



Accomplishments Report

**Report of State Initiatives and
Activities to Improve Integrated
Employment Outcomes**

**Membership Year
2016-2017**



**State Employment
Leadership Network**

Accomplishments Report 2016-2017



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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.



NASDDDS

www.selnhub.org



This has been a year of many competing priorities for SELN member states. Aware of the pressures, states continue working to ensure that individual competitive employment is a reality for people with disabilities. The SELN continues to focus on system improvements and developing capacity at state, regional, and local levels to deliver the employment services and supports individuals need to be successful in the world of work and community life.

Like the sun image on our report cover, the SELN assists states to take the many decision of systems change in to local, regional and state discussions, radiating new expectations and always raising the bar. We acknowledge the daily challenge to keep community inclusion at the forefront of our human services work and the importance of helping individuals and families experience true engagement and economic self sufficiency.

SELN member states are developing new policies, revising service options, and defining clearer expected outcomes to support more real community participation through employment in local businesses and civic engagement. Shifting services away from facility-based and often segregated locations has put a renewed pressure on states to re-evaluate support and shared responsibility to increase providers' capacity to deliver community-based service options.

This pressure has increased focus on partnerships, and the necessity for true collaboration to achieve the collective impact "Employment First" promises to have for people with disabilities. SELN members continue to meet the challenge of working in a chaotic environment where constant change is the norm, supporting each other through shared knowledge, ideas, and resources.

Our report provides a view of the many activities and avenues needed to support ever-increasing numbers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their goals—to enter the general labor market, building assets to improve their standard of living—are our goals, and we welcome your energies in those shared outcomes.

“SELN members continue to meet the challenge of working in a chaotic environment where constant change is the norm, supporting each other through shared knowledge, ideas, and resources.”

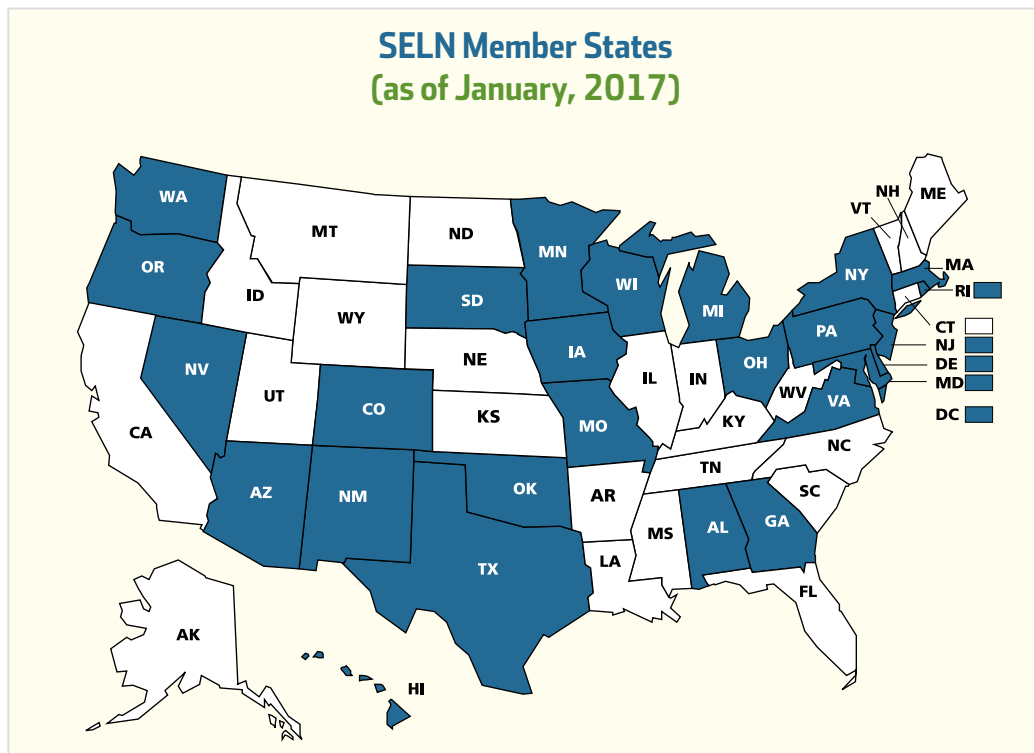
Suzanne Freeze, ICI

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS



The SELN is a membership-based network of state IDD agencies committed to making changes in their service systems and improving competitive integrated employment outcomes. The project is organized to deliver technical assistance and support to participating state agencies during the membership year which runs July 1 through June 30. Responsibility for day-to-day management of the Network is shared by ICI and NASDDDS. Member states complete a strategic employment assessment process to pinpoint priorities to address through customized state level technical assistance. SELN members also share responsibility for identifying issues of common concern across states and designing the network's action agenda.

The SELN is a peer-based network striving to meet states where they are by basing customized technical supports on the culture and needs of each member state itself. In 2006, we shifted the employment conversation from “if” to “how,” steadily growing our members during very difficult economic times and sustaining an extremely stable membership base over ten years. When people work together they synthesize many points of view, producing better results.



“The SELN has provided critical structure for systems change to all of us in Iowa. Using the Higher Performing Framework to guide our discussions with multiple partners and at a time of tremendous transition allowed us to more clearly articulate our goals and achieve success. The Framework is a brilliant way to deliver technical assistance as it gives state IDD agencies a map to know and understand the changes they need to make in their system.”

—Bob Bacon, Iowa

The SELN provides a forum for states to:

- ▶ Talk through common questions or barriers
- ▶ Use data to guide daily systems management
- ▶ Share strategies that work
- ▶ Inform federal policy



New to the SELN? Want a refresher on what we're all about? Let's get back to the basics.

We support you, our SELN members, to help make this vision a reality for the people whom your agencies and partners serve.

Employment is a path to opportunity.

Like everyone else, many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities want an opportunity to do paid work. They want and need to contribute to the economy, and to their communities. They're hungry for their skills and talents to be recognized and valued. They want a chance to give back, without being restricted to publicly funded services.

Your state's employment system stands behind people as they struggle, succeed, fail, and succeed again--just as we all do. And our project team stands behind you, as your state and local systems adapt to changing expectations, and find new ways to meet employment goals.

Employment connects people.

When employment's working well, people get jobs that match their interests, and gain a whole new personal and professional network. They build relationships with coworkers, and get more control over their own destiny.

Employees with disabilities may learn new things about themselves and grow personally. This may also lead to seeking a particular career path, or changing jobs to find new challenges, improving who they are, learning who they want to be, and engaging in their community.

Employment means equity.

At its core, **employment** simply means a person working at an individual job in a local business, as part of the general workforce, earning the prevailing wage. All employees are on the business's payroll, and everyone gets paid the same way. Finally, everyone gets the supports and accommodations they need to thrive in their roles.

Employment means increased economic opportunity.

Earning wages at and above minimum wages provides opportunity for individuals to become more financially self-sufficient, to build assets, and to lead more independent lives.

That's not to say these goals come easily. You know that from interacting with families, individuals, and staff walking out onto the front lines every day. Funding streams shift, acronyms come and go, laws change, and it gets harder to fight the good fight.

But through your work, and the energy and tenacity of the people you serve, we're all getting closer, day by day, to making this vision of employment into a reality.



2016 SELN Annual Meeting: “What is Employment, Really? Role of IDD Systems in Defining Employment”

SELN state members, partners, and project team staff met in Alexandria, Virginia for the SELN’s 11th annual meeting in October 2016. Many states are developing new services or redefining existing services, making choices that signal expected outcomes to individuals, families, and provider organizations. Definitions of various employment services have a real-world impact on states’ programs, initiatives, and policies.

While networking and discussion time are top priorities at the SELN annual meetings, 2016 participants also focused on the impact of new federal policies and what implementation should look like in their own states. Focusing on this goal at the meeting and then throughout the membership year allows states to ensure current and new strategies are aligned with these critical external influences.

Scott Robertson, PhD, Department of Labor, Youth Policy Lead, dinner speaker

Dr. Robertson provided a unique life perspective as a person with autism who has persevered and achieved great accomplishments. He described the benefit of building in concrete employment and career pathway options for all individuals, paired with mentoring and support.

