

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

State Employment  
Leadership Network (SELN)  
Accomplishments Report

**MEMBERSHIP YEAR  
2014-2015**



# State Employment Leadership Network Accomplishments Report 2014-2015



## Contents

From the Project Managers .....	1
About the SELN.....	2
What Is Employment? .....	3
Conversations of Significance .....	4
Special Series .....	8
The Employment Framework .....	12
Elements of a High Performing Employment System .....	13
Leadership .....	13
Strategic Goals and Operating Policies .....	15
Financing and Contracting Methods .....	17
Training and Technical Assistance .....	18
Interagency Agreement and Collaboration .....	19
Services and Service Innovations .....	21
Performance Measurement and Data Management .....	24
From Insight to Action.....	26
SELN State Contacts .....	27
SELN Project Team.....	29

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)



# FROM THE PROJECT MANAGERS



For over nine years, the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) has been supporting state systems to offer new community-based employment options. With a healthy sense of urgency and the goal of helping individuals increase economic well-being, many more states are sharing compelling stories of individuals enjoying rich, full lives in their community, including jobs in the general workforce.

Even with those achievements, it is more critical than ever to remember that success is built one person at a time. Turning the ship of large systems change can often overshadow the work we do with every person or family seeking supports, but it is on that personal level that we make our greatest impact. Successful employment in the community is a very individualized outcome, and states must build the needed human service systems to respond to new demands and expectations.

This year's accomplishments report is a collection of diverse examples illustrating how states achieve both the small steps and large leaps of systems improvements. Our Network activities and individual state work complement each other, providing a rich community of shared learning to members and systems partners. In the following pages, we have captured many examples of "what works," along with the pictures of people experiencing success.

We hope you find inspiration in these reflections, and renew your own investment in the challenges to come. We remain focused on helping states make the systems changes needed to ensure growth in employment opportunities and economic opportunities for citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"TELL ME, WHAT IS IT YOU PLAN TO DO WITH YOUR ONE WILD AND PRECIOUS LIFE?"

-MARY OLIVER

Suzanne Freeze, ICI

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS





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

# WHAT IS EMPLOYMENT?



Clarifying the term “employment” is a key strategic task states must tackle. It impacts many decisions, and affects other system issues--funding and reimbursement rates, service descriptions, provider capacity building, and the IDD agency’s role in collaborating with other state partners.

To the SELN, employment is simply a person working at an individual job in a local business, earning the prevailing wage for that position or industry, alongside peers who do not have disabilities. The business is located within the community, and is not owned or managed by the support organization (or provider).

Individuals with disabilities acquire jobs that match their interests where they can use their skills and talents. They build relationships with coworkers and gain more control over their own destiny. Employees with disabilities are on the business’s payroll, and are paid in the same manner as their coworkers without disabilities.

While systems change does not happen overnight, it is never too late to start. Research continues to show many individuals with disabilities and their families want work in their community alongside peers without disabilities. They want jobs where their abilities are recognized and valued. They want to earn money, accumulate assets, and build the life they desire. They want a job, but they also want to live a fulfilling life and balance work with other activities.

Jobs in the general workforce provide the greatest opportunity for meeting individual preferences, offering prevailing wages and benefits, and creating a strong match between employer and employee. In truly integrated employment, both the individual and the business benefit, and both are invested in making it happen. Our analyses, recommendations, and dialogue with member states all support this view.

## What does Employment First mean?

“Employment First” signals that publicly-funded supports for integrated (community-based) employment are considered the option of choice for citizens with disabilities, rather than participation in a sheltered workshop, a day habilitation program, or other segregated or non-inclusive settings. Other options may be available, but only after employment is fully explored or experiences to build job skills are considered, and in relationship to work if an individual is employed less than full-time.

## TERESA, TEXAS

Teresa works three days a week at Great Clips. She is responsible for answering phones, greeting and signing in guests, filling up water and alcohol bottles, washing and folding laundry, and keeping the shop clean.



# WHAT IS EMPLOYMENT?



## Impact of External Catalysts

A new playing field has been created in recent years. Unprecedented changes converging simultaneously are impacting state human services systems, particularly for people with IDD and their families. The systems supporting people must acknowledge and address a range of external catalysts, including but not limited to:

- ▶ The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- ▶ The 1999 Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision
- ▶ The United States' Department of Justice (DOJ)
- ▶ Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- ▶ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Home and Community Based (HCB) Services regulations

A consistent theme is the inherent value of each individual, and the notion that people belong out in the world to explore, learn, fail, grow, and thrive. In the twentieth century, the IDD system had an awakening, realizing that individuals should not be kept locked away from the rest of society. Systems developed places where groups of people could gather, and over time we have realized that while segregated settings served a purpose in those early days, true inclusion happens in the midst of typical society and not in separate places.

This collection of catalysts reinforces the role for funding and laws to support inclusive (not separate) opportunities. The challenge for state systems is developing a bridge from the legacy services of the past and rising to meet the needs of individuals, families, and communities in this new world.

## JARED, MASSACHUSETTS

Jared works at Microtek, a cable-assembly company. He is a full-time benefited employee. Jared has

learned to do many cable-assembly tasks, and relies on the posted instructions to understand the sequence of tasks to follow. He can safely use any of the equipment at the company.



**The challenge for state systems is developing a bridge from the legacy services of the past and rising to meet the needs of individuals, families, and communities in this new world.**



State members' collective interests drive specific Network activities and products. Technical assistance and support is furnished through several channels: network-wide online events, audio teleconferences, monthly member meetings, individual state calls, access to technical documents and online resources, state site visits, and direct discussion with content experts.

The SELN project team uses a “right time, right information” approach to meeting member needs. Challenges to systems change are often cyclical, and re-emerge as players change or certain catalysts enter the scene. By meeting member states where they are and acknowledging what will be most useful at that particular point in time, resources can be directed as needed. Themes emerge across all network and state-specific activities driving the areas of focus for upcoming membership years. What follows is a summary of the 2014–2015 activity areas.

## Network Meetings 2014–2015

Monthly meetings provide SELN members with routine opportunities for discussion of common challenges and success strategies. Many states wrestle with similar challenges, but address them differently given the politics, culture, timing, and economy in their state. With an emphasis on providing opportunity for interactive dialogue, meetings are a time for building awareness, networking, and sharing.

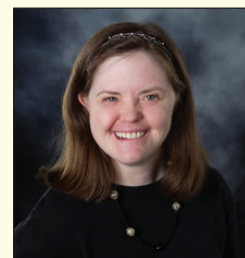
Meeting topics are chosen based on discussions with individual member states, as well as high-profile, time-sensitive, and critical issues circulating across the country. Project team members facilitate the conversations with special guest presenters and staff from member state IDD agencies.

## Topics this year included:

- Redesigning Key Employment Services Definitions
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Managed (Long-Term Services and Supports, LTSS) Care and Integrated Employment
- Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
- Using Data to Predict Future Workforce Development Needs
- New Medicaid-Funded Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Rules
- Conflict-Free Case Management
- Competency-Development and Capacity-Building

## MIA, IOWA

Mia runs her own public speaking business, *Aiming High*. During her presentations, Mia shares her story of growing up as a person with a disability, learning to work on her strengths and getting support in other areas of her life, and becoming a successful business person and advocate. Mia has also coached people with disabilities to speak more confidently.







## Annual Meeting October 2014

### Improving Employment Outcomes: Past, Present, Future

The 2014 SELN Annual Meeting in Alexandria, VA provided member states and colleagues from other systems a face-to-face opportunity to reflect on systems change from the past, share current strategies and improvements, and forecast how the future should look. The annual meetings continue to be invaluable for networking, strategizing, and refueling our work.

