to promote adoption of an Employment First policy, with support from the DVR and the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD). Our biggest achievement has been the engagement of new partners within the Division of Medical Assistance, the Department of Public Instruction, and our Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs). It is our goal that state agencies, organizations, and the individuals we serve collaborate with us as we develop the SELN State Workplan.

Since becoming part of the SELN, we have seen an increase in employment “conversations for change” from all levels of the system. North Carolina’s Alliance for Full Participation State Team, under funding from the NCCDD and with support from the Institute for Community Inclusion, previously developed an Employment First position paper. The DMH/DD/SAS was able to use the momentum of SELN survey responses and onsite SELN meetings to further promote education, awareness, and employment principles and goals.

As our state is currently transitioning to a managed care system, discussions have occurred about how we can further prioritize employment outcomes within the new system. Five of the 11 LME/MCOs have created dedicated employment specialist positions, and others plan to do the same. An emphasis on evidence-based/best practice and policy at the LME/MCO level will assist the work of the DMH/DD/SAS, the DVR, and policy entrepreneurs in advancing the SELN Workplan.

The DMH/DD/SAS will continue to address goals identified in the SELN State Strategic Employment Assessment. These include aligning employment goals within state plans and LME/MCO contracts, improving employment performance measurement, and making better use of data. Our state Employment First Steering Committee will continue building the leadership necessary to promote implementation of an Employment First policy.

*North Carolina*

*Emery Cowan, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Jim Jarrard, Director*



## OHIO

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) joined the SELN in July 2011, working to complete the new member process and building strong local support across the state for individual employment in the community. Many partners were involved in the SELN initial site visit and subsequent priority-setting session a few months later. These discussions prompted participants to identify the most pressing barriers that must be addressed, and to share success stories across projects. The result was a summary of priorities and activities.

**We are analyzing the existing practices that support individual community employment and those that are disincentives, such as service definitions and funding practices.**

In March 2012, DODD Director John Martin joined Governor John Kasich in a press conference to announce Ohio's Employment First initiative. The initiative includes legislation and an executive order to improve collaboration among the Departments of Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Education, and Job and Family Services, and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, to increase meaningful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities by forming an Employment First Taskforce made up of these agencies.

Additionally, the DODD is involved in the Mid-Biennium Budget Review (MBR). This review highlights ways in which integrated employment can increase the self-respect and dignity people with disabilities feel. The MBR also mandated that transition planning start at age 14, and that agencies must first consider integrated employment before other services can be set up.

The DODD is focused on improving integrated employment outcomes through a multi-pronged approach. We are analyzing the existing practices that support individual community employment and those that are disincentives, such as service definitions and funding practices. Ohio recognizes the tension between the state's significant investment in adult day services and the desire of many individuals to work in the community, making a prevailing wage at a job of their choice. The DODD's Employment First Advisory Committee meets monthly to discuss and monitor activities addressing priority areas, along with the work of eight sub-groups focused on specific topics and challenges.


*Ohio*

*Ben Hollinger, SELN Lead State Director*

*John Martin, Director*

## OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) joined the SELN during the 2011–2012 membership year. Oklahoma has had a performance/outcome-based system that reimburses



providers for consumer outcomes—a novel approach compared to other states. Employment-related services and supports are well defined in state revised code (policy), and the overall goal of services funded by DDSD is full-time employment in the community at prevailing wage.

The service system is designed for tiered payments to support the valued employment outcomes, and the payment structure offers funding incentives to serve those with higher support needs. The overarching philosophy and system infrastructure are intended to reduce reliance on public supports. DDSD addresses that goal by collaborating with partner agencies and providing opportunity for open dialogue statewide across all levels of the system.

As a new member of the SELN, DDSD's goal is to build a focused state work plan with key stakeholder input to strengthen an Employment First focus statewide and increase the capacity to support more individuals in integrated employment. Through a close working relationship with vocational rehabilitation, additional work is being considered to: develop a process to assist individuals seeking to transition from group to individual employment; significantly strengthen DDSD's role in supporting students transitioning from high school to employment or post-secondary options; and review the performance measures which lead to making employment-related outcome data available to state personnel, case managers, families, and job seekers.