Dr. Robertson emphasized the discrepancies between the networks of people with autism or developmental disabilities (DD) compared to typically developing people. He cited that people without disabilities tend to have much larger networks, approximately five times as large as the networks of people with autism or DD.

Lacking a social network means there are fewer people in an individual’s life to encourage them and help them overcome set-backs, particularly related to jobs and careers. The utility of apprenticeships was raised as a strong approach for building applied skills. Dr. Robertson applauded emerging research that may help to define criteria for internships, apprenticeships, and career pathways to ensure these options are scalable across localities, states, and the country.

Settings Rule resources:

- ▶ HCBS Advocacy
www.hcbsadvocacy.org
- ▶ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
www.medicaid.gov/hcbs

Olmstead resources:

- ▶ Department of Justice
www.ada.gov/Olmstead

WIOA Resources:

- ▶ Department of Labor
www.dol.gov/odep/topics/wioa.htm

David Jones, Workforce Analyst, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

The Role of the ETA in WIOA Implementation

Mr. Jones provided an overview of the Department of Labor’s Workforce System and structure of American Job Centers (AJCs).

The Department’s Customer-Centered Design Initiative asks, “How might we work with our partners to design services that are physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities?” Mr. Jones led participants in a discussion about the core functions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the ways states and local IDD staff can take action.

WIOA core functions:

- ▶ Promote physical and programmatic access to services
- ▶ Strategic alignment of WIOA programs
- ▶ Clarify competitive integrated employment for all audiences

State action:

- ▶ Go to local workforce board or AJC staff and talk about each of your different systems’ roles in the employment process.
- ▶ Define common problems in your local area, as well as collaborative efforts yielding potential shared solutions.
- ▶ Look for opportunities to share outcome data across systems to reinforce accountabilities.



**Alison Barkoff, JD, Director of Advocacy,
Center for Public Representation**

***Let's Get to Work: Federal Policies Creating
Opportunities to Expand Competitive Integrated
Employment***

Ms. Barkoff emphasized the important goal of helping individuals live like everyone else, framing this opportunity as part of a long-term anti-poverty movement. She noted, “Without money you can’t live a typical life in the community. You can’t live a typical life in the community by only receiving benefits.” She presented on the ways states can align and use recent federal policies, Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) rules, Olmstead enforcement, and WIOA to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment, full integration, and community inclusion of people with disabilities.

Ms. Barkoff played a role in the development of the WIOA Advisory Committee final report, which

**“Without money you
can’t live a typical life
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receiving benefits.”**

– Alison Barkoff

outlined specific recommendations for states to implement. She urged SELN member states to revisit the report’s final recommendations, which were driven by the committee’s commitment to reach consensus across a diverse range of perspectives. She also encouraged states to frame every item in relationship to capacity building in our country to support full inclusion.

The SELN project team hosted small group discussions on three topics: WIOA implementation, provider capacity-building, and community life engagement. The discussions included information-

gathering on how states are addressing systems change in these areas, and resource-sharing on new strategies and approaches.

Monthly Network Meetings

Monthly online meetings provide SELN members with a chance to network and to discuss common challenges and success strategies. Many states wrestle with similar challenges, but address them differently given the politics, culture, and economy in their state. The meetings are a time for building awareness, sharing, and learning how to continue the discussion through channels such as the Hub.

Meeting topics are chosen based on requests from individual member states, as well as high-profile and time-sensitive issues across the country. Project team members host the monthly network meetings and facilitate the conversations with special guest presenters and staff from member state IDD agencies.

Topics this year included:

- ▶ Provider organizational change
- ▶ Systems change through a data lens
- ▶ State IDD agencies' role in the community integration and inclusion agenda
- ▶ Single service plans
- ▶ Impact of WIOA implementation on SELN member states, including Section 511 fact sheet
- ▶ Connection between disability and poverty and tools to assist with asset building
- ▶ ICI's Research Rehabilitation and Training Center on Advancing Employment for People with IDD
- ▶ State community engagement efforts throughout the lifespan



Community Life Engagement Working Group

With the increasing emphasis on moving away from segregated settings and toward lives of full inclusion, states are exploring how to combine work and non-work activities in support of community life engagement (CLE).

Being engaged in the community can include volunteer work, continuing education, accessing community facilities such as the library, gym, or recreation center, or anything else that people with and without disabilities do outside their home in their spare time. These activities may look very different depending upon a person's life circumstances, and will change across the lifespan. But being engaged in the community, in concert with employment, forms the basis of how the majority of adult working-age people live.

An emerging issue for SELN states is how to support CLE outcomes while still maintaining a focus on employment. The goal is for these two important aspects of people's lives to be in balance and to complement each other.

People seeking to work should also have opportunities to engage in their community, and to seek out new social groups based on these experiences. Often, community activities assist with forming relationships and building networks, which can lead to employment opportunities.

The Institute for Community Inclusion has been conducting research on community life engagement, and has identified four CLE guideposts:

1. Individualize supports for each person.
2. Promote community membership and contribution.
3. Use human and social capital to decrease dependence on paid supports.
4. Ensure that supports are outcome-oriented and regularly monitored.

The SELN developed a working group this past membership year to look deeper into these issues as they relate to state systems. Through online meetings, staff from member states discussed ideas and shared strategies on ways states can encourage CLE outcomes that adhere to these guideposts.

The group met five times. Each of the first four meetings focused on one of the guideposts. The fifth meeting explored more broadly how CLE and employment can be regarded in each person's life, and how the seven elements for higher-performing state systems can be applied to support a holistic vision of inclusion.

Two SELN members, the District of Columbia and New Mexico, were selected as the pilot states to test emerging resources and strategies. The states piloted the draft Community Life Engagement toolkit with provider organizations. The pilot project provided select organizations an opportunity to build knowledge about individualizing supports, accessing community partners and sequencing services across systems. We recognize these efforts and the benefits which will be shared with other states to improve community engagement options across the country.

Learn more at
www.communitylifeengagement.org



Data Users Group: Data Collection and Management

Investments in employment services have to be monitored for effectiveness. States use a variety of data collection and management practices to evaluate the return on these investments, both for the individuals served and for the state system itself.

At the end of last membership year, the Data Users Group met to develop a list of key issues for states, and to discuss employment data collection and usage. The 2016–2017 Data Users Group series focused on a series of questions:

- ▶ What are the essential design elements for an employment data collection and monitoring system?
- ▶ What data elements have you identified as being most informative?
- ▶ How do you present data to a variety of audiences through different methods and mediums?
- ▶ How can states use employment data to inform decisions about employment service delivery systems?

States shared their experiences building or modifying data collection systems. Most SELN states have actionable data available. Improvements can be made, but using the available data now, while seeking to build a better data system in the future, should be a strategic priority for all states.

November 2016

To emphasize the importance of data collection, the November SELN Monthly Network meeting was dedicated to discussing how to use existing data sets to gather information about Employment First efforts. Minnesota presented its recently released online Employment Data Dashboard, which generates reports about types of jobs, average wages, and hours worked by people with IDD. The system also can look at trends by region and by provider type.

“Making systems change happen would be easier if consistent, comparable employment data were readily available.”

–Joe Longcor, Michigan

January 2017

Maryland shared some innovations it has made in developing its employment data collection system. The team highlighted the data elements that have been most informative, as well as the different ways they share the data. Presenters also discussed how they synthesize data to learn about individual outcomes, employment goals, regional differences, and provider-level performance, all of which can assist in developing local strategies and contracts.

June 2017

Oregon and Virginia shared how they developed their employment data collection systems and how those systems have been refined over time to meet particular requirements and needs. Both states presented on the ways their data systems helped identify trends and areas for improvement in the employment system.

This past year, the Data User Group meetings were enhanced by the use of a shared workspace on the SELN Hub online community. The group space serves as a repository for materials and resources used in the meetings, including links to the data systems belonging to the states that presented. An added benefit has been the opportunity for group members to continue these conversations via the Hub's discussion forums.

Special Online Series: Systematic Instruction

In spring 2017, the SELN hosted a three-part online series on systematic instruction (SI) taught by a nationally known trainer, Teri Johnson. SI is an approach to teaching or training that uses a highly specific structure, somewhat like creating a blueprint before constructing a building. With the adoption of SI, individuals with disabilities can improve job performance and increase their autonomy through task-oriented learning.