#### Dr. Paul Wehman

Guest speaker Paul Wehman, from Virginia Commonwealth University, shared his observations and the knowledge he gained during his decades-long work in the field of employment systems change. Dr. Wehman described how supported employment looked in the beginning of the disability rights movement. He discussed how federal grants and other catalysts, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, began to emerge, energize people, and create change. He also talked about the impact of available funding and Medicaid Home and Community-Based waivers, and offered examples of self-employment success.

Dr. Wehman spoke about the many positive influences influencing employment today, as well as opportunities for building on the work of the past. He gave examples of how external catalysts for change can become strengths if a state takes advantage of them, in the areas of legal (new regulations, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Olmstead Decision, Department of Justice activities), research (national studies, sharing research-to-practice results), and policy (clear integrated employment priority, aligned funding).

#### Janet LaBreck and Sue Swenson

Janet LaBreck, Rehabilitation Services Administration, and Sue Swenson, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, joined the meeting to offer insights from their experiences at the federal level. The presenters shared messages about the importance of partnering across systems and actively seeking out opportunities to share data and information.

## Member States

Staff from Nevada, Oklahoma, and Virginia described the ways their states support integrated employment across the IDD and vocational rehabilitation (VR) systems as they shift from segregated services to more inclusive options.

## Small Group Discussions

Members formed small groups to discuss key topics, including:

- community life engagement
- supporting families and lifespan activities
- engaging job seekers with disabilities
- funding realignment
- using data to measure outcomes

Together, the groups explored how to define new community integration standards across these topics, current efforts underway in their states, and technical assistance needs to make improvements in each area.

## GLENN, NEVADA

Glenn works at a community-based competitive job at Arrow Electronics. Glenn earns \$400 per week. He is a determined and hardworking young man who transitioned from a sheltered workshop in Nevada to a community-based competitive job.







## Funding Workgroup

The SELN project team and member states explore how historical funding practices impact integrated employment outcomes. Armed with case study research from the past ten years on funding models for employment and related day services, the SELN project team supports member states to assess their funding structures, analyze options to support systems goals, and propose new methodologies, including rates and units that align with revised service definitions.

Nevada and South Dakota participated in a SELN rate model study during the membership year. Both member states had executive-level support to address funding issues, and assembled a core team to participate in the study. Six months of structured discussions with each state were conducted to determine how to reach a differently balanced set of investments.

Through this iterative process, state groups also identify new questions resulting from the study exploration related to services, sources of funding, built-in funding assumptions, units, and rates. The rate model study will continue through the next membership year to as states do outreach and host discussions to build consensus for new funding realignment options.

June 2015 saw the release of the “SELN Funding Statement: An Essential Strategy to Support Integrated Employment.” This statement guides member states in essential components to consider toward funding realignment. SELN states have made great strides in acknowledging an imbalance in investment in public supports, compared to customer interests and regulations supporting full inclusion, and many are working to resolve those issues. The statement outlines the goals that states must embrace as they strive to improve integrated employment outcomes, and offers assistance in the following areas:

- ▶ make educated decisions from a wide range of possible payment amounts and systems,
- ▶ develop methodologies for funding each distinct phase of integrated employment service delivery,

- ▶ build employment pathways so that individuals can easily access employment services at any time,
- ▶ ensure that all supports and services are held accountable for promoting integrated employment,
- ▶ promote the delivery and widespread availability of high-quality supports, and
- ▶ ensure that changes to funding strategy are developed and evaluated on an ongoing basis within the context of all IDD systems changes.

## Data Users Group

### Shifting Focus from Services to Outcomes Through Data Collection and Analysis

The SELN 2014–2015 Data Users Group series focused on a series of questions to help member states address data management activities:

**Framing the Question:** *Choosing and Defining Data Elements to Promote Outcomes*

**Answering the Question:** *Existing Sources and Strategies to Collect Data*

**Using the Answers:** *Data Reports that Promote and Boost Employment*

**Future of Data:** *The Frontier for Employment Data*

State systems make investments in services to meet the needs of those seeking support, and must be able to reflect on the results. Data must be captured to develop a clear picture of what is occurring and to accurately reflect what is occurring in the field, including those who are working without supports. Data may then be used to inform rate-setting methodologies, service definitions, policies, and practices; to make the business case for funding and legislation; and to guide needed systems changes.

### October 2014 meeting

Each year, the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) releases the National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes. With increasing state staff turnover and retirements, it is important to routinely revisit how this publication and employment-related data can enhance state systems work.

# CONVERSATIONS OF SIGNIFICANCE



The discussion focused on how the 2013 National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes can be useful to SELN member state systems change activities, how to put the StateData website ([www.statedata.info](http://www.statedata.info)) to good use in generating charts and information to promote and achieve integrated employment, how member states may want to use the Report, and frequently asked questions submitted to the ICI data team.

## December 2014 meeting

The session focused on helping state IDD agencies interested in improving the usefulness of their employment data system move past common “stuck points.” Often (and especially when there have been leadership changes), administrators believe the most important data decisions revolve around factors such as hardware, software, and integrating with existing management information systems. For human service systems, the most important decisions are often tied to design or revision of a data system that quantifies public investment, reflects useful information, and promotes employment outcomes.

The session provided a framework for identifying and defining the purpose of the data, benefits and strategies for including stakeholders in the design, and achieving consensus on data element definitions. Several SELN member states shared their ongoing data system revamp work, and described how the resulting collaborative discussions are helping them achieve new successes.

## April 2015 meeting

A representative from Virginia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) presented on how the Virginia team developed a new report (the DBHDS Semiannual Report on Employment) outlining their employment path over the last few years, acknowledging where Virginia is today, and offering recommendations for future activities. The speaker described the impact of the 2011 Employment First Proclamation and the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement on the work of DBHDS and partner systems. The necessary cross-systems work drove

critical decisions about what employment is, what to count, and how to categorize it, using a simple survey process to collect the data and using what was already available but not being used effectively, and new measures as part of the Community Service Boards' performance contracts.

## June 2015 meeting

Representatives from Maryland's SELN team described the data systems work over the past eighteen months, which has led to new observations of the service system and the importance of a cross-system effort to build consensus in support of the new data collection and reporting strategy. Through building the data system, those responsible for services to people with IDD have recognized the relevance of discussing a shift from a service focus to an outcome focus. Questions related to service definitions (such as “How does job development fit in to outcome-based data reporting?”) must be addressed to ensure what is collected is used to inform future decisions related to funding, other community-based activities, and interagency work.

## Summary

Each of the states with focused data efforts is seeing and more importantly sharing progress:

- Collecting outcome data helps a system understand how people spend time, for instance how much time is spent working versus other activities. This informs decisions about employment as well as community life engagement activities. And supports states' efforts to build robust options leading to inclusive lives in the least restrictive environment as reflected in Olmstead and Medicaid references.
- The ability to monitor employment outcomes over time can be empowering and inspiring. It shifts the conversation from “Why employment?” to “What can we do to make it happen?”



## Building Capacity and the Role of Case Managers and Services/Supports Coordinators

The role of the case manager and services/supports coordinator is instrumental in moving the employment agenda forward and, as a result, their job is becoming more complex. Person-focused care coordination requires knowledge and expertise in many areas, and community-based employment is just one of them. Case managers and services/supports coordinators are one of the best resources for explaining the role of work, the impact of employment on public benefits, and how to navigate the path of services and supports. This year, SELN provided members and guests with a three-part series on Qualities of a High-Performing Case Manager.

### Qualities of a high-performing case manager:

- Recognize that families are the nation's true long-term care system of support.
- Understand new ideas may be rejected many times before the ideas are accepted into a family's culture and plans.
- Listen, interpret, and assimilate the information gathered day to day with individuals and families.
- Make person-centered thinking evident in all activities.
- Maintain a basic understanding of work incentives and Social Security benefits, and know where to point families and individuals to delve deeper into the specifics.
- Express high expectations about employment.
- Communicate early and often that work is fundamental to earning the means to exercise our freedoms.
- Understand that earnings and benefits are not an either/or choice.
- Connect people to resources that will help them make informed decisions about working.

