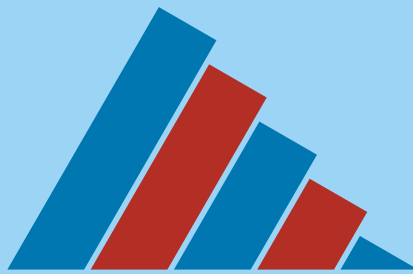


Report of State Initiatives and Activities to Improve Integrated Employment Outcomes

State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)
Accomplishments Report

MEMBERSHIP YEAR 2013–2014





The SELN project team dedicates this year's report to the
memory of our friend and colleague Bob Hagearty.

Enjoy every sandwich.

—Bob Hagearty



A YEAR OF WORDS

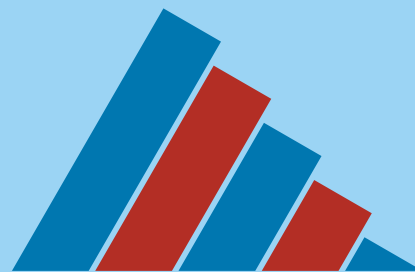
In one word, how would you describe the past year's work? We asked member states this question, and the responses were creative, thoughtful, and honest. Our list is on the cover and you will also see the words and explanations sprinkled throughout the report.

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

State Employment Leadership Network Accomplishments Report 2013-2014



Contents

From the Project Managers	1
About the SELN.....	2
What Does Employment Really Mean?.....	3
Conversations of Significance	4
Special Series	7
The Employment Framework	10
2013 Annual Meeting	11
Elements of a High Performing Employment System	14
Leadership	14
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	22
From Insight to Action.....	23
SELN State Contacts	24
SELN Project Team.....	27

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For the past eight years, the SELN has focused on the intersection of innovative ideas and strategic implementation. Every day, SELN states improve employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This report highlights the developments, achievements, and opportunities occurring in SELN states.

The SELN has brought an increased focus to integrated employment activities across the country. As a result, SELN states are seeing encouraging developments and accomplishments, as well as increased understanding and buy-in from leaders, agency partners, and individuals and families.

We still have much work to do together. Earlier this decade, very few public conversations were occurring to test why the service and outcome data reflected such a different story from that which people said they wanted: “real jobs for real pay.” Even today, many state, regional, and local governments struggle to see systems change take hold.

States find conflict between new and old systems, confusion on the definition of integrated employment, and unintended movement back to non-work day program/segregated services. The majority of individuals with IDD live with family members, and face increasing economic challenges. Youth with disabilities are still graduating without jobs or career preparedness. Individuals and families strive to use complex publicly funded systems to help them earn a living and live a good life.

In the face of these challenges, the SELN offers direction, coaching, and success strategies. Our network supports the system structures needed to assist more individuals to secure jobs in the general workforce, and to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency.

We hope you enjoy reading this report as much as we have enjoyed looking back over all the important work taking place. We invited you to join us in the movement supporting people with IDD to find meaningful work and economic freedom. Get in the game at your level of influence, whatever it may be!

Key takeaways from the past year:

- ▶ Remember history as we create the future; the deficits of our institutional past must not be repeated
- ▶ Strengthen the competency and capacity of those who work with people
- ▶ Prioritize employment as the expected outcome of public funding
- ▶ Support and engage families, including self-advocates and siblings--they are our backbone
- ▶ Find our champions and highlight their successes and activities noted throughout this report.