SI evolved in response to widely accepted myths and harmful attitudes formed in the early 1900s that claimed people with cognitive disabilities were incapable of learning. Practitioners of SI, including Johnson, maintain that a lack of learning should first be interpreted as insufficient use of teaching strategies rather than inability of the learner.

The online series provided an overview of the components of SI, including task design and task

analysis, which help the trainer prepare, document progress, and address concerns about safety and independent job performance. Johnson also spoke about the importance of accommodating learning styles through individualized teaching strategies.

Johnson used original videos and stories to demonstrate the ways employment specialists can engage SI when the complexity of a task presents challenges to the learner. Participants had the opportunity to prepare and complete task analysis forms. Templates of these forms and session recordings are available at www.selnhub.org/si.

SELN Hub: The Access Point

The SELN Hub is a closed online community hosted for member state contacts and partners. Hub users have the chance to talk candidly with each other in this environment, building their relationships and strengthening the network overall.

Over the past membership year, the Hub has evolved as the access point for promoting and sharing information about SELN projects, topical working groups, monthly network meetings, and other activities. Whether you're asking questions or searching the resource database, the Hub offers 24/7 access to centralized, relevant information.

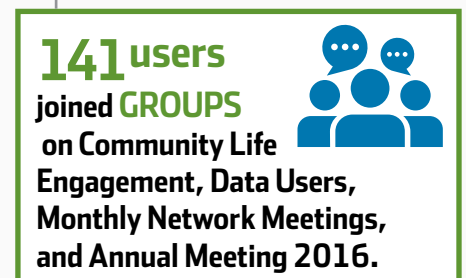
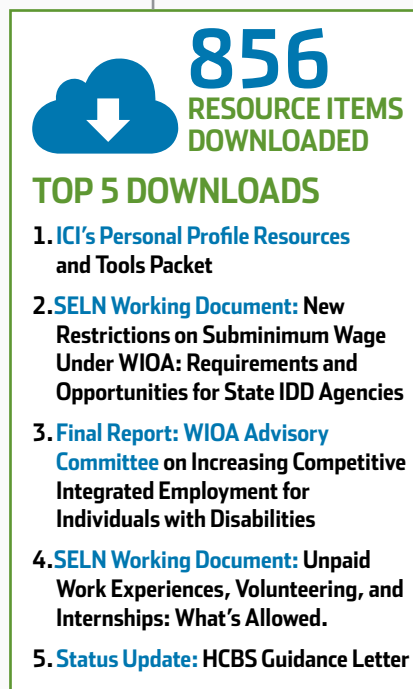
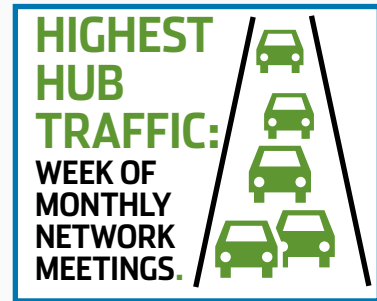
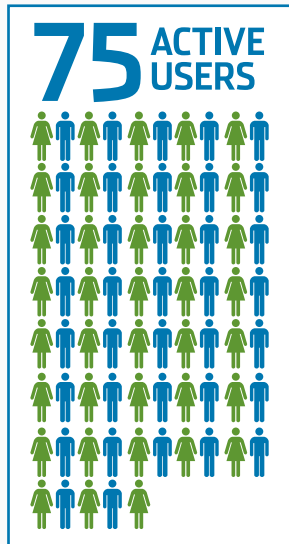
Hub Group Spaces

This year group spaces were introduced within the larger Hub community to help users engage in more targeted conversations. Each group space houses resources, discussions, and messaging on a specific topic or activity in one location, rather than dispersed throughout the main Hub site.

The Community Life Engagement group and Data Users group have been using a group space to organize and promote meetings, dialogue on specific issues, and share resources.

SELN HUB

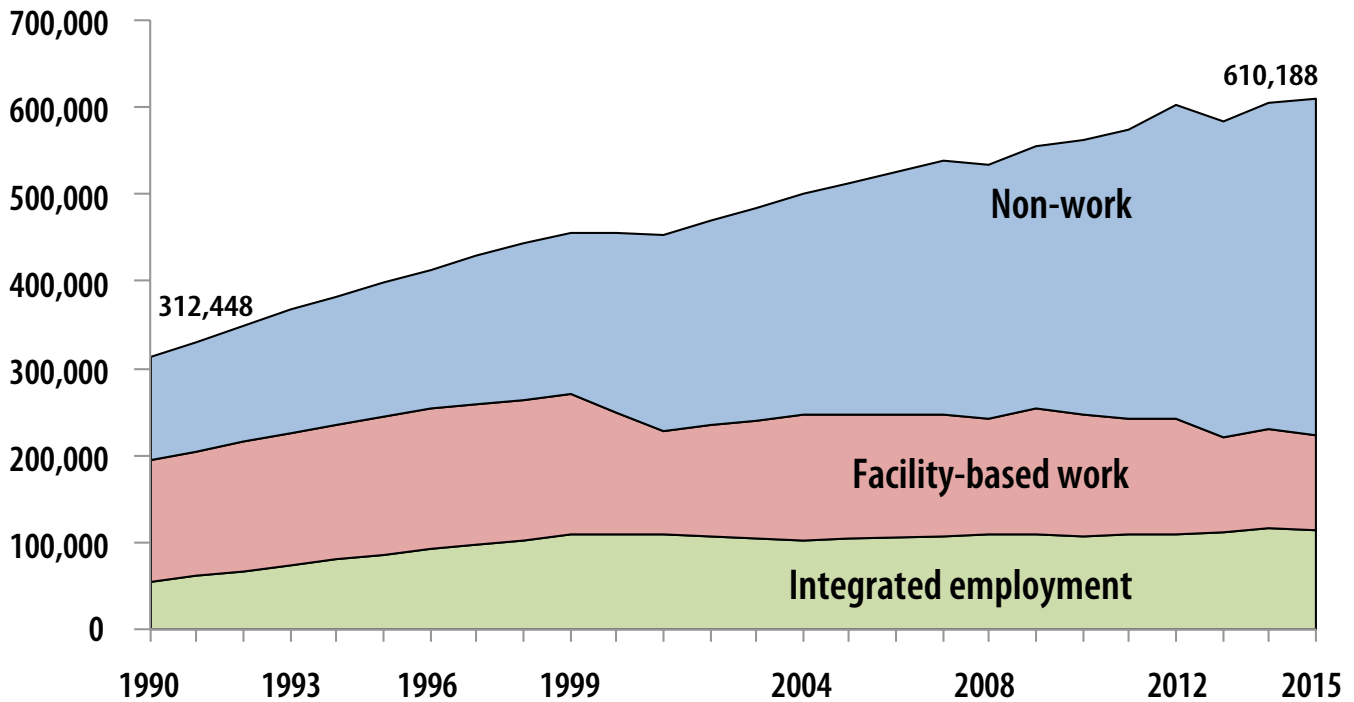
SELECTED ACTIVITY:
7/1/2016 – 6/30/2017



WWW.SELNHUB.ORG



Chart 1: Employment and Day Services IDD Agencies: Nationwide



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2015

In FY 2015, an estimated 610,188 individuals received day or employment supports from state IDD program agencies. This number grew from 312,448 in FY1990. The estimated number of individuals in integrated employment services increased from 108,227 in FY 1999 to 113,226 in FY 2015.