## The Role of Family Involvement in Employment

SELN hosted a series of discussions on how to reframe expectations around employment; provide tools for having conversations with youth, families, and professionals; and share concrete examples from around the nation. The discussions were based on the LifeCourse Framework, which was developed by University of Missouri Kansas City, Institute for Human Development to help individuals with disabilities and families at any age or stage of life develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the life they desire. The framework serves as a guide for policy, service provision, and planning. It can be used not only by families, but also by professionals in state systems and organizations, or project teams striving to improve family engagement efforts.



### Session I: Strategic Mapping Using the LifeCourse Framework Objectives

Participants learned how to use strategies and tools to assess current services, gain a better understanding of the concept of family engagement, and consider employment options.

### Session II: LifeCourse and Employment Outcomes Objectives

Participants learned to use the framework and its tools to advance employment outcomes in transitioning youth, spread the message of employment to families and professionals, and explore opportunities for interacting with families.

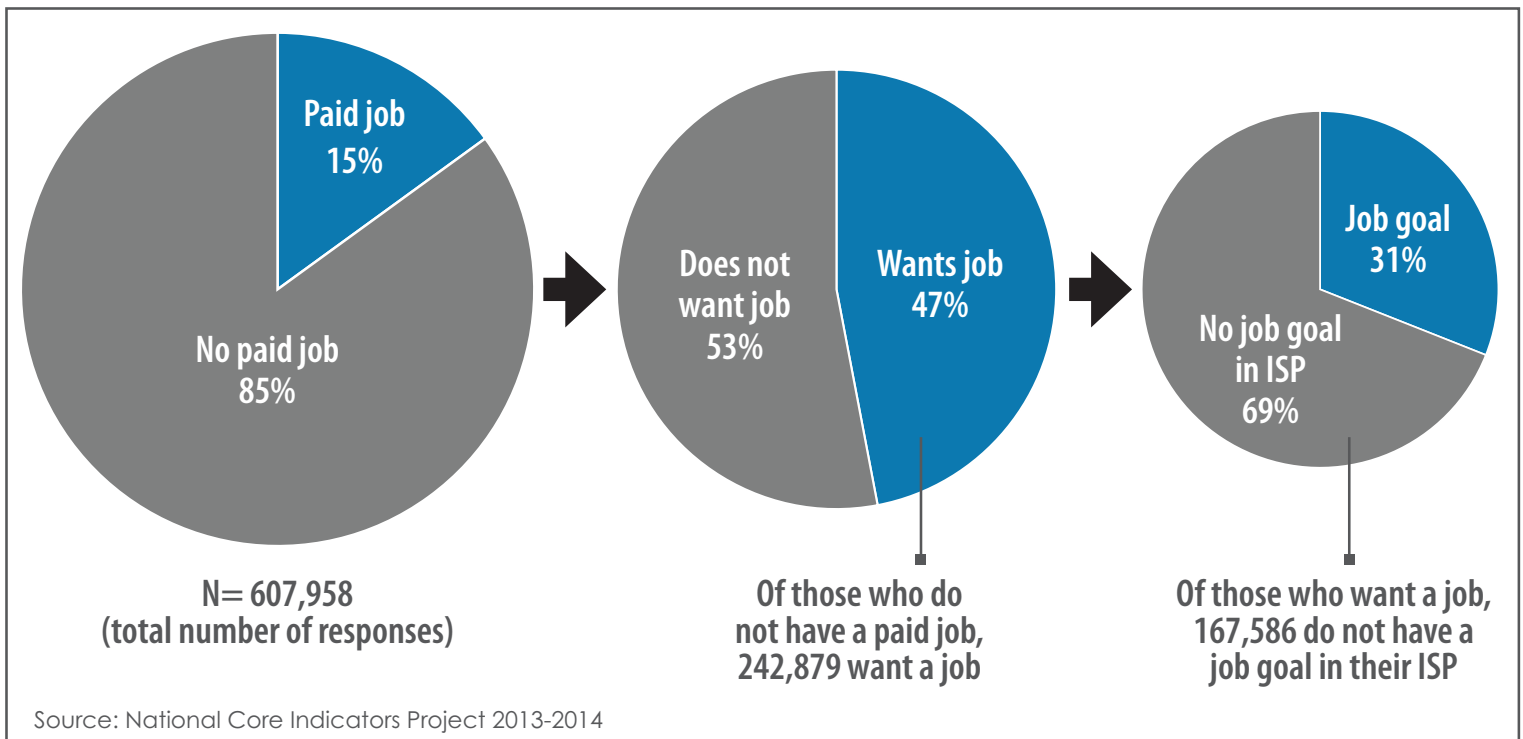
### Session III: Implementing Lessons-Learned Objectives

Presenters shared first-hand stories on how the framework has been used to change policy and practice, promote self-determination, and improve planning, so employment and life outcomes are planned for and achieved.



## Importance of Supporting Choice

This chart displays data from the National Core Indicators (NCI) survey (2013-2014). This NCI survey gathers data from a representative sample of individuals and families in participating states. As the chart depicts, there are a large percentage of people who are not currently working, who want a job but do not have a job-related goal in the individual service plan (ISP). The driving question from this information is whether the service system is addressing the choices of those seeking supports. State systems must ensure a robust and active pathway to employment is made available to all who are pursuing community-based employment over other, often segregated, alternatives.



**State systems must ensure a robust and active pathway to employment is made available to all who are pursuing community-based employment over other, often segregated, alternatives.**

# THE EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK



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 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.



## STACY, NEVADA

Stacy has been employed for four years at a Reno-area Starbucks. She works three days a week, four hours per day and earns \$10.25 per hour. Stacy began her career volunteering as a cleaner in an elementary classroom and a retail business.



# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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.**

### Colorado

Given the number of new regulations, rate changes, and shifting expectations for service outcomes, state-level staff from Colorado's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) continued to commit significant resources toward effective partnerships through regular meetings and consistent communication with stakeholders on Colorado's employment goals.

Education personnel from the Department of Education and special education transition programs were invited to attend DIDD meetings to increase the cross-systems dialogue, and to address issues that impact school-age youth and their families. In particular, the meetings provided an opportunity for DIDD, VR, and education staff to ensure that they are in sync, and to offer consistent and accurate feedback to field staff.

### Maryland

Maryland uses an interagency planning approach that includes the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), the Department of Disabilities, and the Developmental Disabilities Council to coordinate efforts and provide leadership to the employment initiative. Involving these key partners consistently ensures those needed for strategic decisions hear the same message and work through issues more rapidly. It also means the agencies present a unified front when discussing employment-related feedback with the governor and others invested in the outcome of this work.

### Michigan

In support of the ABLE Act, the Michigan House of Representatives passed bills 4542, 4543, and 4544. The Senate passed bill 360. The bills' purpose is to create statewide legislation that is in line with the national Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. The ABLE Act amends an Internal Revenue Service code to create tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. Eligible individuals will have the opportunity to save for education, housing, and transportation.

### Nevada

In Nevada, Governor Brian Sandoval established the Governor's Taskforce on Integrated Employment through Executive Order 2014-16 on July 21, 2014. The taskforce is examining and evaluating employment programs, resources, and training and employment opportunities for individuals with IDD, and informing development of a strategic plan to create a more diversified, inclusive, and integrated workforce.

In 2015, the Nevada legislature passed the Employment First law, making work the preferred service option for individuals with IDD, and mandating collaboration between VR and the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) in developing a seamless system to support individuals to prepare for, obtain, and maintain work.

These high-profile efforts support the division's leadership role in ensuring that individuals and families can access integrated, individual employment, rather than other (often less desirable) options.

### Oregon

Over the past year, Oregon's Employment First initiative has promoted the benefits of paid, integrated work in community jobs for people with IDD. It has shared success stories, launched an outreach campaign, developed and shared training tools more widely, and brought stakeholders together through a variety of venues, all with the purpose of increasing integrated employment.