*Oklahoma*


*Regina Chace, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Jim Nicholson, Division Administrator*

## **TEXAS**

In 2010, the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) underscored the state's commitment to employment for people with disabilities through a letter to providers affirming the state's position that individuals with IDD who want to work should receive the support they need to do so. This communication sent a strong message to the field and provided direction and support to DADS' plans to move forward in this area. DADS continues to work with the TX Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the TX Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to better coordinate employment services for individuals with IDD. This collaboration includes data sharing between DADS and DARS to coordinate services, track employment outcomes of shared consumers, and identify and address any policy or practice issues that affect employment outcomes of individuals receiving DADS services. DADS is in the process of receiving unemployment insurance information as

**The overarching philosophy and system infrastructure are intended to reduce reliance on public supports. DDSD addresses that goal by collaborating with partner agencies and providing opportunity for open dialogue statewide across all levels of the system.**



well, and, with input from stakeholders, developing a report showing employment services and outcomes within and across relevant agencies. The goal of this report is to track employment services and outcomes over time, as a person moves between agencies, and as they relate to programmatic and funding changes.

DADS continues to update and expand two web pages devoted to sharing supported employment resources. The first, available at <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/supportedemployment>, is a webpage with information and tools useful for individuals with disabilities seeking employment, as well as their providers, case managers, family members, and other stakeholders. While mainly targeted to stakeholders of DADS' IDD programs, it also contains information relevant for all individuals with disabilities who want to work.

The second webpage, available at <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/SSLC/employment>, hosts video featuring individuals who reside at State Supported Living Centers (SSLC) and are working in the community. DADS is in the process of developing an Employment Manual for individuals with IDD that will collect in one place much of the information from these two pages, as well as other tips and resources. This information exists in various places; by collecting it in one place, however, DADS can provide a useful tool for stakeholders interested in increasing employment of individuals receiving services, and place an emphasis on employment for people with IDD.

DADS is beginning to implement a five-year Money Follows the Person Demonstration "Customized Employment Project" to provide short-term administrative funds to one community Intermediate Care Facility for persons with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) and two Medicaid 1915(c) waiver providers (specifically the Home and Community-based Services (HCS) and Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) waivers). A pilot with the three providers, in cooperation with case managers/service coordinators, will be funded to provide individuals with IDD more opportunity to move out of congregate settings and into employment at local places of businesses. The Project will be structured as a collaborative effort with DADS, Medicaid providers, Local Authorities, Case Management Agencies, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are receiving services from DADS, and DARS as key stakeholders.

Lastly, DADS is adding the consumer-directed services (CDS) option to existing employment services in waivers.

*Texas*

*Adrienne Nevola, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Jon Weisenbaum, Deputy Commissioner*

**[DADS created] a web page with information and tools useful for individuals with disabilities seeking employment, as well as their providers, case managers, family members, and other stakeholders**

## VIRGINIA

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) continues to work to improve employment outcomes through a broad-based systems-change initiative that is being implemented as an ongoing, long-range effort throughout the state. Moving toward an Employment First approach, we will involve stakeholders in a series of activities and initiatives to ensure the project continues in the right direction over time.

The Virginia SELN Advisory Group, made up of advocates, providers, and state agencies, continues to identify roadblocks and disincentives in our state system. The group is developing specific strategies for implementation of a system that prioritizes employment as an outcome of services.

This past year, Virginia held its first annual Employment First summit. Representatives from employment service organizations, individuals with disabilities, advocacy groups, community service boards, and state agencies met to discuss the current programs and efforts to provide integrated employment. Summit attendees reviewed current roadblocks to Employment First, and identified steps to begin to change the employment system for people with disabilities in Virginia.

In October, the governor signed a certificate of recognition for the Employment First initiative in Virginia. In this certificate, he called on state agencies and the employment community to work towards increasing employment options for people with disabilities.

In February of 2012 the general assembly passed a joint resolution in support of the Employment First initiative, directing the appropriate state departments to work together towards implementing an Employment First agenda.