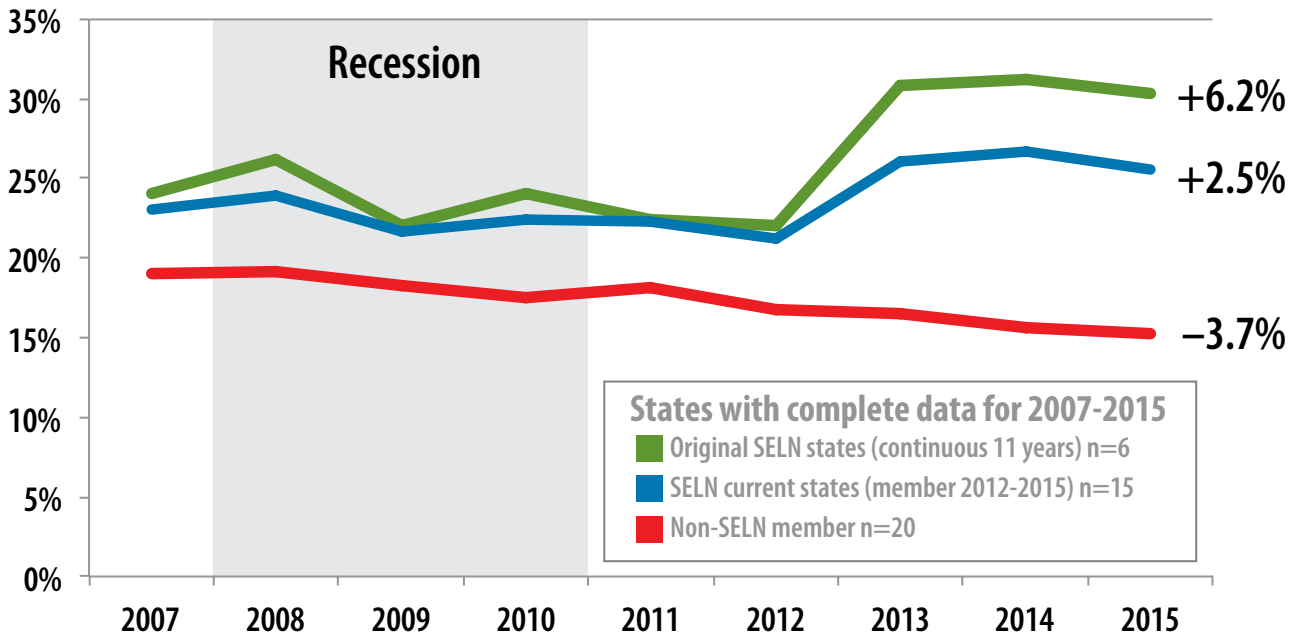
For over eleven years the SELN along with other national project and grant partners have studied the factors which promote a strong integrated employment and full community inclusion agenda. These groups are also reviewing growth as well as declines in services other than those leading to community-based work. This chart illustrates how three categories of supports: non-work services, facility-based work, and integrated employment, have changed over time.

Also, many states in the country have moved to full implementation of Employment First policies and practices with revised service definitions to reflect a preference for individual integrated employment in the community. There is anecdotal evidence that states' definitions of integrated employment are being strengthened, and this has led to outcomes previously counted as integrated employment being reclassified to other service types. The SELN regularly reviews this evidence to determine the results of states' investments in Employment First agendas.

A feature of the SELN is the emphasis on the overall systems dynamic and the importance of balanced change across all of the higher-performing framework elements. Given the changes being made at state, regional and local levels, it is important to acknowledge the time needed for those changes to take effect, to radiate throughout the system long enough to take hold, for the right data to be collected, and for the data to then reflect new results.



Chart 2: Percent in Integrated Employment Services



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2015

The graphic above illustrates the percent of individuals receiving integrated employment services in states across the country. Data is collected annually on the total count of individuals who received integrated employment services funded or monitored by the state IDD agency. Integrated employment services primarily capture services to maintain paid integrated employment (including job training, job coaching (both individual and group), ongoing supports, and services for self-employment), but also include job development services funded by the state DD agency (including discovery and career planning as part of a job development process) that are intended to directly result in paid integrated employment.

The chart's recession markers indicate the beginning and ending of the 2008 to 2010 period of general economic decline in our country. It is noticeable that following the economic downturn, SELN member states (the blue and green lines) show an overall improvement trend after the period of correction. By comparison, states with complete data but not SELN members (the red line), show an overall decline in the percent of people receiving employment services signaling a shift away from those options.

The network of members benefits from the synergy of learning and sharing across states to address common policy and practice questions so often associated with systems change. Read on to the state activities' section of this report to learn more about how states are focusing on tangible and realistic changes needed to address their short- and long-term integrated employment outcome goals.



A direct benefit of SELN membership is access to guidance that can lead states to a better understanding of priorities. The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, guides the SELN's strategy for system improvements.

The framework sets an organizational tone for capturing the critical aspects of systems change in states. The elements represent practices and outcomes that enable states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGHER-PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

This graphic demonstrates the factors that, when working together, can lead to better integrated employment outcomes. The dynamic interplay of all the elements represent priorities in our long-term systems change work.





LEADERSHIP

Clear and unambiguous commitment to employment in individual community jobs, from top leadership through all levels in the system. Local, regional, and state-level administrators are consistent champions for integrated, individual employment.

Arizona

Over the past year, the Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities held four listening sessions in different areas of the state with several groups: support coordinators; the individuals they serve, known as members; and members' families. The purpose of the sessions was to collect feedback on key areas of employment supports to improve employment services. The support coordinators identified a need for relevant and practical materials to help them discuss employment with members and their families.

The sessions with family members provided insight into their experiences and the type of information that would be helpful when discussing and planning for members' employment goals. The state will use this feedback to improve the individual planning process and identify a path to employment for each member.

Iowa

In January 2017, the Department of Human Services published an update to the Iowa Employment First Guidebook. This second edition of the guidebook represents changes that occurred in 2016 to Iowa's service system. A primary goal of the guidebook is to ensure that all disability professionals have the knowledge they need to support Iowans with disabilities to develop and implement an employment vision and goal.

The new edition was announced via emails and list-serves to case managers, managed care organization community-based care managers, integrated health home staff, people with disabilities and their families, and other advocates.

Missouri

In October 2016, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) launched the Empowering through Employment Initiative to assist the growing number of individuals who express an interest in community-based employment. Prior to the initiative, only 3% of individuals

had an authorization for employment services. A goal has been set that within two years, 35% of all individuals will be connected to employment services to explore choice, address earned income myths, and assist with becoming employed.

DDD has designed a three-tiered "ribbon recognition" campaign for outreach and achievement. As of June 2017, 94 support coordinators and 14 case management providers have been awarded a recognition ribbon. Additionally, there has been a 52% increase in those receiving employment services.

Nevada

Oversight of Nevada's Integrated Employment Strategic Plan (2015–2025) is provided by the Commission on Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD). CSPD also designated a new subcommittee to oversee implementation of the plan, and the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities provided funding to the state's Aging and Disability Service Division (ADSD).

This funding allows ADSD to help CSPD ensure that the governor's strategic plan recommendations are addressed by partners across the state. The funds also paid for ADSD to recruit Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. to facilitate subcommittee proceedings and discussions. Results are now being tracked with a new implementation progress plan.

Oregon

Oregon launched the second phase of its statewide "I Work We Succeed" marketing campaign, which focuses on employers and families. The campaign aims to increase job opportunities for people with IDD by raising awareness and celebrating success stories.

The campaign is visible via multiple platforms throughout Oregon. Transit ads and billboards feature success stories. Radio ads focus on employer engagement. An ad campaign on the Oregon



Employment First Facebook site increased page “likes” from 1,500 to more than 3,000. Window decals featuring the campaign logo were given to local employers that hire people with IDD.

The campaign was launched by Department of Human Services Employment First, with input and collaboration from Office of Developmental Disabilities Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Oregon Department of Education, and self-advocates.

Washington

The Washington Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) closed the front door to pre-vocational services on July 1, 2015. This means that new clients will not be able to enter into pre-vocational services, and providers can focus on those currently receiving these services to move them into integrated settings.

To this end, DDA began working with provider agencies to develop transformation plans (a business plan for an agency to move to a fully integrated service model), as well as offering provider staff training. DDA expects all people receiving employment support to be in integrated employment by June 30, 2019 through partnership work and natural attrition.

As of June 2017, approximately 164 individuals with IDD served by DDA were receiving pre-vocational services in 11 counties from 8 different service providers.

If I got three employment-related wishes from a genie in a bottle, I would wish for _____

...no more subminimum wage, no underemployment, and competitive integrated employment for all!

—Heather Norton, Virginia

...more opportunities, equal pay and true integration.

—Terry Redmon, Washington

...everyone having high expectations for individuals with I/DD, higher culture acceptance, and increased engagement with families.

—Stacy Collins, Ohio





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.