Suzanne Freeze, ICI

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS

ABOUT US



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

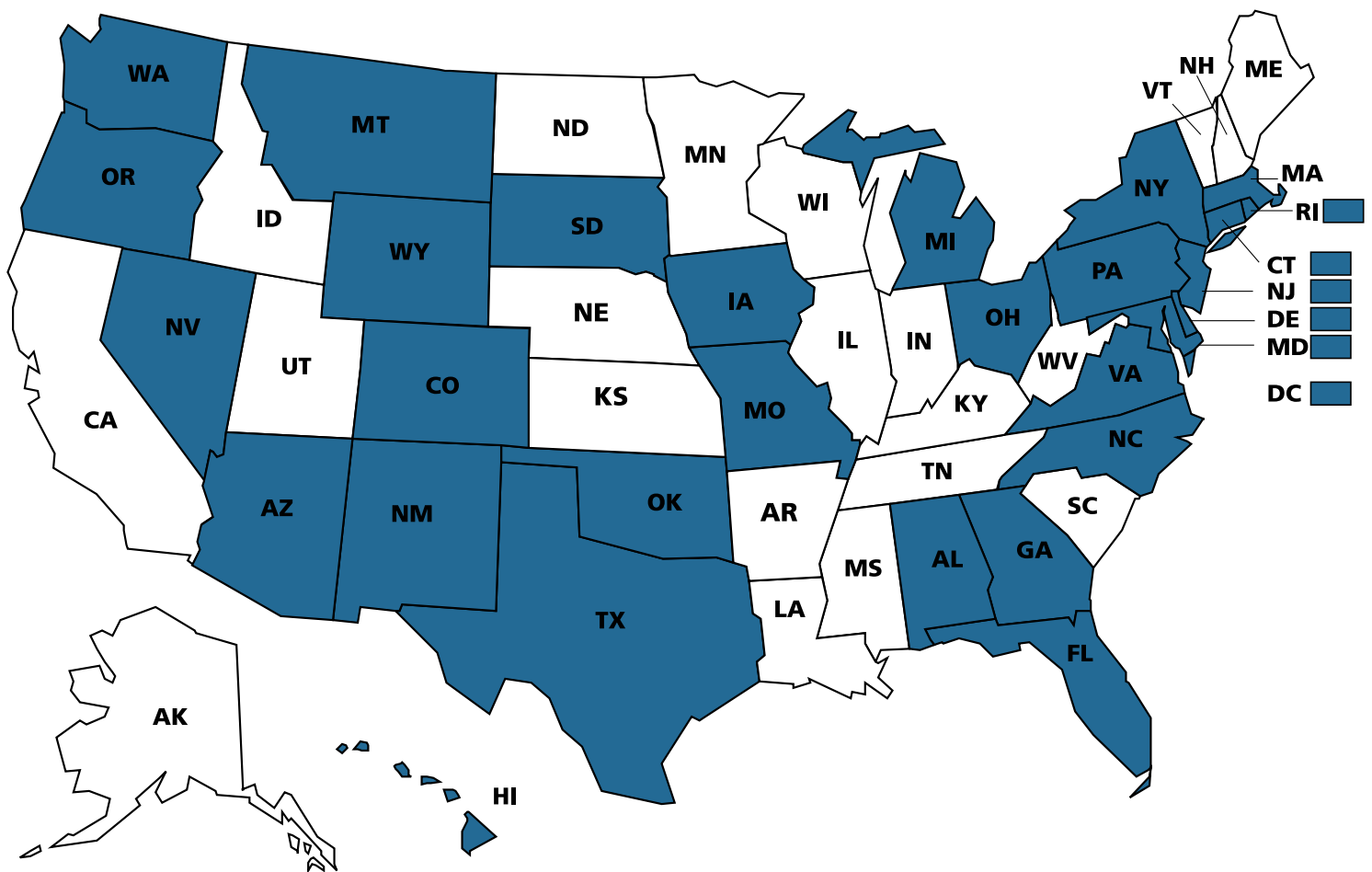
SELN members meet regularly to connect, collaborate, and share ideas across state lines and system boundaries. State agency staff build cross-community support for pressing employment-related

issues and policies at the state and federal levels.

States commit to work together and to analyze key elements in their systems to improve the integrated employment outcomes for their citizens with IDD.

During the membership year, which runs July 1 to June 30, each state focuses on a customized workplan unique to its circumstances.

The 2013–2014 membership year concluded with 30 member states.



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

WHAT DOES EMPLOYMENT REALLY MEAN?



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 developmental disability 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. The business is located within the community, and is not owned or managed by the support organization (or provider).

In these integrated employment settings, 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 shows that individuals with disabilities want to work in the community alongside their 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. Therefore, each person receiving public funding can and should be supported to explore integrated employment.

Through our work, the SELN emphasizes employment in the general workforce. Competitive jobs 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 are invested in making it happen. Our analyses, recommendations, and dialogue with our partner states all support this view.

IT WAS A YEAR OF EFFICACY

“In the past year, we invested time in exploring the effectiveness of practices, policies, and collaboration and how strategies for continuous improvement are ensuring individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to actualize their employment desires.”

IT WAS A YEAR OF BEGINNINGS

“We are at the beginning of many changes that involve employment. While we have made progress over the past year, there is still a lot of work to be done, and our developmental disabilities department is prepared to undertake more.

Also, supporting local DDD and DVR staff to work collaboratively, even on an individual case basis.”



Opportunities for dialogue are available throughout the membership year in the form of 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. Members identify their individual and collective interests and in response, the SELN project team provides activities and products to address these areas of focus and concerns. What follows is a summary of the 2013–2014 activity areas.

Network Meetings 2013–2014

Monthly meetings provide SELN members with routine opportunities for networking and 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. The 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 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:

- Strategies for collaborative leadership
- Capacity-building and the role of case managers and service/support coordinators
- Funding realignment
- Community-based non-work
- Pro-employment culture
- "Let's Get to Work" project
- Supporting individuals with disabilities and their development

Funding Workgroup

This discussion group provides member states an opportunity to focus exclusively on the critical role of funding methodologies used to support employment service and outcomes. States discussed the current variability across the country in the payment rates and funding methodologies for integrated employment, and the ways in which rates and methodologies may impede or support integrated employment outcomes.

States were coached that there is not a "correct rate" to pay for integrated employment services. Instead, funding rates and methodologies must be developed as a component of systemic efforts to use all available state resources, including dollar resources, to support integrated employment as the priority service.

A SELN funding toolkit is in development as a result of the workgroup's efforts. The toolkit will provide guidance and offer a series of steps to prepare states for more in-depth funding-related discussions.

The workgroup met six times in 2013-2014 and fifteen states participated.

Questions explored during discussion included:

- What is the most profitable service for providers to deliver?
- Are non-integrated employment services funded as supplements to integrated employment or are they funded as unique service options?
- What opportunity does having different rates across funding sources offer providers?
- Does the current rate structure provide an incentive to address employment as a priority outcome of day and employment services?
- Are current allocation levels based on need and what conflicts arise when people make resource-based decisions during defined service periods?
- What information can and should be shared with counterparts working with a state's Medicaid services to support funding improvements?