Information about recent activities is available through the agency's Employment First website. The site includes resources for job seekers, family members, employers, and providers, as well as success stories about people who have found good jobs at minimum wage, or better, in the community.





### Rhode Island

In March 2015, six Rhode Island lawmakers and two state officials participated in “Take a Legislator to Work Day” to publicly support and champion employment for individuals with IDD. The lawmakers paid a visit to a young woman working as a cook at Buffalo Wild Wings Restaurant, where she described her career path from housekeeping to food service preparation. RI Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) organized the event, and staff members from the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) spoke with legislators about the benefits of community employment for people with IDD to the individuals, businesses, and the state’s economy.

Rhode Island has seen an increase in the number of individuals working in local businesses and corporations, such as CVS Health, TJX, Gregg’s Restaurant, Buffalo Wild Wings Restaurant, New England Tech, Walgreens, Automated Business Solutions, PF Chang’s, and the State of Rhode Island.

### Texas

The interagency Employment First Policy taskforce, created by Senate Bill 1226, presented its first report to the state legislature. The report included recommendations for policy, procedure, and rule changes for joint adoption and implementation of the Employment First policy by the Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Education Agency, and Texas Workforce Commission. Through high-level support and executive level buy-in, the bill and the task force provide strong backing for the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) policy, as well as for implementation and oversight of systems change activities. Recommendations for DADS include increased information about coordinating with DARs and VR services, increased use of and visibility for person-centered planning, expansion of training for agency staff, and clarification of policies regarding vocational and/or academic training.

### FRANCESCA, PENNSYLVANIA

Francesca is a teacher’s assistant at an elementary school. She prepared for her career by enrolling

in the Academy of Adult Learning, a college-level program at Temple University designed for adults with developmental disabilities. She took classes there in life skills, child development, CPR, and first aid. Francesca now earns \$7.50 per hour and works 17.5 hours a week.



# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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

The Alabama Division of Developmental Disabilities/ Department of Mental Health (MH/DD) renewed the state's intellectual disabilities waiver, and added three new services: community experience, emergency transportation, and benefits and career counseling. These services provide funding options for supporting integrated work and non-work experiences for people with IDD.

### Delaware

During the 2014–2015 membership year, Delaware became the first state to receive approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to use the 1915 (i) State Plan Amendment. This new home and community-based funding and service option promotes employment opportunities for young adults exiting high school through the Pathways to Employment program. The program prepares youth ages 14–25 with IDD, physical disabilities, and/or visual impairments for work, and supports them to obtain and maintain integrated employment.

### Hawaii

In the past membership year, the Hawaii Department of Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) developed and launched a multi-year (2015–2017) strategic plan. The plan analyzed the current landscape of services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families using National Core Indicators data, as well as discussions with families, self-advocates, providers, and staff from human services partner systems in Hawaii.

One of the plan's goals explicitly addresses improving integrated employment services and outcomes across the state through a series of focused objectives. These include structured and meaningful activities, such as robust person-centered planning, that lead to informed choices about employment and a career pathway; requirements for providers to document employment-related conversations as part of the person-centered planning process; and action

steps to find or sustain employment based on the individual's and family's needs.

### Maryland

Maryland DDA implemented a monthly Employment First online meeting for self-advocates and their family members, local advocacy groups and organizations, and other state departments working to support people with disabilities who want to work. The monthly meeting encourages participation, collects feedback, and provides updates on recent activities related to the initiative.

DDA issued guidance in the form of Frequently Asked Questions addressing what is an employment service, and what can be billed as an employment service.

Other responses to stakeholder requests have included detailed recommendations from the employment advisory working group that were integrated into DDA priorities, and a summit of all working groups and committees that address employment.

### Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has just finished its first year of implementation of the "Blueprint for Success," shifting resources away from sheltered workshop services and increasing the state's investment in individual, integrated employment. Employment data from the past year shows that Massachusetts has made strides toward the goals outlined in this four-year plan.

There has been a reduction in the number of sheltered workshop programs operating in the state. Eighteen providers have closed their workshop doors since the inception of the Blueprint, going from 46 to 28 workshops, and approximately 1,500 people have transitioned to individual, integrated employment; group employment; and/or integrated, community-based day services.

## STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATING POLICIES (continued)



### North Carolina

The North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS) analyzed several areas of systems change supporting individualized, integrated employment outcomes to address barriers and improve current practices. Division leadership met with self-advocates, job seekers and family members, employment service providers, representatives of local management entities, and others to collect opinions and ideas on current integrated employment services. The feedback will inform strategic planning and goal-setting to align with new regulations, as well as individual and community needs for services and supports.

### Oregon

Through extensive analysis, stakeholder engagement, and policy development, no new individuals with IDD will enter Oregon sheltered workshops as of July 1, 2015. The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) distributed and posted to its website an FAQ document directly addressing individuals with disabilities and their family members to explain the policy change.

### Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) actively worked to streamline referrals for employment services across both systems. A joint bulletin was created by both offices to provide guidance regarding referrals to OVR, and outlines the process to be used by both agencies.

### South Dakota

The South Dakota Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) developed marketing strategies targeted to self-advocates and families to create a consistent message of employment as an expectation and a priority. DDD created the Supporting Real Lives folder, and made it available online and in print. The folder included a booklet and worksheets to guide conversations related to planning for supports throughout the lifespan. Over 350 copies have been distributed to families and community providers.

Another resource, Achieving Dreams through Employment, is distributed with Supporting Real Lives. Achieving Dreams discusses the removal of the cost

share for earned income from the CHOICES waiver, the benefits of and considerations around employment, and the impact of earnings on Social Security benefits.

All the documents are available electronically via the DDD website.

### Virginia

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) added a performance requirement to local case management provider contracts to document conversations about integrated employment options in person-centered plans. Additionally, based on each individual's preferences, their plan must reflect either an employment goal or a goal related to or leading to employment options.

DBHDS created the Community Engagement Advisory Group to ensure that individuals receiving services also have options to engage in community-based non-work activities, rather than activities in segregated settings. The purpose of the advisory group is to develop revised service definitions for new Home and Community-Based (HCB) Medicaid waivers to support and promote non-work activities in the most integrated manner.

To date, four new service definitions have been submitted to the state's waiver redesign committee for review. Upon approval, the definitions will be incorporated into future HCB waiver applications.

### Washington

The Washington Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) closed the front door to pre-vocational services (PVS) on July 1, 2015. This means that new clients will not be able to enter into PVS, and providers can focus on those currently receiving PVS 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), third party planning, and 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 2015, approximately 340 individuals with IDD served by the DDA were receiving PVS in 11 counties from 15 different service providers.

# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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.

### Florida

For the second year in a row, the Florida legislature appropriated \$500,000 for the Employment Enhancement Project (EEP) to support people of transition age on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) waiting list with supported employment services. The APD allocated these funds to pay for supported employment coaching and follow-along services, transportation to and from work, and paid internships as paths to employment.

### Iowa

The Iowa Division of Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS) and the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise continued work on service definitions and a rate methodology with stakeholder input and technical assistance from SELN. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) has implemented funding for customized employment, and a focus on serving all customers under age 24.

### New Mexico

In December 2014, New Mexico Department of Health/Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) implemented a new rate structure for Community Integrated Employment (CIE). CIE includes job development and job maintenance services. In collaboration with the Supported Employment Agencies, DDSD changed the per-unit rate for service delivery to an enhanced monthly rate. This encourages competitive, integrated employment as a preferred outcome for individuals.

With a greater focus on employment outcomes, providers are building capacity to provide CIE supports. Providers have reported hiring additional job developers and job coaches, as well as increasing training opportunities for these new staff members.