Alabama

Alabama's Department of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Division continues its involvement in provider transformation through its partnership with the Office of Disability Employment Policy that began in 2014. This year, four additional service providers were accepted as pilots, and are now working with subject-matter experts to transform services to a community-based model. One of the original pilot providers, The ARC of Jackson County, closed its facility-based operation and became exclusively community-based in September 2016.

Colorado

The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) developed a contract to explore how to expand employment services to all Home and Community-Based Medicaid waiver that it administers. This will support members receiving HCBS to achieve their competitive integrated employment goals.

HCPF expanded the Medicaid Buy-in Program for Working Adults to three additional waivers: the Elderly Blind and Disabled waiver, the Brain Injury waiver, and the Community Mental Health waiver. The Buy-in Program for Working Adults enables Medicaid recipients to expand their earning potential by allowing individuals receiving higher wages to remain Medicaid-eligible.

District of Columbia

DC's Department on Disability Services (DDS) created new waiver service definitions. These include time limitations on employment readiness, limits on the hours someone can spend in day habilitation, inclusion of community exploration to support employment in all day-related services, and requirements that supported employment and employment readiness providers become RSA providers.

Maryland

Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) heads up the Employment First State Leadership Team, which is comprised of a wide variety of statewide stakeholders including self-advocates,

employment service providers, and representatives from Maryland state agencies. DDA supports substantial stakeholder involvement in implementation of the Employment First strategic plan through monthly meetings and the work of subcommittees. The plan has outcomes and goals, and was updated to guide DDA's work in FY 2018. Stakeholders are updated on the status of outcomes and barriers that need additional support.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has finished the third year of its four-year plan, "Blueprint for Success." The plan focuses on increasing the number of individuals achieving individual, integrated employment, and successfully phased out funding for sheltered workshops.

An employment conference was held with about 450 participants and 26 workshop sessions. It was an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate Blueprint for Success accomplishments, while fostering continued momentum to keep expanding employment opportunities.

This year, MA DDS leadership recognized the need to increase support for transition-age young adults to directly enter integrated employment upon leaving school. DDS applied for and received one of the five-year Partnership in Employment system change grants funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This funding provides a great opportunity to work more closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, other state agency partners, and stakeholders to support the goals and outcomes outlined in this project.

Missouri

During the 2016–2017 membership year, the Division of Developmental Disabilities developed an 8-module online training to increase case managers' knowledge of the content needed in an individual service plan (ISP) in order to meet a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rule implemented in January 2017. The online training complements the DDD's ISP Guidebook released in 2016.



The training explains each section of the rule, and identifies tools and resources to assist case managers as they write ISPs. Module topics include development of the ISP, daily life and employment, community living, social life and spirituality, healthy living, safety and security, and citizenship and advocacy. The online training is available on the DDD website.

Minnesota

In May 2017, the Minnesota State Legislature passed three new employment services to assist job seekers with disabilities in pursuit of competitive, integrated employment for the Medicaid HCBS waiver services. These three services are Exploration, Development, and Support. The legislation was a result of efforts (beginning in 2014) by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, day service providers in Minnesota, advocacy organizations, and counties/lead agencies. Minnesota anticipates that the services will be available next year.

Oregon

Oregon's Office of Developmental Disabilities Services and Vocational Rehabilitation issued a new policy in July 2016 that the recommended standard for supported employment services is the opportunity to work at least 20 hours per week. The purpose of this policy is to make sure service coordinators, personal agents, and VR counselors are talking to individuals about how to get the right job with the maximum hours, based on each person's preferences and circumstances. The goal is to increase the number of hours that people with IDD are working in the community.

Pennsylvania

The Office of Developmental Programs redesigned employment, pre-vocational, and day habilitation services to ensure that people with IDD can engage in competitive integrated employment and have the necessary support to be active members of their communities. Changes include three new HCBS waiver service definitions; advanced supported employment, benefits counseling, and community participation supports; refreshed rates and methodology; and new quality assurance measures.

Advanced supported employment is outcome-based, and is provided by certified consultants. The service includes discovery, job development, and systematic instruction. The category of community participation supports includes pre-vocational skill development and community participation activities. This flexible service definition encourages the shift from facility-based services to community-based services by establishing a performance target for individualized integrated community settings.

Washington

The Employment and Day Unit in the Washington Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is using its Employment Plan Quality Review Tool during its quality monitoring of Washington State counties and the implementation of employment services. The tool scores employment plans based on six areas: minimum requirements of the plan; identification of skills, gifts, interests, and preferred activities; employment preferences and goals; action steps and supports; use of respectful and strength-based language; and other accommodations critical to achieving the employment goal.

The scoring guide then ranks the employment plan as excellent, above standard, satisfactory, below standard, or unsatisfactory. The documents are shared with the county and archived for future reference as a way to challenge the county to improve the quality of its employment plans.



FINANCING AND CONTRACTING METHODS

The outcome of employment in integrated community jobs is emphasized and supported through the state's resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices.

Georgia

Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities added supported employment to its array of state-funded family support services. Most supported employment in Georgia is still provided as a separate, distinct service, and family support is certainly not the "front door" to access supported employment services. However, accessing supported employment through family support does offer advantages for some individuals.

One such advantage is that eligibility criteria for Georgia's family support program are broader than those for its other state-funded or waiver-funded services. Also, family support can provide other wrap-around services that are not available through supported employment. Finally, while there are waiting lists in Georgia for all other services (including supported employment), family support can be accessed almost immediately upon verification of eligibility and need.

These advantages do not make this option appropriate for all people seeking supported employment services. For example, the family support rate cap is lower than Georgia's regular supported employment rates, so access to supported employment through family support is not a viable option for individuals who require intensive ongoing supports.

New York

The New York Office for People with Developmental Disabilities supported employment services have been revised to focus on individual supports a person needs to achieve competitive integrated employment as a priority outcome. To ensure that all individuals employed or seeking employment receive the proper level of service, providers now receive an hourly fee. Since the inception of the redesign, there has been an increase in both job retention and newly created jobs for individuals with IDD.

New Mexico

The New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) launched the new Transition to Employment grant to provide opportunities to youth who might not otherwise access employment supports. New Mexico has 6,580 individuals waiting to

be allocated to a Medicaid waiver.

This grant was developed through Senate Memorial 20, which provides funding for efforts that reduce the wait time between school and adult services. DDSD-eligible youth between the ages of 17 and 25 can apply. This program funds up to 10 hours per month of follow-along supports, and up to \$460 for transportation services. Individuals choose who will provide these supports.

Ohio

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities launched new, modified day service rules that focus on encouraging community integration opportunities. Created in partnership with those who manage and use the system, the revised adult day services prioritize person-centered planning, community employment, and community membership.

New adult day waiver services included career planning, individual employment support, and group employment support. The modified services included vocational habilitation and adult day support.

Career planning supports people one-on-one, from early employment planning to job attainment. This service includes assessment, work incentives counseling, and job development. All components of career planning focus on preparing and supporting people interested in working in their community.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals Division of Developmental Disabilities implemented a new service package of performance-based contracts with supported employment service providers. The contracts encourage both integrated employment and day services, to help people achieve positive integrated employment outcomes.

These contracts are linked to levels of provider achievement regarding quality, numerical targets, and implementation timelines. When agencies and self-directed clients meet certain performance benchmarks, a payment will be provided to the agency or to the self-directed client, in addition to the reimbursements they receive through the current billing structure.



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.

Arizona

Through the Employment Supports and Service Training program, DDD provides in-person required training to new support coordinators (SCs). The new computer based training gives SCs a comprehensive understanding of the employment supports that DDD offers, as well as the key role that support coordination has in assisting people with IDD to become employed.

DDD is also developing a required web-based training course that SCs must take every two years. The goal of the training is to refresh and expand SCs' employment knowledge base and skills, and to help them feel more competent supporting people on a path to employment.

Colorado

The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provided educational webinars to 150 providers and clients to inform and provide technical assistance on changes to DVR policy related to WIOA, and HCPF changes due to the HCBS Final Setting Rule.

With both of these new federal regulations and a new commitment in Colorado to move toward Employment First polices, these presentations help providers understand how to implement Competitive Integrated Employment opportunities. These webinars also set the stage for the employment roundtables that will happen in August. This project helped build a strong partnership between HCPF and DVR.