Data Users Workgroup

The Data Users group focuses on increasing each state's strategic access to and use of available service and outcome data. Discussions and activities are based on examples of data work and questions gathered from member states. The SELN Project Team routinely recommends and coaches states in developing data systems that are simple, focused on outcomes in addition to services, provide individual-level data, and include a strategy for sharing and using the collected data with a wide range of partners.

Robust data systems reinforce the importance of system-wide accountabilities and measuring progress towards goals. Nationally, despite many employers hiring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, despite the need for people to get and keep good jobs, despite our country's urgent need for a capable workforce, it is not yet a commonly held belief that it is possible for everyone to work. The data reflects this lack of expectation that everyone is employable.

The workgroup held four discussions in 2013-2014 and nineteen states participated.

Discussion sessions focus on specific data-related issues impacting state intellectual and developmental disability systems. Staff from SELN states shared their experiences planning and conducting state data-related activity.

Takeaways

Decisions must be made and states seek guidance on topics such as:

Variables and outcomes associated with each type of employment: Hours, wages, benefits, industry or occupation, retention or consistency over time, new jobs

Parameters of collection: Frequency, target population, format, data entry, stand alone system or integrated in existing MIS systems, data collection tool

Provided by: case management records/reported by service coordinators, collect as part of six-month reviews or individual service plan (ISP)/reported by service coordinators, collect from providers with billing data, collect in a survey of providers, collect in a survey of service coordinators, incorporate in an annual eligibility screening process, use quarterly wage data from the unemployment insurance system as a source of data, incorporate in a quality assurance/quality management system)

Identify/develop data management infrastructure: data screening, personnel, equipment or supplies, establish cross walk with demographic data, internal or contracted, whether to pilot or not, develop data display and reporting options, implement statewide or in target programs streams

Member states identified top three strategic data planning goals:

- Benchmarking employment services and employment outcomes indicators
- Relating program inputs (services) to program outputs (employment outcomes)
- Using data to influence legislators and policymakers

IT WAS A YEAR OF TRANSITION

"There are many changes happening related to employment for people with developmental disabilities. There is a greater focus on outcomes, goal setting, building the capacity of providers, and creating new services that will enable individuals to achieve their employment goals."



Building Capacity and the Role of Case Managers Workgroup

Member states were invited to three online discussions on the critical role case managers and service/support coordinators play in supporting nimble teams, listening to families and individuals seeking supports, facilitating systems change, and improving integrated employment outcomes. Participants varied from state-level directors to field professionals and family members.

Takeaways

The case manager or service/support coordinator's role is integral and instrumental in moving the employment agenda forward. Actions that support employment outcomes are often in addition to many other facets of their current duties, and these roles have evolved and expanded over the last ten years.

Meeting daily compliance requirements, managing large caseloads, and addressing competing challenges often limit the time available for case managers to work with the individual to build skills, conduct job searches, or plan career paths.

IT WAS A **WILD** YEAR

"It was a year of learning, expanding contacts, developing drafts, getting on the page. It was an exciting year!"

What SELN Members Had to Say

"Critical analytical thinking and problem solving is important so perceived barriers can be worked through before they become entrenched and alternative solutions can be explored."

--EMPLOYMENT FIRST COORDINATOR, OREGON

"In our state, employment for individuals with IDD seems to be a barrier in developing opportunities due to not having professionals understanding the true concept of supported employment."

--SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT COORDINATOR, GEORGIA

"I feel the success of these programs is the complementary working relationship between the support coordinator and the job coach. While there may be some overlap in what each brings to the person with a disability, each professional plays distinctive and critical roles in the carrying out the goal of the individual securing employment."

--CASE MANAGER, VIRGINIA

"We have a DDD Self-Advisory Group that meets monthly. This group was designed to ensure communication about the Division's activities with the people who receive the services and obtain their feedback. An unexpected but pleasant outcome has been that the people participating in this group share their employment experiences--good and challenging."

--SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT COORDINATOR, CO

"Our state is in the very early stages of talking about employment as an expectation and how discussion might look. One of our goals is to collaborate with the Birth to Three program, educators, Family Support Coordinators, and other transition services to ensure that the culture begins to shift and families are considering what supports their child/family member might need to be employed or have a career down the road."

--EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM SPECIALIST, SOUTH DAKOTA



State systems change is not only about policy, funding, rates, and data collection. It is about people helping people. SELN special series give members the opportunity to explore what is happening at the ground level. Each year SELN members request the special topics, and the project team coordinates multiple online events with area experts, individuals with IDD, and family members.

Supporting Individuals with Criminal Backgrounds in Employment

The Supporting Individuals with Criminal Backgrounds in Employment series was designed to increase the public's understanding of the problems people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) encounter after engagement with the criminal justice system. This year's sessions focused on (1) community resources, (2) people with developmental disabilities and substance abuse disorders seeking employment, and (3) partnerships between IDD field professionals and probation and parole officers.

What SELN Members Had to Say

83% felt more confident and competent supporting an individual engaged in the criminal justice system

66% started discussions at their agency on the topic

The Role of Family Involvement in Employment

Families play a vital role in ensuring employment is part of their loved one's future. Developmental disabilities agencies can play a significant role in establishing employment expectations, but all systems must be in sync to minimize competing, and sometimes contradictory, messaging to families.

Participants in this four-part series engaged in discussions about creating opportunities for a productive relationship between families and service systems, and making sure shared goals are routinely communicated.