### Nevada

ADSD is working closely with the SELN project team to systematically revise the state's employment services funding system. The method of reimbursing for services

is overly complicated and not easily understood by provider agencies, service coordinators, resource allocation staff, and individuals and their families. Additionally, the true cost of hiring high-quality staff is not accounted for in the current methodology.

The goal is for systems within Nevada to implement a reimbursement structure for service providers that increases competitive, integrated employment of people with IDD.

### Ohio

The DODD is developing a service model that supports informed choice, community integration, and competitive employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. In order to accomplish this, DODD engaged with consultants and a statewide group to develop recommendations regarding service definitions, provider qualifications, and rate methodologies.

DODD is using these recommendations to revise its employment and day support service definitions to be included in an upcoming waiver amendment. At the same time, the department is continuing to explore new rate methodologies that reinforce integrated employment outcomes.

### South Dakota

DDD formed a financial workgroup to assist the agency with redefining employment-related services and to realign funding in support of increased integrated employment outcomes. Together, DDD and the workgroup established a higher reimbursement rate for supported employment services provided through the CHOICES waiver. The rate provides a financial incentive for providers to support more people through supported employment services rather than day habilitation or prevocational services.

The goal of the workgroup is to include a more individualized reimbursement structure and process, greater choice of providers and services, and more employment opportunities for people with IDD.

# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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.

### Colorado

Colorado DIDD staff conducted a round of online training titled "Case Management Training: Case Managers' Role in Creating Pathways for Employment." Sixty individual case managers and case management directors participated in the event.

The training focused on why employment is important for people with disabilities, the role of VR and the process for accessing VR services, the role of the Medicaid Home and Community-Based (HCB) waiver in supporting employment goals, the process for accessing supported employment services, and how VR and waiver services work together. DIDD plans to provide the training twice a year to address turnover concerns around the state.

### Delaware

Delaware's Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) is developing materials for implementation of the first Medicaid State Plan Amendment waiver. These materials include both a navigator and a provider manual to explain eligibility, enrollment, outreach, and service planning requirements.

### Iowa

While MHDS and the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise do not directly provide training related to employment services, the companion projects of the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE) and Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) have worked with the Iowa Association of Community Providers to offer direct service workforce trainings in customized employment, as well as an intensive leadership series for providers, and technical assistance related to community-based employment. The number of providers engaged in transformation activities has doubled from last year. ICIE continues to offer training through a monthly community of practice webinar that is open to the provider community and other stakeholders.

### Massachusetts

DDS has made an investment in training and technical assistance, building a strong foundation to prepare its providers for the shift from segregated to integrated services. A comprehensive employment supports series (six days, 36 hours total) is offered on a regular basis to help develop and enhance the knowledge base, skill sets, and expertise of job developers and job coaches.

Over the last year, national experts offered trainings on program design and development of inclusive community-based day services that provide a pathway to employment. DDS also continues to support trainings by self-advocates for their peers. An interactive video presentation, "Explore, Prepare, Act," allows self-advocates to promote the value of employment, encourage interest in job opportunities in the community, and demonstrate the ways individuals can take a leadership role in their job search.

### Missouri

To ensure consistency in the quality of employment service provider staff, the Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) has implemented new contract requirements for continuing education. All employment support professionals in Missouri must now complete 14 contact hours of online training through the College of Employment Services, an ACRE-certified curriculum, or an APSE training event within six months of hire. They also must complete an additional four contact hours of training annually.

New employees must complete six hours of mentoring in the delivery of employment services, in addition to the training requirements listed above.

### Montana

The Montana Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) hosted an online training for case managers and supports coordinators on capacity building in the areas of Supplemental Security Income and the





Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program. Participants received training on strategies used to help families and individuals understand the relationship between paid work and benefits. As a follow-up to the online series, DDP coordinated a statewide training for provider staff and case managers with Montana's community work incentive coordinator to provide more detailed and locally relevant education.

In collaboration with VR, DDP implemented the Montana Integrated Vocational Employment Specialist Training (INVEST), a free online certificate training available to all providers and the general public. The curriculum teaches employment support best practices using five learning modules. Instruction focuses on job-seeker assessment, job development, training and job coaching, long-term supports, and customer service. As of June 30, 2015, more than 200 individuals working with DDP and VR have taken the curriculum.

### Nevada

ADSD partnered with the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) to enroll individuals in DirectCourse's online College of Employment Services (CES). NGCDD supported the activity through grant funds, allowing 75 learners to take CES courses. These learners included state IDD staff, community provider agency staff (from center-based work services and day habilitation activities), supported employment vendors (including VR staff), and staff from community colleges and universities.

CES coursework prepares learners for national certification through APSE as employment support professionals. The classes teach people in the employment services field how to foster inclusion for those with IDD, and how to support them to lead more productive, purposeful, independent, and self-directed lives.

### New Jersey

The New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) developed a series of webinars titled "A Support Coordinator's Guide to the Employment Service System." The webinars teach support coordinators about the importance of employment for people with

IDD, implementation of the Employment First initiative in NJ, the employment service system and supports, using the Pathway to Employment tool, writing employment outcomes, and assisting individuals and families in seeing employment as a viable option. This series of eight online lessons is mandatory for all support coordinators.

### Ohio

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) created a How-To Guide for Job Seekers and Families. The guide is an interactive online toolkit about Employment First, community employment, self-advocacy, transition, assistive technology, community resources, and benefits planning. It has eight learning modules with step-by-step help for job seekers navigating through various topical areas. Each lesson provides definitions, activities (such as filling out job applications), and tips (for example, how to be a self-advocate).

The guide also offers 22 tools to support job seekers on their path to community employment. Examples include the Employment First Companion Document, Discovery Guide, Medicaid Buy-In Game, and Pathway from School to Employment folder. The toolkit is available at <http://jobguide.ohioemploymentfirst.org>.

### Oklahoma

In Oklahoma, Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) and the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) hosted joint training sessions across the state for service providers. This activity heightened awareness of the public system and available services, and emphasized an active partnership between the two systems. Offering consistent responses aligned with a clear "employment for all" goal has ensured that more staff understand their role in helping people reach their potential.

Additionally, this activity helped clear up misunderstandings related to who can access which system at what time (it is common for individuals to simultaneously access both DDS- and DRS-funded services). Participants realized that both systems are equally committed to helping those with IDD reach and sustain employment goals.





### Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) collaborated on a Discovery Certification Project with The Arc of Pennsylvania, which trains field professionals to become discovery consultants. Once certified, consultants help students with IDD develop a personal profile reflecting their strengths, needs, and interests as they prepare to transition from school to employment, job training programs, and/or post-secondary education. The consultants also mentor and train others to become discovery consultants.

In conjunction with the Governor's Cabinet for People with Disabilities, ODP held the third annual Pennsylvania Disability Employment and Empowerment Summit in September 2014. The summit brings together members of the business community, individuals with disabilities and family members, and advocates to discuss community employment for individuals with IDD. Sessions in 2014 covered employment, housing, technology in the workplace, discrimination laws, transition, transportation, new federal contractor hiring rules, and tax laws. Support coordinators and other professionals received training certificates.

### Rhode Island

Rhode Island has increased its focus on building trust among the provider community through the Sherlock Center Conversion Institute, Rhode Island's University Center for Excellence in Education [<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/index.html>]. The center offers training about integrated employment to direct support professionals, case managers, job developers, and educators.

### Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Division of Developmental Disabilities funded peer-to-peer training with Advocates in Action (AinA-RI), a statewide advocacy organization directed by and for people with developmental disabilities. The AinA leadership series is a 10-month learning experience for Rhode Islanders who have IDD as well as their family members, friends, and direct support staff.

Through the training, participants learn how to make informed decisions, speak up for themselves, and become leaders. Topics include decision-making skills, voting, how government works, participating in meetings, and individual support plans, among many others.