As part of Colorado's Employment First legislation, HCPF, the Department of Human Services' Office of Behavioral Health, DVR, the Department of Education, and the Department of Higher Education created a memorandum of understanding establishing the Employment First Advisory Partnership. This group also includes stakeholders such as employment services providers and individuals receiving services. The

Employment First Advisory Partnership is directed, by the Colorado legislature, to develop a strategic plan to adopt Employment First principles and to improve access to Competitive Integrated Employment opportunities.

Delaware

In January 2017, the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services finalized the revised training policy for providers of employment services. This policy requires providers to complete modules from the College of Employment Services online curriculum, participate in annual best practice trainings, and attend a four-day, in-person employment boot camp course. To meet the demand, DDDS launched a train-the-trainer series to prepare local agency staff to teach the boot camp course.

Providers are also encouraged to become Certified Employment Service Professionals (CESPs) by passing the APSE CESP examination. Employment specialists who are CESPs are exempted from annual best practice trainings required by DDDS.

Hawaii

Hawaii's Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division (DOH-DDD) provided resources to train and certify 16 benefits counselors who provide services to individuals with IDD who are considering entering the workforce, but are concerned about the impact paid work will have on their benefits. DOH-DDD's employment specialist staff provides direct training and mentoring for case managers, agency providers, and VR counselors to help these professionals fully embrace and understand service delivery from a person-focused perspective.

Maryland

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) provides monthly technical assistance to provider organizations in the process of shifting service models from primarily facility-based to individualized service delivery. Technical



assistance is delivered through Employment First webinars on several topics: How to Support Families; Where to Start with Employment First; Creating Career Ladders; Customized Employment and Discovery; and Organizational Transformation. Supported by the Office of Disability Employment Programs/ Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, DDA has been able to offer the webinar series to all providers interested in organizational transformation.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) continues to invest in technical assistance, training, and other capacity-building initiatives to assist providers in delivering high-quality integrated employment services. An increasing focus of training and consultation has been on the redesign of community-based day services to offer more inclusive experiences in the community to support a pathway to employment. A new Community of Practice for providers of community-based day services has been meeting to share best practices.

Additionally, DDS continues to fund six regional employment collaboratives across the state to engage in employer outreach to identify new job opportunities and streamline access to job openings. The collaboratives support a job developer's network that facilitates sharing of job leads among partners, and this past year piloted a successful new retail-training program.

Minnesota

In April 2017, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, as part of the state's Moving Home Minnesota initiative, released an application for a 12-week training for up to 25 employment service providers. The training required 40 to 50 hours of online courses, live webinars, and field assignments. Those who completed the training received the Basic National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services from the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators. This training helped build capacity for employment support among Minnesota's service providers.

Pennsylvania

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) conducted Provider Transformation Leadership "Bootcamp" for 50 pre-vocational and day support providers. These two-day sessions were targeted to high-level executive leaders. Participants received information from nationally recognized subject matter experts, an opportunity to network with peers considering similar changes to their service models, and time to team-build with other senior members of their organization. Six provider agencies will receive more intensive follow-up training and consultation. Funding for this initiative was provided by the ODP/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Interagency Funding Agreement.

Ohio

Over the past two fiscal years, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) awarded 44 grants to providers to work with subject matter experts to establish service models that prioritize person-centered, community-based services for individuals with IDD. As a result of the technical assistance, providers are becoming less reliant on facility-based services, and people are receiving services that are individualized and community-based.

During 2017, DODD held a series for provider agencies called "Transformation Series: Building Innovative Service Models." The series gave providers a chance to share ideas, strategies, and practices about the systems change process. The goal was to improve person-centered planning and employment opportunities for individuals across Ohio. Activities included site visits at provider agencies, hands-on planning, and small group work, all with the support of subject matter experts well versed in agency transformation.

Oklahoma

In Oklahoma, the Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Division has been working for the past two years to provide focused information and training to case managers and service provider organizations on community inclusion and employment outcome expectations. These efforts are centered on ensuring that every individual with IDD has increased opportunities for community engagement.



In 2017, DDS began a quality assurance process to make sure that providers are identifying barriers to employment in individual service plans. The process began with face-to-face discussions with providers and documentation checks to confirm that all individual plans were identifying a pathway to employment. The process revealed a big shift, showing that providers are now asking how to help individuals achieve greater community engagement and gain new employment experiences, rather than saying, “It’s not going to happen.”

Oregon

More than 100 regional trainings were held throughout Oregon in 2016–2017. In collaboration with Office of Developmental Disabilities Services, VR, and the Oregon Department of Education, trainings have focused on transition services, how to create a career development plan, Home and Community-Based Service regulations, local collaboration, and much more. Regional DD and VR specialists participate in and lead each training to make sure cross-agency policies and collaboration are emphasized.

New York

Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) created the Innovations in Employment Supports training sessions to inform and train provider staff and management in OPWDD’s person-centered philosophy and goals. The classes train staff in discovery techniques, customized job development, job coaching, and management skills. Regulation requires attendance by staff who provide supported employment services. In 2016, 8,901 training seats were filled, with more than 400 classes offered.

Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Health-care, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) Division of Developmental Disabilities is supporting transformation of provider networks by giving technical assistance to 22 provider agencies through structured monthly meetings. At the meetings, BHDDH staff review participant engagement, participant records, provider documentation and billing practices, and data tracking.

In addition to individualized technical assistance, a monthly strategy meeting is held with all 22 providers to review best practices, outline training needs, review program topics, and answer questions. These strategy meetings also include Office of Rehabilitation Services

for ongoing collaborative discussions, and often have a guest speaker to discuss issues pertinent to employment program needs.

South Dakota

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has finalized waiver definitions to be included in the CHOICES waiver renewal submission planned for March 2018. Collaboration with the SD Employment First Alliance continues in order to develop policies and procedures outlining expectations and details for provision, approval, and exceptions for each service. The group is exploring an online format that would include resources accessible to job seekers, families, educators, and employment providers. In addition, three trainings in Person Centered Employment were offered as part of the Sustaining Person Centered Practices training series in FY17. Additional opportunities for training employment providers and case managers will be available through these efforts as well as learning gained from DDD’s participation in the Supporting Families Community of Practice.

Texas

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) developed and released a web-based Employment First training series developed for employment service and direct care staff. The 12-module series gives an overview of basic employment service practices. Each module incorporates a quiz on the material covered in that module. All staff taking the module must pass the quiz to get credit for doing the training.

The goal of the series is to increase direct care staff knowledge of employment, which will ultimately improve the quality of employment services for people with IDD in Texas.

Virginia

Virginia amended two IDD waivers so that people with developmental disabilities can have better access to services that help them live, work, and socialize in their own communities. The new waivers, community engagement and community coaching, started July 1, 2016. Virginia’s Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services provided training for individuals and families to explain the changes and the new services. Over 25 trainings have been provided throughout Virginia, and over a thousand people have been trained.



INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT AND COLLABORATION

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.

Arizona

Through the work of the Arizona Employment First Team, Arizona's Division of Developmental Disabilities collaborated with VR, Arizona Healthcare Cost Containment System, and Arizona Department of Education and stakeholders to create a WIOA guidance document that will be shared with all stakeholders and partnering agencies. The document covers issues and concerns that had been raised as the state prepares to implement WIOA requirements. The team meets regularly, and the focus has shifted from identifying questions and tasks to reviewing policies and developing further implementation strategies.

An interagency agreement related to the WIOA requirements for youth in transition was developed to strengthen relationships and identify accountability factors to improve and stabilize the Arizona workforce. This agreement lays out the roles and responsibilities of interagency partners to provide pre-employment opportunities, follow Section 511 guidelines, and ensure coordination between VR and the Department of Education is fluid and structured.

Hawaii

Beginning in August 2016, a cross-agency team coordinated four full-day sessions focused on the transition from school to adult life. Cross-agency teams included Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, DDD case managers and staff, Department of Education Transition teachers, Hawaii Disability Rights Center staff, the University of Hawai'i Center on Disability Studies, Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Self-Advocacy and Advisory Council. The purpose of the sessions were to clarify processes across departments and services for individuals transitioning from school to community life and employment.

Iowa

In April 2016, Mental Health and Disability Services began contracting with three managed care organizations (MCOs) for Medicaid long-term care services. To support the transition to a managed

care system, between August 2016 and May 2017, a series of in-person events were held for MCO staff. The meetings provided a forum to share information about Employment First, learn how service system stakeholders benefit from employment, and discuss best practices for employment services.