A six-month follow up survey revealed that participants are feeling more confident and taking action.

63% of participants said they felt more confident and competent supporting people with challenging issues.

32% spoke with people with IDD and their families about family engagement.

32% of respondents re-focused or expanded upon family engagement efforts already in place.

362 people participated in the four sessions

Takeaways

Human services system staff, specifically those from the IDD system who know an individual well, can be a valuable resource to aid in successful recovery for addicts. They can also support re-entry for individuals with a criminal history or other exposure to the criminal justice (CJ) system.

Early engagement with an individual, such as at the point of arrest, will assist in diverting the individual away from further involvement the CJ system, and may keep the individual from seeing probation or serving jail time, eliminating the need for parole.

"Thanks to the most recent information shared in the online series, I have been able to refocus my efforts to assist my daughter. Further, this information has been shared with other families to encourage them to look to employment for their loved ones."

--DIANE, PARENT

"After the session, I took part in transition groups for students entering adulthood and attended advocacy groups with parents of young children with intellectual and developmental disabilities to speak to them about their children's future."

--CHARLES, DIRECT SERVICE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

"From this webinar series, I learned that not only do we need to listen to families, we need to act on what they say."

--ROSEMARIE, PROJECT MANAGER

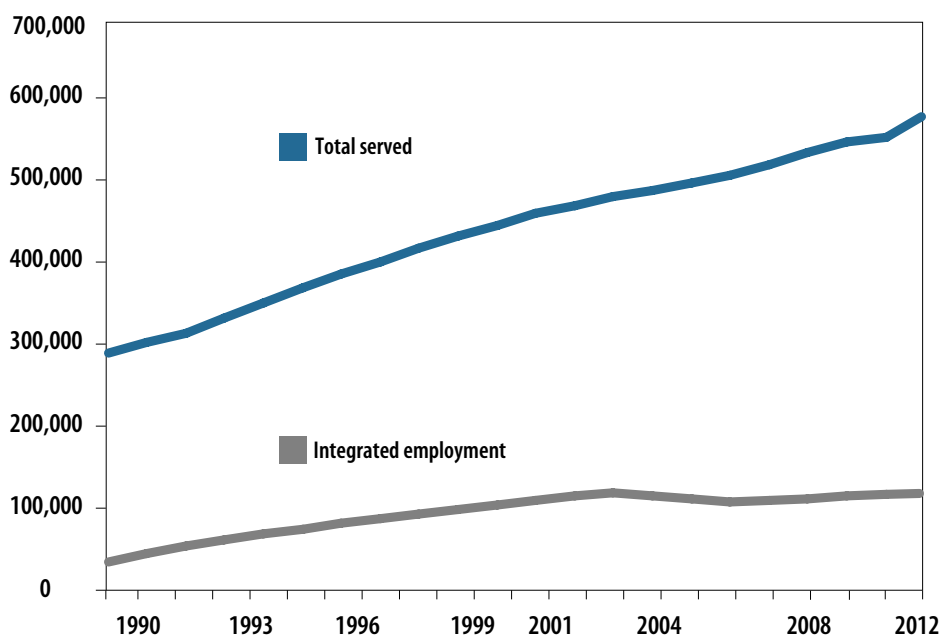
NETWORK IMPACT: WHAT THE DATA TRENDS SHOW



TREND 1 States continue to fund an increase in overall day and employment services more rapidly than integrated employment services.

As shown in chart 1, the number of individuals who participate in any employment or day supports has increased steadily since the 1980s (total served), reaching an estimated 570,400 in 2011. Participation in integrated employment services, however, has not grown at the same rate and, beginning in 2001, national growth of integrated employment participation began to level off or decrease.

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



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies 2012

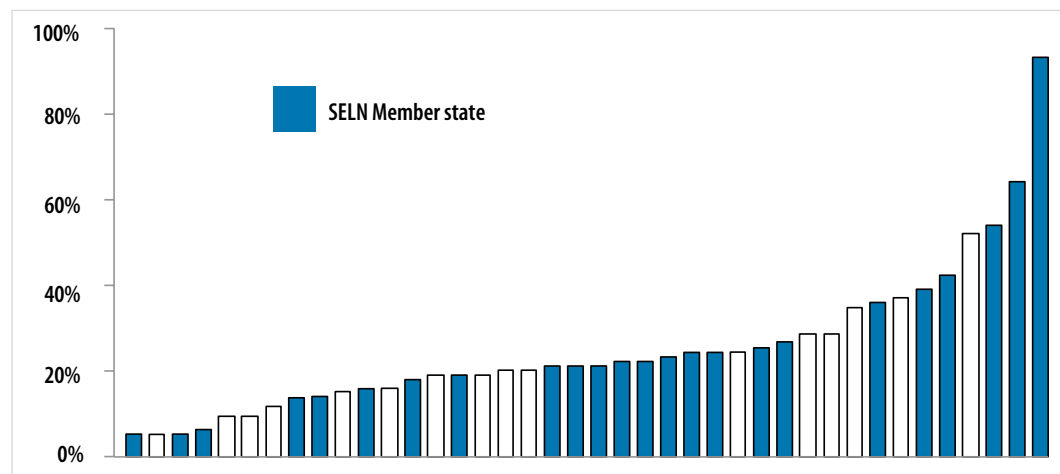
States are experiencing these results because of specific resource and strategy decisions. To ensure increases in integrated, individualized employment, new practices, policies and partnerships are needed. A cultural and generational shift must occur to reflect the new expectations for employment in our publicly funded systems.