### South Dakota

DDD conducted person-centered thinking (PCT) trainings for VR counselors in the fall of 2014. Shortly after, the Department of Human Services began efforts to become a person-centered organization. The Division of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Division of Developmental Disabilities, and secretariat have designated staff to act as coaches and leaders.

This effort has helped to develop a common language across various divisions within DHS, and has increased understanding and collaboration among all divisions and programs. Additional employment-specific PCT trainings were held in August and September 2015.

To show commitment to person-centered practices and integrated employment, DRS has offered a 25% rate increase for providers who attain the status of Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP). In addition to passing the CESP exam, certified providers must attend a two-day PCT training.

# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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.

### Alabama

MH/DD received funding for expansion of the Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program and Vision Quest. These funds will assist MH/DD with two areas of focus: provider transformation and rate restructuring.

With this funding, MH/DD received technical assistance (TA) and support from subject matter experts. The TA addressed blending resources for individuals with IDD and mental health issues, implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and rate restructuring, and enhancing Medicaid use for employment services.

### Colorado

Last year, DIDD hosted roundtable meetings with 20 local community-centered boards (CCBs) across the state. Staff from the local VR offices and area service providers attended the CCB meetings to evaluate local services and plan for enhancing collaboration.

CCB meetings are open to the public, and provide an opportunity to present a unified set of responses related to Employment First. Participants share common questions and themes, what is working well, and what could be improved to help people become and stay successfully employed. Self-advocates, families, and staff from Independent Living Centers also participate in the meetings.

### District of Columbia

The DC Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), both part of the Department on Disability Services (DDS), implemented a written protocol for making referrals and using resources across systems. Also, VR and the workforce development system are developing a unified intake application to facilitate co-enrollment and timely access to services.

New memoranda of understanding with DDS, DC

public schools, workforce development and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, facilitate an integrated approach to supporting young job seekers. DC is working to require DDA employment services providers to also become VR providers, which will facilitate a seamless experience.

Data reports indicate that a significant number of individuals with IDD are being served by VR and achieving positive outcomes. In fiscal year 2014, 230 individuals with IDD were served by VR, with 86 entering employment at average wages of \$11.09 per hour, working an average of 31 hours per week.

### Massachusetts

Massachusetts has made a commitment to the development of six regional employment collaboratives across the state. These collaboratives, whose mission is to improve competitive employment outcomes, are partnerships of cross-disability provider organizations, state agencies, workforce development entities, and employers. Through staff members who serve as employer liaisons, each collaborative engages in employer outreach to identify new opportunities and to streamline access to openings among partners. Each collaborative also helps establish and facilitates a job developers' network to share job leads.

### Delaware

To achieve the goals of a new Medicaid State Plan Amendment targeting youth with disabilities, Delaware's Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) used new legislation, regulations, legal proceedings, and media reports when talking with prospective service recipients, their families, and other interested stakeholders about the benefits of offering Pathways to Employment services to youth with disabilities.

### New Mexico

In January, Partners for Employment, a collaboration between DDSD, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the University of New Mexico,



held an all-day meeting with supported employment leaders to obtain feedback about future planning. At this meeting, providers expressed interest in having a safe place to network and share ideas. In response, the Supported Employment Local Leaders (SELL) concept was formed.

SELL meetings support providers by offering local technical assistance, training, or resources based on the consensus of the participants in attendance. Meetings are held in each of five DDS regions across the state. Local participants design the schedule and agenda. Benefits have been increased collaboration between IDD and VR agencies, local resource sharing, problem-solving, and interagency collaboration. Agencies that have not historically partnered with DDS have started to attend the meetings.

### **North Carolina**

MH/DD/SAS enhanced its infrastructure by hiring a program manager to oversee integrated employment initiatives and services for people with IDD. The new position increases the division's capacity to strategically align the state systems infrastructure with the services individuals and families are requesting, and to link with other populations supported across the Department of Health and Human Services, such as people with mental health or substance abuse needs. The program manager also allows the division to collaborate with partners engaged in Home and Community-Based Services, including local management entities and managed care organizations.

### **Oregon**

Leadership from DDS, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Oregon Department of Education, and the Oregon Council of Developmental Disabilities entered into a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on transition of students with disabilities to the workforce. This comprehensive MOU calls for collaboration in areas such as funding, data-sharing, outreach to

families, professional development, and service coordination.

### **Virginia**

DBHDS and the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) collaborated on joint guidance to assist case managers, providers, and VR counselors on how to use various funding sources throughout the course of services.

DBHDS and DARS conducted trainings across the state to share the information, answer questions about the importance of local collaborative partnerships, and support the systems to work together.

# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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

Staff from the Alabama Division of Developmental Disabilities/Department of Mental Health (MH/DD) and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) supported a new Alabama Developmental Disabilities Council initiative, Project GATE (Gaining Access to Employment). Developed as a pilot with potential for implementation statewide, Project GATE illustrates how to partner with a community business and sequence specific services between the IDD and VR systems. This leads to individuals gaining valuable experiences and, ideally, community-based employment.

Pilot sites provide on-site training, with job coaches used as needed to prepare people for jobs within the business, where they earn competitive wages and benefits. Ongoing follow-along can also be funded. For the majority of participating individuals, the pilot has led to employment within the partnering business. Project GATE is reinforcing how to maximize existing services, supports, and relationships to fulfill employment needs and goals.

### Arizona

The Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and Rehabilitation Services Administration/ Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) formalized performance expectations for staff of both agencies and finalized a new joint protocol. All division support coordinators, employment specialists, and VR staff are introduced to the revised operational protocol at regional "mixers."

Staff use these events to build positive working relationships between the agencies at the local level. Information sharing, eligibility, and the referral process are some of the areas that VR and the division will coordinate and collaborate on.

DDD added a new service: Transition to Employment. This is a curriculum-based service that provides a division member with IDD the individualized instruction, training, and supports to promote skill development for competitive employment. The service may also assist the person in obtaining unpaid work opportunities, such as volunteering or job shadowing.

### District of Columbia

DDS has prioritized an enhanced focus on employment in the individual support planning (ISP) process and in service delivery. Tools have been developed to assist service coordinators and service providers in guided conversations as part of the ISP process to support individuals on a pathway to employment, including training on how to do discovery, develop a positive personal profile, and complete a job search/community participation plan. Toolkits are posted on the DDA website.

The District has placed a strong emphasis on provider transformation, and is working with 12-day habilitation and employment readiness providers to move towards individualized community-based services that support a pathway to employment. Three providers also are receiving support from Office of Disability Employment Policy subject matter experts to support service transformation.

### Florida

APD analyzed and reviewed the findings of Adult Day Training services, which provide different levels of life skills development for adults with IDD. Job seekers receive information on volunteering, job exploration, accessing community resources, and self-advocacy, in settings that are appropriate to their age and cultural background. APD is also developing a pilot project for future implementation.

### Georgia

Georgia's advocacy community secured an increase in legislatively appropriated employment service and support funding for youth transitioning out of school. The funding increase allows 70 young adults to receive supported employment beginning July 1, an increase of 27% over last year's funding for 55 transitioning youth.

Twenty-five of the young adults funded in the last membership year are working in community jobs, and all are receiving support to find and maintain jobs in integrated employment.

Kennesaw State University has a long-standing, successful post-secondary education opportunity

## SERVICES AND SERVICE INNOVATIONS (continued)

for students with IDD. With Kennesaw at capacity, Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities provided implementation grants for two new inclusive programs at Columbus State University and East Georgia State College. Both of the new college programs launched their inaugural classes in the spring of 2015.

### Michigan

In Michigan, amendments are being considered for all 46 local community mental health services programs throughout the state to include language for the braiding of services and resources to support youth in transition from school to community. In the past year, the Department of Community Health in the Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration went through the process of gathering input and feedback on outdated manuals and worked to propose incorporating the 2011 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services definitions promoting integrated employment outcomes.