SELN staff joined the August and September 2016 sessions to present about Employment First. Three subsequent workgroup meetings examined the purpose and values underlying collection and reporting of Employment First outcomes, and how this supports Iowa's Employment First vision.

Massachusetts

The Department of Developmental Services continues to strengthen its collaboration and partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind to facilitate access to integrated employment services for individuals with IDD by using resources across systems. Regional meetings of managers across agencies are held to support this coordination, and Area Office liaisons facilitate service access, share promising practices, and help with problem solving.

This past year, there has been an increased focus on the use of pre-employment transition services to provide career development and employment experiences for students. In addition, there has been communication and coordination related to implementation of the new WIOA Section 511 requirements for individuals earning less than minimum wage under US Department of Labor Title 14(c) certificates.

Michigan

The Michigan Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Administration (BHDDA) has worked with Michigan Rehabilitation Services over the past year to establish a memorandum of understanding reflective of the WIOA, the HCBS rule, and current and anticipated Medicaid Provider Manual changes. Michigan's Developmental Disabilities Council coordinates Michigan's interagency participation in the Office of Disability Employment Policy's



Employment First Leadership Mentoring Network, and this initiative has enhanced this effort.

This work has led to candid conversations centered primarily on long-term follow-along services, presumed eligibility, and braided funding and resources to increase individual competitive integrated employment for shared customers. These resources are being used to improve coordination of services.

Minnesota

In February 2017, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Vocational Rehabilitation Services, released joint guidance for case managers on fulfilling the requirements of WIOA. This guidance clarified case manager roles, responsibilities, and resources. It included a services manual update, a “myths and realities” document, and a webinar.

Ohio

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities entered the fourth year of their Employment First partnership. The partnership has increased referrals, outreach, and collaboration with the local county boards of developmental disabilities. Since the inception of the partnership, 1380 people have achieved competitive employment.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma’s Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Division has collaborated with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to meet WIOA requirements for individuals age 24 and younger. DDS and DRS staff communicate regularly to troubleshoot cross-system issues, and also meet monthly to identify providers who need support to implement the requirements. The required career counseling activity is provided directly to individuals by DRS. A positive outcome of this collaborative work is an increase of individuals who are seeking competitive employment once they understand opportunities for better wages.

South Dakota

The South Dakota Employment First Alliance (EFA) is an employment advisory committee for the South

Dakota Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Its members include self-advocates and family members, employment providers, VR staff, the Department of Human Services business specialist, transition services liaisons, benefits specialists, Department of Education staff, and South Dakota advocacy personnel.

The purpose of the EFA is to collaborate in systems change efforts regarding employment. As DDD promotes interagency collaboration, feedback and participation from these partners is key to obtaining true partnership. DDD organizes quarterly meetings, and held face-to-face meetings in July 2016 and November 2016 to review progress and set DDD priorities.

On November 15, 2016, the South Dakota Employment First Alliance subcommittee for Interagency Collaboration hosted “Let’s Talk About Work,” an event for high schoolers with IDD. 132 students and teachers attended sessions related to employment, benefits planning, and programs available through the Department of Labor and Regulation, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, and various advocacy networks. Feedback was positive, and another event is planned for 2017.

Virginia

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) has been working with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services on a joint approach bringing Virginia closer toward full compliance with WIOA regulations and implementation of the HCBS Final Rule. This year, the Virginia Department of Education and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired solidified this interagency team, which is focusing on customized employment as a strategy.

Community engagement and community coaching services under DD waiver redesign are underway. With guidance from Virginia’s Employment First and community engagement advisory groups, DBHDS and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services developed and delivered training on community engagement and community coaching to providers.



SERVICES AND SERVICE INNOVATIONS

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.

Alabama

Alabama's Project Search, a partnership between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, local schools, the Alabama Department of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Division, and local industries, continues to thrive across the state. Project Search allows opportunities for students to participate in internships to explore different career paths while acquiring transferable job skills. Participants gain independence, confidence, self-esteem, and maturity through a year in a work environment where they get individualized coaching, instruction, and feedback. This year, 75% of students involved in Project Search secured employment.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) created a new intake process that includes a guided conversation on employment and strengthens efforts to coordinate intake and planning with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), DC's VR agency. The person-centered information gathered at intake informs service plans and referrals. DDA and RSA are working on a joint intake application to streamline the eligibility and intake process.

Delaware

Delaware Health and Social Services Developmental Disability Services (DDDS) has continued to engage youth between the ages of 14 and 25 to achieve their individual employment goals via the Pathways to Employment (P2E) program. During 2016–2017, enrollment in P2E increased over the previous year by 37%. Enrollment includes youth aged 14 to 17 who are focusing on career exploration and enhancing pre-employment skills, and youth aged 18 to 25 who are working on pre-employment skills while job hunting. DDDS collaborates with the Department of Education, local education agencies, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to coordinate services and supports for youth engaged in P2E.

DDDS amended the state's strategic plan to include targeted case management services for individuals who live at home with their families or on their own.

The changes mean that Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) can shift from crisis management to a case management service called Community Navigation, which uses LifeCourse tools.

A case management vendor was selected via an RFP process, a contract is in place, and the vendor is hiring community navigators and supervisors. At the same time, Delaware is awaiting a response from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the 1915(c) waiver amendment, which if approved will double the number of people who will be served via the DDDS Home and Community-Based Waiver program. The new enrollees will have access to an array of new services, such as behavioral consultation, vehicle/home modification, and assistive technology.

Hawaii

During the 2016–2017 membership year, the Hawaii Department of Health/Developmental Disabilities Division (DOH-DDD), in alignment with its 2018–2020 strategic plan, made several changes to service delivery through an amendment of the 1915(c) waiver. CMS approved the amendment effective June 1, 2017.

The amendment enabled Job Development and Job Coaching, under Individual Employment Supports, to be delivered in a manner that would result in focused outcomes. In addition, Benefits Counseling is now an expected component in delivery of Discovery and Career Planning services. A new service called Community Learning Service became available as a group or individual service option to support individuals with IDD to identify and engage in community-based activities that match their interests.

Iowa

The Iowa Department of Human Services contracts with the Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD) at the University of Iowa for Employment First technical assistance. In February 2017, CDD and the ASK Resource Center published a family-friendly summary of Iowa's Employment First guidebook.



CDD and the ASK Resource Center created a 6-page color flyer highlighting information from the guidebook that would be of interest to families of people with disabilities. The ASK Resource Center funded the printing and distribution of 1,800 hard copies. The flyer is available on the resource center website.

New Mexico

Partners for Employment (Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability) launched the Informed Choice initiative to build provider capacity for the person-centered practices of Discovery and Customized Employment. Three providers are receiving intensive training from national and local experts. Rather than using Discovery solely as a tool for employment, it is being used for person-centered planning to drive service options.

Individuals with limited experiences engaging with their communities access new activities through this project. Once the Discovery summary is complete, they can make informed choices about work and other life areas.

New York

The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities created two new pre-employment services, community pre-vocational (pre-voc) and Pathway to Employment, that allow for a wide range of volunteer and career exploration activities for individuals to gain experience and skills. Pathway to Employment provides 278 service hours over a one-year period to discover the individual's skills, abilities, needs, and desires, which culminates in a written career plan.

Pathway to Employment and community pre-voc are being used by many of the providers seeking to transition workshop participants into community employment. Almost 2,000 individuals have participated or are currently participating in Pathway, many of whom had been in workshops for many years.

Ohio

With increased access to their communities, people with disabilities may face risks and challenges. To address these issues, the Center for Disability Empowerment developed the peer mentoring program "Speak Up, Stay Safe: A Community Health and Safety Training." Informational sessions on risk and challenges were provided to over 193 parents, professionals, and individuals with IDD. Topics ranged from healthy relationships and boundaries to alcohol and drug use. Ten peer mentors and eight support allies (individuals with disabilities) were trained to teach the curriculum, which was funded by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities' Employment First budget.

Oregon

Oregon's Office of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Employment First initiative launched innovation grants in March 2017. These grants expand the state's efforts to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for people with IDD. More than 20 grants were awarded to local employment providers, case management entities, and family networks throughout Oregon. Grants are focused on areas such as family and employer engagement, benefits counseling, and self-advocacy training.