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

TREND 2 States across the country represent a diverse set of experiences.

Despite the long-term national reliance on day supports, an increasing number of states continue to address integrated employment as a priority outcome. These states provide models for policy, strategy, and the management of services. While most states are only able to report service data and not outcome data, much

Chart 2: Percentage of individuals receiving employment services



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies 2012

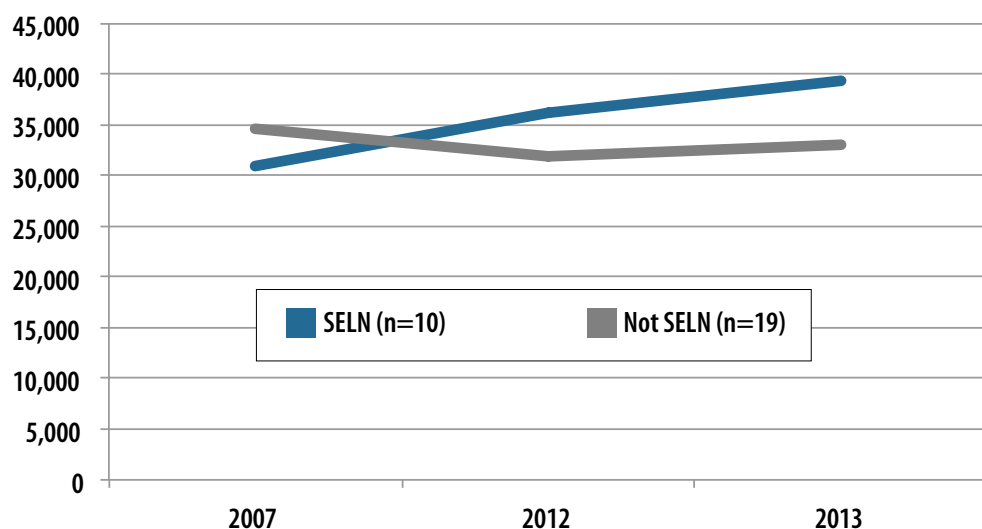
can be learned from the range of investments. Chart 2 illustrates the range of individuals receiving employment services across states. The bars represent the different percentages of individuals receiving employment services by reporting states.* The blue bars represent state members of the SELN (as of June 30, 2013).



TREND 3

Number in integrated employment (2007-2013)

The change process is slow and often difficult to gauge in public systems due to the nature of the work, turnover at all levels of organizations and often-limited ability to measure results. Trend 3 shows change over three data points and includes: states with complete* data for 2007, 2012, 2013, and were a member of the SELN at least in 2011 and 2012. The blue line indicates a 27% increase in the number of people receiving integrated employment services in SELN member states compared to a slight decrease in the number of people receiving integrated employment services in states that are not SELN members.



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies 2012
Complete data for 2007, 2012, 2013. SELN (Member in at least 2011 and 2012)

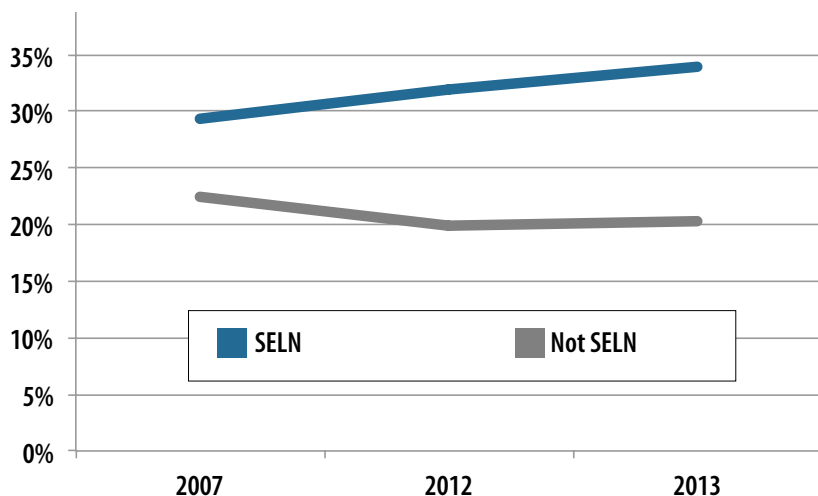
Key takeaways:

- ▶ Systems must establish a priority for employment at all levels.
- ▶ States utilizing systems change resources are seeing progress.
- ▶ These trend charts provide a backdrop for understanding the impact of the state activities noted throughout this report.

TREND 4

Percent in integrated employment (mean of the states, 2007-2013)

Similarly, Trend 4 chart reports the percent in integrated employment services by state for 2007, 2012, and 2013. This reflects the extent to which participation in integrated employment is changing as a percent of all individuals who receive a day service. The percent increased on average from 29% to 34% for SELN member states. This suggests growth based on the result of increased investment in integrated employment outcomes. The percent in integrated employment declined slightly for states that are not SELN members.



* "Complete" data means that data was submitted for each year to the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services by the time of publication. Data collection for 2013 was still in process at the time of publication.

Key takeaway:

While participation in integrated employment services is not an exact measure of the number of people actually working, service utilization is a useful indicator of employment exposure and experience and closely tracks employment participation.

Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies 2012

Complete data for 2007, 2012, 2013. SELN (Member in at least 2011 and 2012)



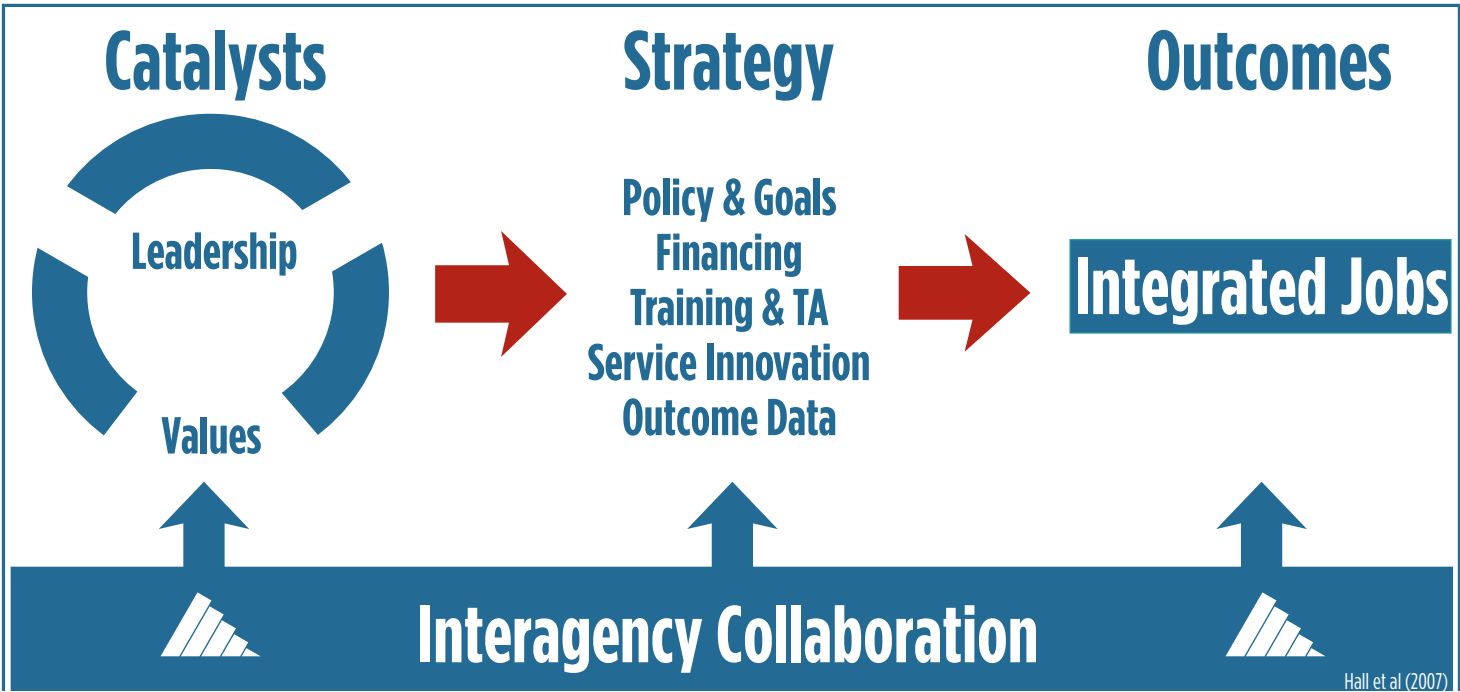
SELN member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key partners to participate in employment-related discussions and workgroups. The objective is to assist each state in determining a course of action that will improve employment outcomes among people receiving supports.

A direct member benefit is access to guidance that can lead states to a better understanding of priorities while

setting that course. The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, guides the SELN's strategy for system improvements. The Framework sets an organizational tone for capturing the critical aspects of systems change in states. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

Elements of a High-Performing Employment System

This graphic demonstrates the factors that, when working together, can lead to better integrated employment outcomes. It is the dynamic interplay of all the elements that can lead to long-term systems change.





Staying Focused in the Face of Competing Forces: A Gathering to Build Leadership, System Capacity and Influence

At our annual meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, participants engaged with their peers about the daily work being done to balance customer needs and the public resources. States discovered that they face similar challenges: obtaining good data, building provider capacity, writing service definitions, and identifying appropriate rates. Conversations at the meeting laid the groundwork for new activities that can help advance the employment agenda.

The meeting's graphic facilitator, Tim Corey, captured the SELN member comments to create a snapshot of the year's past work and a vision of the future. The visual is included in this report to emphasize how fluid and impressive systems change work is, and to offer an alternative representation of our work. Throughout this report the essential elements of a high-performing system are used to capture states' activities.

SELN member states work to decipher the needed strategy to build a culture of employment. Choice is often noted as an area of conflict in states and systems wrestle with how to strike a balance between individual's choice and responsibility. The choice discussion should be about a choice of jobs, a choice of career path, and choices that relate back to the importance of work or post-secondary education in a person's life.

SELN colleagues work to ensure the integrity of each member state's systems change efforts. Seeing each person's life as one complete picture, including home, work, and community, is essential for systems change activities to be cohesive, effective, and long lasting.

Here's what members had to say about the SELN at the annual meeting:

"I appreciated the emphasis on personal leadership, as it seemed as if some participants feel that they cannot really impact their statewide systems while others are very empowered and are doing amazing changes. I think the difference is leadership, so keeping this as a focus was very helpful!"