### Missouri

Transformation from facility-based employment to day services has been a major area of focus for DD. With the support of the SELN, DD is working with two state-operated day programs and several major private service providers on transformation from primarily facility-based services and group employment to individual employment.

In conjunction with these transformation efforts, DD is training service providers to assist individuals with community life engagement as part of individualized wraparound services and supports.

### New Mexico

The New Mexico DDSD recently launched the Work Experience Grant Program. Individuals who are interested in community employment are able to apply for grant funding in collaboration with their supported employment agency.

There are three design models for this program: Trial Work Opportunity, Community-Based Situational Assessment, and Microenterprise. The Work Experience Grant Program can cover funding for wages and workers' compensation insurance for individuals in the Trial Work Opportunity and Community-Based Situational Assessment models. The Microenterprise model covers business start-up costs that cannot be funded through other means.

### New York

The New York Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) established Pathway to Employment, a new person-centered employment planning and support service. Pathway assists individuals in developing pre-employment skills, engaging in integrated community vocational experiences, and developing a career plan. Through this service, people explore jobs in the community and take advantage of specialized employment supports once career goals and employment skills have been identified.

OPWDD is working to define required documentation for Pathway services, such as a discovery report and a career development report, and is determining whether an individual then uses the VR system or another OPWDD-funded service to secure employment.

### Oklahoma

DDS released a revised individual plan format and implementation guidelines for both residential and non-residential services to reflect an expanded employment section. The new individual plan process is being used for all home and community-based waiver services, and provider staff are being trained on implementation. This new section of the individual plan better illustrates using the planning process as a pathway to employment. It shows whether someone is working toward competitive, integrated employment or would like to pursue different career goals.

### Oregon

ODDS awarded \$2.57 million in transformation grants to 25 service provider agencies that offer facility-based employment or day services. These providers will receive training and technical assistance from two entities to help transform their organizational and program models to community-based, integrated employment services.

### South Dakota

DDD enhanced employment provider capacity and capability within the current provider system through the Person-Centered Employment Planning Guide. The guide combines SD's investment in person-centered thinking concepts with the commitment to discovering individual strengths and preferences. The overall goal is to assist South Dakotans with IDD to work in a fulfilling career, while ensuring that people have the supports they need for success.

Webinar training was conducted in January 2015. Since then, DDD has received several requests for more information and agency-specific trainings regarding use of the planning guide.



# ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



## 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.

### Florida

APD has continued to refine its online employment data management system, the Supported Employment Tracking System (SETS). A statewide assessment of SETS was performed in 2015 that included a review by each of the 14 regions, as well as data entry to keep the regions updated in the system.

SETS enables users to view individual job-seeker records for Employment Enhancement Project (EEP) services received, EEP allocations, and income generated through the EEP. (EEP provides opportunities for competitive employment to individuals on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) waiting list who want a job.) The data management system also provides five EEP reports for tracking allocations, outcomes, expenditures, number of people served, and incomes.

### Iowa

Iowa MHDS is piloting a methodology for individual employment outcomes data collection, and gathering baseline data from 20 employment service providers representing each of the 15 regions. The project is collaboration among stakeholders including the Center for Disabilities and Development, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment, the Governance Group, and the MHDS regions.

Data elements being collected are employment setting, hours worked, and gross earnings for each individual who had Medicaid-funded employment services in a given time-frame. Technical assistance will be available to providers, whose participation is voluntary. After data collection occurs, there will be a focus group to learn from and refine the process. A summary baseline outcomes report will be distributed next year.

### Maryland

In Maryland, a cross-systems team built consensus to support a new data collection and reporting process. DDA is the lead agency responsible for collecting and reporting information to the field.

DDA shared state and regional outcomes through online discussions in December 2014 and March 2015. Providers have received individual (agency-level) data reports with a comparison between their region and the entire state. These reports are driving decisions about how employment is defined in Maryland, and where and how to position resources to promote integrated employment outcomes.

This data work has also assisted DDA in leading efforts to shift the system focus from services to outcomes. Future work will address how to make the resulting information fully accessible to the public.

### Michigan

BHDDA continues working to streamline efforts to track the following key employment data outcomes in Michigan: the number of people employed, average wages, and average hours. The requirement will be considered for the 2016 fiscal year contract with the 46 community mental health services programs throughout the state.

### Missouri

DD designed a data-collection platform for evaluating employment outcomes, employment services, and day services. Data collected will be used internally to identify technical assistance needs and report on service utilization, and will be shared with the agency's administrative staff and the governor's office.

The goal of the data system is to ensure an accurate picture of individuals' employment status, as well as overall system progress in shifting from segregated services to integrated community employment across the state.





### New Jersey

DDD conducted reviews of the supported employment providers it funds, and provided ongoing technical assistance to these providers. The goals of these efforts were to assess the status of supported employment services, increase the quality of these services, build capacity to serve more individuals with IDD (including those with higher support needs), and prepare providers for the shift to the Medicaid-based fee-for-service system.

DDD also developed and began the testing phase of a new electronic case management system that includes data reporting related to employment. Information gathered will include employment status, type of employment, hours worked, wages, benefits, and employment-related services for each client who began using the system in summer 2015.

### New York

OPWDD has identified four strategic goals related to integrated employment, one of which is to improve job retention. Data being collected from supported employment providers contains information about retention by provider and region of the state, reason for job loss, and amount of time a person is unemployed. The data will be used to help provider agencies create additional strategies to improve retention.

OPWDD will talk with leadership from provider agencies about this data, including ways to improve its accuracy and integrity, how it is collected, and addressing lags in data reporting. This will improve OPWDD's ability to track successful employment outcomes, retention rates, and the overall quality of supported employment services.

### Oklahoma

DDS showed its commitment to continuous improvement through two new data-related goals: making outcome data public through increased distribution of reports, and reviewing the data collected by category to determine its accuracy and reliability. The cross-system employment workgroup met consistently

over the past year to discuss data currently available, new data to be collected, how DDS would be managing analysis, and possible distribution options.

These efforts further the goal of using data to determine the effectiveness of the DDS system, and determining if it is having a positive impact on people's lives. Making the data public demonstrates DDS's progress in these areas. DDS is also interested in breaking down data for use in new ways, such as determining service provision.

### Virginia

DBHDS, in partnership with its Employment First advisory group, developed a survey to collect outcome data, such as hours worked, wages, and length of employment. The new data augments current service delivery data to highlight the results of Virginia's employment service system investments. These two sources--service data and outcome data--provide a better picture of individuals' employment experiences and where changes need to be made.

The survey was sent to all private employment service organizations to collect basic information on individuals served, such as hourly wages, average hours worked, length of time at the current job, employer category, and age. DBHDS's five regions organized the data across the state. DBHDS staff produced and disseminated a report based on the survey results.

### Washington

WA DDA has focused planning efforts on increasing the number of individuals with high support needs who earn at least minimum wage. One path to achieving this goal has been identifying successful individuals and their employment pathways and supports by merging outcome data, individual characteristics, hours of support, and cost in a single analysis with SELN's assistance. The number of individuals with high support needs working above minimum wage increased from 409 in 2010 to 850 in 2015.



Taking the long view, the SELN project team assists states to fully recognize the role of work and wages for citizens with IDD, and the often-dramatic cultural shift needed to sustain new systems and outcomes. We are motivated by setting high expectations, preserving the accomplishments of the last few decades including landmark legislation for full community inclusion, and eliminating the barriers that still exist for citizens with IDD in achieving meaningful roles in their communities.

For some, an early or first job may meet all the criteria and lead to a long-term commitment. For others, certain experiences lead to many different jobs one may have never considered, carving a very different type of career path. Experiences leading to stronger financial means, learning new skills, developing relationships with co-workers, and making friends are just a few examples of growth that occurs when someone works.