South Dakota

Over the past few years, the South Dakota Division of Developmental Disabilities has helped ensure that families are supported in interacting with the paid service system by sharing publicly available educational materials and presentations. This year, South Dakota joined the national Supporting Families Community of Practice to establish a deeper understanding of what supporting families really means for true systems change to occur.

The state formed a project team and held an initial meeting and kickoff event in November 2016. Priority areas were identified by the project team and include early childhood, education/transition, employment, and family networking and advocacy.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES 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.

Alabama

In collaboration with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), and an ODEP contractor, EconSys, Alabama's Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Division has developed a data-collection tool that allows providers to report employment information. The system captures the data needed to track employment outcomes for the DD Division. The tool was piloted with 6 providers involved in a transformation initiative, and has since been expanded to 10 more providers in the state that offer employment services. Alabama's goal is to have all providers who offer employment services report data.

Maryland

In early 2016, Maryland passed the Ken Capone Equal Employment Act (EEA), which ends the use of 14(c) certificates that allow payment of subminimum wage to people with disabilities by the year 2020. The legislation created an EEA committee that meets regularly and evaluates outcomes and compliance with the EEA. The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration analyzes provider-level data, as well as individual data on people currently receiving subminimum wage. This data tracking helps to identify the impact of the legislation on individual outcomes, including movement to competitive integrated employment and transition from subminimum wage employment to non-work services.

Michigan

The Michigan Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Administration (BHDDA) implemented enhanced data reporting requirements in its Behavioral Health Treatment Episode Data Set in October 2016. Once a year, a two-week period/snapshot showing both average hours worked and average wages paid is reported for all individuals receiving BHDDA services. This generally happens during the month of the consumer's annual review, and is an initial step toward heightening employment data reporting.

BHDDA implemented a revised school-to-community transition policy in FY 2017. This policy underscores the value and expectation of partnering with the Michigan school system, and of early engagement with interested school-age and young adults who are likely to be eligible for adult services through the Medicaid system. Basic data collection on individuals seeking individual competitive integrated employment will be tracked as a first step toward improving coordination and transition planning.

Missouri

In an effort to report the use of waiver-funded employment services, Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) developed a new monthly report that analyzes authorizations to assist individuals with obtaining competitive integrated employment. The report tracks the percentage of individuals using a waiver, as well as those who are using an employment service by region, targeted case management entity, and support coordinator. A variance analysis is completed for each region. Quarterly, DDD uses Missouri Division of Employment Securities data regarding employment status. As a result, DDD now provides a statewide and regional report of those who received an employment service, their employment rate, and their retention rate.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma's Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Division tracks the impact of ongoing community inclusion efforts. For the first data collection period (spanning six months in 2016), DDS has seen an 18% increase in the number of people in facility-based services who have had new experiences in their local community. DDS credits the increase to the last couple of years' training and technical support with providers and case managers. Technical assistance and one-on-one strategizing with these staff is creating more team-based commitment to achieving the goal of all individuals becoming engaged in their community.



Pennsylvania

In September 2016, the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) published *Everyday Lives: Values in Action*. The document sets forth 13 recommendations to guide policy and program development. Quality measures were developed to gauge progress and make continuous improvements to achieve the recommendations.

This detailed set of measures is reviewed with the Department of Human Services on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual cycle as appropriate. A minimum of six data sources are used for these efforts, and the results to date are providing ODP programs with information on who is working, the type of supports in use, and whether greater numbers of individuals are working.

Rhode Island

This year, the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) Division of Developmental Disabilities established the Person-Centered Supported Employment Performance Program to promote the expansion of integrated employment for DD Division clients. The program awarded 22 provider agencies with technical assistance to help them develop goals and benchmarks related to three core components: credentialing staff, developing employment teams, and hitting specific performance goals.

All these agencies, with assistance from BHDDH, established performance goals, numerical targets, and implementation timelines.

South Dakota

The South Dakota Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) hosted several employment-outcome discussions with the South Dakota Employment First Alliance Subcommittee for Performance Measures. The goal is a plan to

gather data that will provide DDD and the subcommittee members with deeper insights on system performance and individual outcomes, such as hours and wages by work setting, source of paycheck, industry and occupation, retention and longevity, and paid time off. This information can be used to make decisions on which supports and services are most effective in helping individuals achieve employment goals and the state's use of resources.

The subcommittee identified data sources from which employment outcomes can be derived, including National Core Indicator data, Center for Quality and Leadership Personal Outcome Measures data, and SMART data.

Virginia

To understand the impact of the Employment First Initiative in Virginia, the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (DBHDS) has collaborated with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) for data gathering and analysis. Through a data-sharing agreement with DARS, DBHDS was able to gather all data for individuals with developmental disabilities receiving long-term follow-along services through Extended Employment Services and Long-Term Employment Support Services funded through DARS.

DBHDS released the data on April 1, 2017. This semi-annual reporting of data collection yielded 100% provider participation. The data shows that Virginia's efforts around employment are working. It indicates a sustained increase in the number of individuals employed, and a 35% increase in the number of people accessing individual supported employment under the waiver over the course of one year.

Washington

The Employment and Day Unit in the Washington Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)



is beginning to collect data on individuals' preferred number of hours of work to determine if DDA customers feel they are underemployed. The new variable is collected as part of the service planning process, and will include over 6,000 DDA individual employment clients' desired work hours by July 2018. Combined with data on employment outcomes that is collected monthly, DDA will begin to assess and set goals focused on information such as the percentage of clients working their preferred work hours, and the difference between the number of hours each client works and their preferred work hours.

These new data will be used by the Washington State Implementation Committee, a standing committee of county leaders that has ongoing discussions around trends and patterns in the data set, as well as the best ways for counties and providers to use this information: goal setting, training, monitoring, etc.



Something that always surprises me about doing this work is _____.

...the constant "change."

—Joe Longcor, Michigan

...Nothing surprises me anymore!

—Stacy Jones, Maryland

...thinking that we'll be "done" when we accomplish xyz ...but it is always evolving, we are always learning from our experiences and from each other. We are not in the business of being "done."

—Julie Hand, South Dakota



As the network of SELN member states concludes year eleven of collaborative employment-focused work, we continue to find examples of the critical role that vision plays in achieving desired outcomes. Without a clear vision of their agency's goals, high-level decision-makers can lose their strategic focus, affecting employment outcomes for those we serve. Leaders communicate that clear vision at every opportunity, radiating the strength and perseverance needed to stay the course.

State agency leaders are bombarded by ideas and suggestions on a daily basis. Those inputs may not easily align with a state's vision, and may require analysis and synthesis to determine future actions.

The SELN has worked steadily to provide a compass as leaders navigate these forces, both from the outside world and within our agencies. Our busy group of like-minded and supportive colleagues has offered consistency and a firm foundation to build and sustain capacity for achieving new life outcomes—an endeavor that requires steady support over time.

Another point of light in our last decade-plus of work is that disability systems in general, and IDD systems specifically, have numerous reminders that they can no longer function productively or thrive in a vacuum. Expectations and need for collaboration across systems and partners enhances the information sharing and decision making. Many new forces impacting states must be addressed in partnership with other systems, ensuring stronger long-term solutions are jointly supported.

Additionally, reinforcing that both employment policy and implementation must address the whole person, coordinating work and non-work opportunities, has been a key area of focus for the network. Community engagement activities to build new employment options, or to round out a full life, are positioned equally at the decision-making table at all levels of systems work.

Each of the state activities noted on the previous pages weave the intricate tale of the many and complicated individual steps needed to establish and build a solid foundation for success. We encourage you to reach out to individual state contacts to learn more about their activities and how to apply lessons learned in your future work.

As we continue to coach and counsel state systems toward making individual and system employment outcomes a reality, we know there will always be questions about what paths to choose, based on issues faced across the country. We hold firm to our commitment to assist states in building a strong foundation that stands the test of time.

“Our goal should be clear. We are seeking nothing less than a life surrounded by the richness and diversity of community. A collective life. A common life. An Everyday life.”

–John McKnight

Visit www.SELNhub.org for links for more information on the various state activities and projects.





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State Employment Leadership Network

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

The SELN was launched in 2006 as a joint program of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston.



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