"I learned that we have a shared vision and common challenges. Learning, connecting, and implementing effective strategies from one another is simply empowering and hopeful!"

"It appears that we all have similar challenges: obtaining good data, provider capacity, service definitions, and rates. It will be beneficial once the Division is able to hire a dedicated person for employment (which is already in the works)."

"We must address the gaps in a planned, timely manner that truly addresses the needs of individuals. Helping the individual find not only a job, but also a job with enough hours or other desired/quality activities, is a key to moving through this system change."

IT WAS A

FOUNDATIONAL YEAR

"Much of this year's effort has been on making changes to basic systems to generate and sustain employment-systems change and ongoing outcome improvements."



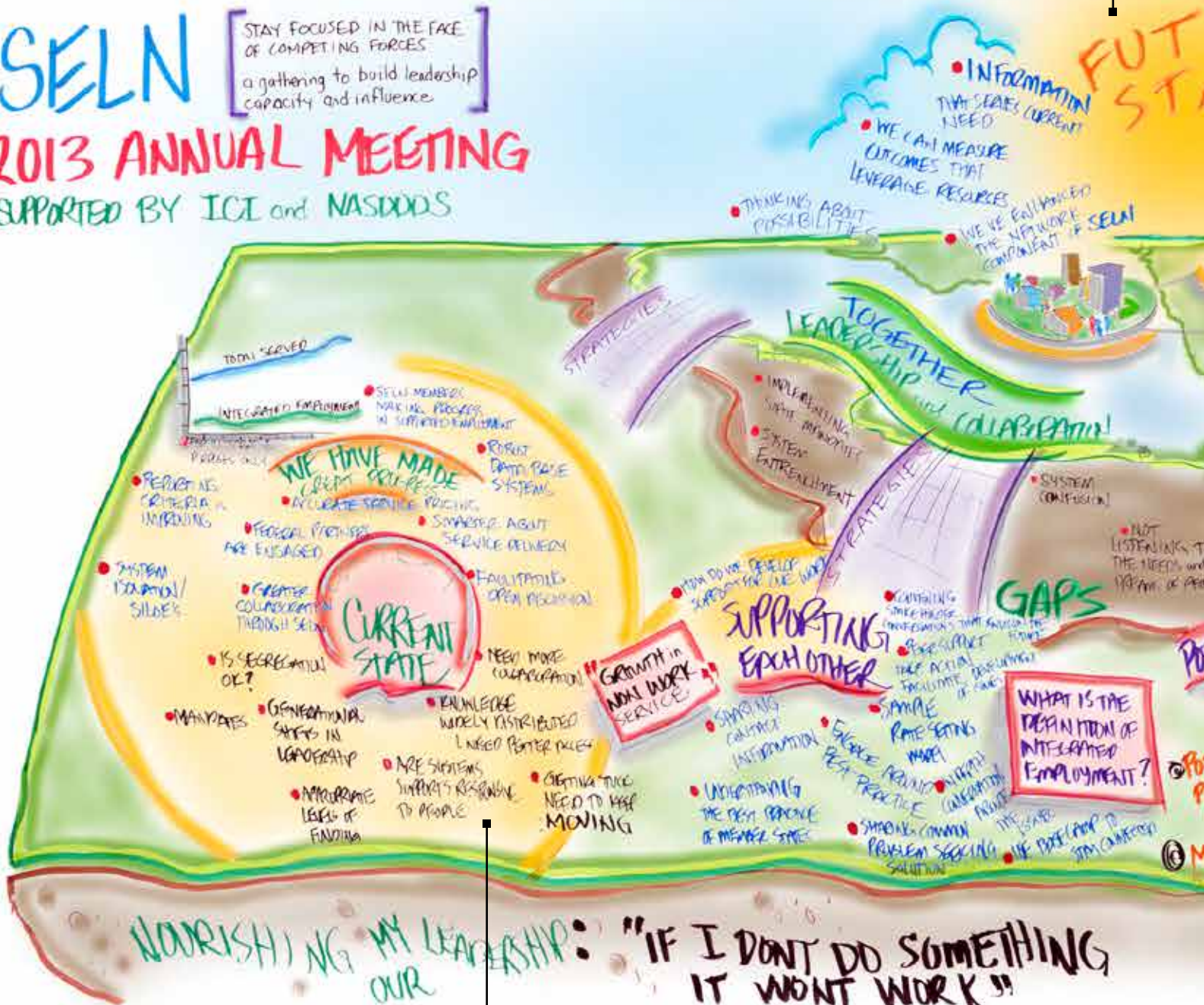
How well do we communicate features of the “future state” for others to relate to?