An Employment First policy was drafted for the State Board for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. This policy directs case management agencies to offer the individuals they serve employment as the first option for day services. The annual performance contract for Virginia's system of Community Service Boards now includes measurable goals for integrated employment.

Virginia continues to develop our data-collection procedures to obtain reliable data we can act upon to improve employment service options. DBHDS has signed memorandums of understanding with a number of state agencies to share data and develop baseline data to evaluate progress towards increasing employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

*Virginia*

*Adam Sass, SELN Lead State Contact*

*C. Lee Price, Director*

**Summit attendees reviewed current roadblocks to Employment First, and identified steps to begin to change the employment system for people with disabilities in Virginia.**



## WASHINGTON

Washington State's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is a national leader in employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The state IDD system is often recognized for its sustained leadership and commitment to employment for all working-age adults as the best way to achieve the greatest level of personal development and economic self-sufficiency. A key strategy in the state's approach to improving employment outcomes is a clear focus on the value of work for people with disabilities, including those with the most intensive needs, and the belief that with appropriate supports everyone can work and earn a living wage.

Along with belief and leadership, achieving typical employment for all in the workforce requires serious, sustained commitment to training, technical assistance, tracking and publishing data on employment outcomes, communicating success stories, an opportunity for rewarding and meaningful employment for each young adult leaving school, and continued commitment to innovation.

Significant strides continue to be made in working with counties, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and local school districts to ensure that practices/curriculum in school transition programs lead to employment, particularly for people between ages 18 and 21. A statewide stakeholder work group is working to a) determine and describe the essential elements of integrated employment, b) develop a consistent allocation methodology for county employment services based on individual support need, and c) develop a common understanding of the supports integral to achieving employment service outcomes. Based on this work, the state will begin to use information about each individual's support need acuity (high, medium, and low) and wage earning history when determining the total allocation to each county for employment.

DDD has also been in partnership with the state's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to evaluate the return on investment in employment support services and to help establish a statewide network that provides benefits planning funded by multiple systems. There may be some opportunity to use other federal funding through the Roads to Community Living grant to support some benefits planning activities. The Roads to Community Living grant is also supporting a project to develop best practices in employing people with the most severe disabilities.

Washington collects monthly data online on employment outcomes, wages, hours, benefits, places of work, etc., and has collaborated with the Institute for Community Inclusion (through SELN membership) to make that data broadly available across the state. SELN staff built and manage a web-based data display and management tool for Washington that provides on-demand reporting. The tool lets users filter data by region, county, provider, and an array of personal variables such as age, level of support need, and housing situation. Data are updated monthly and the data

**A key strategy in the state's approach to improving employment outcomes is a clear focus on the value of work for people with disabilities, including those with the most intensive needs, and the belief that with appropriate supports everyone can work and earn a living wage.**



display system is scheduled to become publicly available in 2012.

The 2011 Washington state legislature made two policy decisions that affect employment for citizens with IDD. These decisions were made as provisos to the state budget bill. The first proviso establishes an Employment First policy and requires every DDD client of working age (21–61) who is served in a county (day) program to participate in employment for at least nine months. If no job is found during that time, the person may choose community access.

The second proviso establishes a work group to explore a new approach to employment/day services so that people can choose something other than employment. Reports are due to the legislature for both provisos. The budget bill also provided that people may only have access to one day service.

*Washington*

*Jane Boone, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Linda Rolfe, Director*

## **WYOMING**

In 2011, the Wyoming Behavioral Health Division (the Division) partnered with Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND), Wyoming's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and the SELN to conduct a State Strategic Employment Assessment. Pending delivery of the report, the SELN provided technical assistance regarding the new member process.

This helped to connect the recently organized State Integrated Employment Team with various providers, family members, self-advocates, and state agencies, including the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and Department of Workforce Services. The team meets monthly to

complete assessments and diagnostics on the employment climate and support system in Wyoming for people with intellectual disabilities, and to coordinate their efforts and resources to increase employment outcomes.