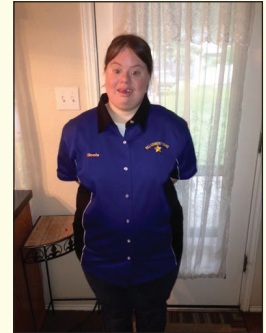
While employment “looks” different for every one of us, a consistent thread is that work plays a role in fulfilling individual needs, interests, and aspirations, with opportunities for greater economic security. This is a very different message for some individuals and families using the publicly-financed supports of the past. State systems that “get it” realize a new train has left the station and know to keep moving swiftly in order to keep pace with new expectations.

The SELN’s role has been to help state IDD systems keep the focus on integrated employment and helping individual citizens build economic self-sufficiency. Through clear goals and keeping the end in mind, many of the systems changes underway must be implemented gradually and have a very different focus from what was built fifty years ago. The traditional or legacy services are still valued by certain groups, and IDD systems across our country are juggling the balance of proactively building new opportunities while maintaining a deteriorating investment.

This report is a synthesis of how states are dealing with the multiple distractions to build the infrastructure needed for those seeking robust integrated employment options. Our work continues in support of the individuals and families seeking “real work for real pay.” We have made great strides in helping people live fulfilling lives, and we continue to endeavor to bring their hopes and dreams to fruition.

## NICOLE, TEXAS

Nicole works as an apparel associate at a Walmart Superstore. She started her position with a job coach but began working independently within a few weeks. Nicole’s supervisor says she is one of the most motivated and diligent employees in her department. Even though Amanda began her internship at Sanoh she found her permanent position at another industry. She overcame significant legal issues to be employed.



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

# SELN MEMBER STATE CONTACTS



Email and phone numbers for lead contacts are available at [www.SELN.org](http://www.SELN.org)

## **Alabama Department of Mental Health**

Byron White, SELN lead contact  
Courtney Tarver, Associate Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities

## **Arizona Department of Economic Security**

Linda Tasco, SELN lead contact  
Laura Love, Assistant Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

## **Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing**

Michele Craig, SELN lead contact  
Barbara Ramsey, Director, Division for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

## **Delaware Health and Social Services**

Marissa Catalon, SELN lead contact  
Jane Gallivan, Director, Developmental Disabilities Services

## **District of Columbia Department on Disability Services**

Erin Leveton, SELN lead contact  
Laura Nuss, Director

## **Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities\***

Meghan Murray, Director of community supports  
Barbara Palmer, Director

## **Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities**

Byron Sartin, SELN lead contact  
Dan Howell, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities

## **Hawaii Department of Health**

Maria Merry, SELN lead contact  
Mary Brogan, Chief, Developmental Disabilities Division

## **Iowa Department of Human Services**

Lin Nibbelink, SELN lead contact  
Rick Shults, Division Administrator, Mental Health and Disability Services

## **Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services**

Margaret Van Gelder, SELN lead contact  
Elin Howe, Commissioner

## **Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration**

Karen Lee, SELN lead contact  
Bernie Simons, Deputy Secretary for Developmental Disabilities

## **Michigan Department of Community Health**

Joe Longcor, SELN lead contact  
Lynda Zeller, Deputy Director, Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration

## **Minnesota Department of Human Services**

Dawn Bacon, SELN lead contact  
Alex Bartolic, Director, Disability Services Division

## **Missouri Department of Mental Health**

Duane Shumate, SELN lead contact  
Valerie Huhn, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

## **Montana Public Health & Human Services\***

Kelly McNurlin, Individualized Services coordinator  
Novelene Martin, Bureau Chief, Developmental Disabilities Program

# SELN MEMBER STATE CONTACTS



## **New Jersey Department of Human Services**

Jennifer Joyce, SELN lead contact  
Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities

## **New Mexico Department of Health**

Carrie Roberts, SELN lead contact  
Cathy Stevenson, Director, Developmental Disabilities Supports

## **New York Office for People with Developmental Disabilities**

Ceylane Meyers-Ruff, SELN lead contact  
Kerry Delaney, Acting Commissioner

## **Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division**

Rosie Melarkey, SELN lead contact  
Jane Gruner, Administrator

## **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

Joshua Strasburg, SELN lead contact  
Courtney Cantrell, Interim Director, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services

## **Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities**

Stacy Collins, SELN lead contact  
John Martin, Director

## **Oklahoma Department of Human Services**

Regina Chace, SELN lead contact  
JoAnne Goin, Division Administrator, Developmental Disabilities Services

## **Oregon Department of Human Services**

Mike Maley, SELN lead contact  
Lilia Teninty, Director, Developmental Disability Services

## **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services**

Diane Cashman, SELN lead contact  
Nancy Thaler, Deputy Secretary, Office of Developmental Programs

## **Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals**

Andrew McQuaide, SELN lead contact  
Maria Montanaro, Director, Department of Behavioral Healthcare

## **South Dakota Department of Human Services**

Julie Hand, SELN lead contact  
Dan Lusk, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

## **Texas Aging and Disability Services**

Donnie Wilson, SELN lead contact  
Donna Jessee, Director, Center for Policy and Innovation

## **Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services**

Adam Sass, SELN lead contact  
Connie Cochran, Assistant Commissioner for Developmental Services

## **Washington Social and Health Services**

Terry Redmon, SELN lead contact  
Evelyn Perez, Assistant Secretary, Developmental Disabilities Services Administration

**\*No longer active members of the SELN**



**Thanks to our many collaborators and  
presenters from across the nation, especially:**

Molly Boyle  
Donna Bonessi  
Kim Buckman  
Regina Chace  
Daria Domin  
Terri Egnor  
Mary Lee Fay  
Sheila Fesko  
Jade Gingerich  
Julie Hand  
Scott Harrington  
Debra Hart  
Amy Hewitt  
Cyndi Johns  
Janet LaBreck  
Ralph Lollar  
Danielle Lyons  
Trieste Kennedy  
Rick Kugler  
Dan Lusk  
Rose McAllister  
Rosie Melarkey  
SueAnn Morrow  
KD Munson  
Derek Nord  
Heather Norton  
Maria Paiewonsky  
Sheli Reynolds  
Adam Sass  
Emma Shouse  
Duane Shumate  
Sue Swenson  
Helen Terza  
Paul Wehman  
Cate Weir  
Darla Wilkerson  
Karen Wolfe

The SELN would like to extend a special thank you to the agencies and organizations that shared success stories: Alabama APSE, Real Work Stories at the Institute of Community Inclusion, the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council, and Bluebonnet Trails Community Services.

The SELN Project Team extends its heartfelt appreciation to Sheila Johnson, Anya Weber and David Temelini for their tireless efforts to assure this report arrived on time for your reading enjoyment.

**SELN Project Managers**

Suzanne Freeze  
suzanne.freeze@umb.edu  
617.287.4395

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte  
rklizotte@nasddds.org  
703.683.4202

**SELN Project Team Members**

**ICI/UMass Boston**

Jane Boone  
John Butterworth  
Allison Cohen Hall  
David Hoff  
Sheila Johnson  
Melanie Jordan  
William Kiernan  
John Kramer  
Nancy Nickolaus  
Cindy Thomas  
Jean Winsor

**NASDDDS**

Barb Brent  
Mary Lee Fay  
Nancy Thaler  
Jeanine Zlockie

**ICI Support Team**

Zohal Atif--fiscal administration  
Quinn Barbour--outreach, social media  
Jeff Coburn--online technology support  
Karen Flippo--policy, training  
Paul Foos--online technology support  
Pam McFarland--survey development  
Alberto Migliore--research  
Julie Reposa--web design, content strategy  
Frank A. Smith--data analysis  
David Temelini--marketing strategy, design  
Anya Weber--copyediting, marketing strategy

**NASDDDS Support Team**

Dan Berland--federal policy technical assistance  
Robin Cooper-- Medicaid policy & technical assistance  
Nicole Orellana--administrative service  
Megan Rose--fiscal administration  
Karol Snyder--administrative service  
Mary Sowers-- special projects

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