Building a focused state work plan through key stakeholder input is reflective of the Division's and WIND's goal to improve employment outcomes and opportunities statewide, including the rural and frontier parts of Wyoming.

The Division is working to redesign certain aspects of its comprehensive waiver and service definitions, improve person-centered planning, and build a data-collection system to clarify the current employment picture for waiver participants. WIND, through its Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, is coordinating a social awareness campaign regarding the employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities. WIND is also working with the Division to implement a job coaching and job development training program in the state.

*Wyoming*

*Jamie Staunton, SELN Lead State Contact*

*Chris Newman, Administrator*

**The team meets monthly to complete assessments and diagnostics on the employment climate and support system in Wyoming for people with intellectual disabilities, and to coordinate their efforts and resources to increase employment outcomes.**

# Conversations of Significance

Opportunities for dialogue on common interests and concerns are available throughout the membership year. These conversations form the basis of the Network's community of practice culture. The sharing of successful strategies and equally important lessons learned provide each member with insights related to the common paths many states pursue. States are often surprised to learn that their colleagues across the country are dealing with the exact same issues, and are eager to learn what has worked for them. The SELN's focused discussions are beneficial for those states making concerted efforts to address outdated practices.

A variety of opportunities for dialogue are offered to members throughout the year. Many are open to all members and participation is voluntary, while others are targeted to particular states and their pressing issues. The SELN Project Team works through a process with each member to define core questions to address the presented issues. Network discussions are organized as:

- Workgroups focused on generating an end product
- Small group discussions to work through issues, arrive at key questions, and identify potential solutions
- Full Network monthly meetings for dialogue, sharing, and discovery
- Annual meeting where the SELN community comes together in person and spends dedicated time on topics of importance

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## Workgroups

### ***Data Users Group***


This new group was created to address the age-old questions of how to collect and interpret national and state employment data. States met bimonthly to discuss:

- What data elements are critical and which ones are optional?
- How can states create and report on the information that was attained?
- What are the pros and cons of state management information systems in relation to employment outcome and services data?

### ***Vocational Rehabilitation Writing Group***

Mid-year, this new group kicked off discussions in the development of a "best practice brief" on collaboration between the public developmental disability and vocational rehabilitation systems. Topics include:

- How the VR and DD systems each define employment
- Tension between shared responsibilities and individuals' goals
- Ways to prepare individuals to work so they maximize the expertise of the public systems

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- Keeping the two systems in sync as individuals seek work
  - Paying for services and braided funding
  - Opportunities and limitations of extended supports
  - Using the transition from school to adult life as a key phase for collaboration

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## Small Group Discussions

While workgroups are often tasked with discussing specific questions or generating a focused written product, there are other times when the SELN hosts discussions with small groups of states for purposes of defining the key issues and their impact on employment-related goals. Participants talk about the process of uncovering each state's core questions and whether they are in a position to address them. States are considering:

- Adding a data-collection requirement to report outcomes, not just service utilization data
- Analyzing the features of other funding strategies most likely to support high rates of individual participation in integrated employment
- Using a team of employment training specialists to provide services over time, rather than separating job development and initial placement from long-term job coaching
- Ensuring that funding for all day and employment services is designed to support the individual's whole life and allows wrap-around supports during times when the individual is not working
- Putting in place quality assurance and case management structures to manage the cost of employment services, so that the client authorization process can be quickly modified.
- Clearly defining billable activities and rates to take into account non-billable activities, such as provider agency staff meetings, time to complete paperwork, transportation without the individual, and time for staff to attend employment-related training.
- Making sure that a specific process exists for determining the transition from job coaching to long-term or ongoing support services
- Funding transportation separately from integrated employment services
- Making IDD agency services available as individuals begin the employment process, so they are not held up waiting for services from other systems such as vocational rehabilitation
- Ensuring that job development, negotiation, and initial job entry are funded differently from job coaching and other employment support services

By working through issues such as the ones listed above, together with colleagues around the country, states move beyond nebulous, high-level goals to the more concrete, defined objectives and implementation strategies of systems change. Through all of the work, it is imperative that the champions for integrated individual employment stay involved and empower a wide range of staff and partners to build momentum.




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## Monthly meetings

During each monthly meeting, state members and guests participate in dialogue on higher-level topics presented. These online gatherings provide options for interacting with other meeting participants and emphasize not just the main presentation but networking, and questions and answers with the group. The critical policy and practice discussions reveal how states wrestle with the need to strategically plan for changes to service delivery and achieve desired employment outcomes, and the barriers that typically arise with such shifts.

Discussions provide opportunity for dialogue with colleagues around the country. We explored a wide range of topics this year:

- Annette Shea and Nancy Kirchner from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services presented about **Medicaid, employment, and systems change.**
- SELN members from Missouri (Nancy Nicklaus, Tom McVeigh), Iowa (Becky Harker), and California (Denyse Curtright) described their newly funded **AIDD Partnerships in Employment grants.**
- Steve Wooderson and Rita Martin from the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation spoke about **partnering with the vocational rehabilitation system.**
- Michael Briogoli and Wanda Willis from the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities discussed ways that **councils on developmental disabilities** can help agencies advance employment.
- David Test from the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center and Dawn Rowe from the National Post-School Outcomes Center shared information on **work to improve transition services in states.** They explained what data is being collected and used to shape those services.
- We learned about ways that **employment services professionals can build their skills**, and heard about the online College of Employment Services, the Transition Services Bill supporting training efforts in Massachusetts, and APSE's new nationally recognized employment services professional certification.
- Nancy Kirchner and Colleen Gauruder from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services joined us to talk about using **Medicaid funds** to support employment goals. Sally Oudekerk from the Iowa Department of Human Services shared her expertise about **Medicaid policy planning** for the Affordable Care Act.
- Barbara Brent from the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services discussed **employment and managed care.**
- Scott Standifer from the University of Missouri joined us to go over current trends in **employment of people with autism.**



The collaboration with other state systems, and local and regional staff, reinforces the need to share responsibility across many levels of work. Many states have figured out how to promote integrated employment outcomes through policy or legislative work, but are now challenged by the difficult task of aligning services and supports with those changes.

**Policies that state the expected outcomes must be supported with strategies and resources to achieve those outcomes.** It is not enough to write policy or state priorities through legislation. The entire system must be aligned to support the shifting priorities and it is this work that most often challenges states.

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## Annual Meeting

This year the annual meeting was held the day prior to the Alliance for Full Participation Summit at the Gaylord Harbor Hotel just outside Washington, D.C. The SELN supported one member from each SELN state to participate in the Summit following the SELN annual meeting.

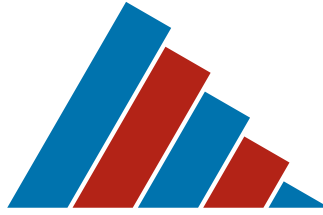
With a theme of exploring “employment performance standards”, the SELN Project Team presented a draft toolkit for states to use when developing their systems for data collection, management, and display.

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## From Insights to Action

In this report, we have provided you with many examples of the work SELN is doing to support states as they rebalance their day and employment service systems to improve integrated employment outcomes for working age youth and adults with IDD. Now it is up to you to take this inspiration, think about the infrastructure and environment around you, and create strategies that can work in your state.

So what’s next? Find your champions—including the state contacts listed here!—and call on them regularly while you work through the issues that must be faced. The demand for integrated, individualized services is growing stronger each day. Individuals are seeking opportunities to create full lives and thrive in their community, and work is an integral part of that journey. Through cross-state support and building strong competencies, we are better prepared to rise to that challenge.



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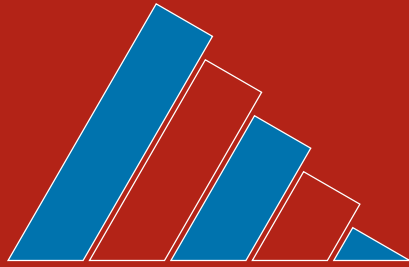
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# State Employment Leadership Network



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