SELN

[STAY FOCUSED IN THE FACE OF COMPETING FORCES
a gathering to build leadership capacity and influence]

2013 ANNUAL MEETING

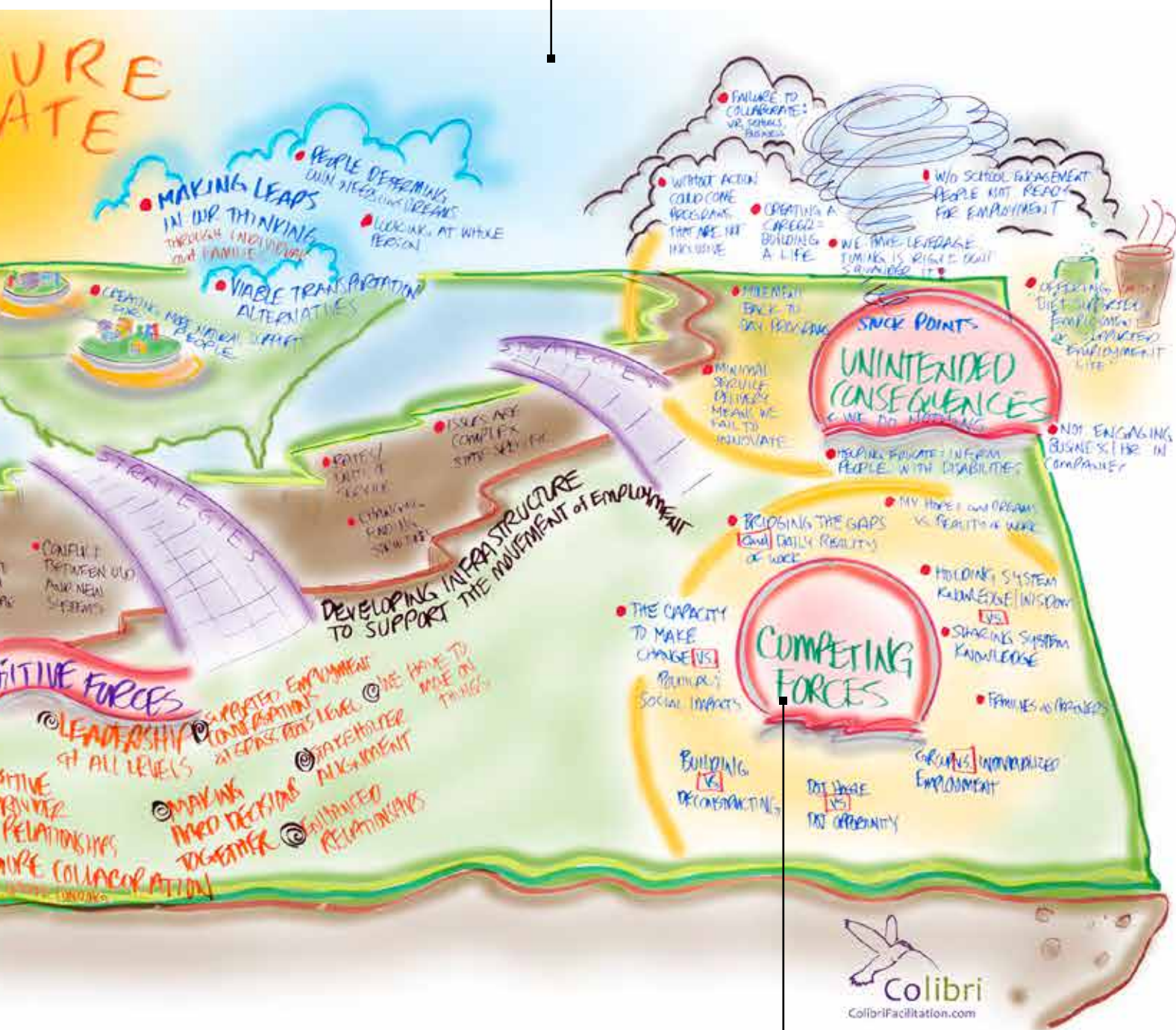
SUPPORTED BY ICI and NASDDDS



How do our systems currently make it difficult for integrated employment to be the outcome of funded supports?



What are the most powerful obstacles to integrated employment and how do we overcome them?



How do we nourish our work in the face of competing forces?

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.

Developments

- Stakeholder leadership at all levels
- Conversations grassroots level
- Alignment amongst stakeholders

Opportunities

- Generational shifts in leadership

Challenges

- Generational shifts in leadership
- Youth graduating without school involvement and education leadership
- Inconsistent messaging about expectations and outcomes

Massachusetts

In partnership with key stakeholders, the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services developed a comprehensive plan, "Blueprint for Success: Employing Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Massachusetts." The goal of the blueprint is to close sheltered workshops by June 2015 and to assist individuals to move to integrated employment earning minimum wage or higher, and/or to inclusion in meaningful community experiences through community-based day support programs.

Michigan

Through an executive order and with the lieutenant governor's leadership, employment is highlighted in the State of Michigan Mental Health and Wellness Commission 2013 Report, including a recommendation that all individual person-centered plans include employment objectives for those seeking a job. The Michigan Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration leadership continues to encourage competitive, integrated work as the optimal outcome for individuals, while also recognizing the value of personal choice.

Nevada

Under the leadership of the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services formed an ad hoc employment committee to write a position statement on integrated employment: "Changing Nevada's Employment Landscape: Increasing Integrated Employment Outcomes for Nevadans with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities." The document shows elected officials that there is consensus across key systems and partners on integrated employment among state agencies. As a result of focused efforts over the last four years, the governor issued an executive order establishing a taskforce on integrated employment.

Arizona

The Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) continues its leadership role in a broadly based statewide partnership working toward a consistent Employment First approach. Stakeholder buy-in has been prioritized. Over three hundred participants shared ideas and feedback at community forums and webinars held throughout the state. The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council provided start up funding for these statewide grassroots efforts.

District of Columbia

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) exhibited strong leadership in its commitment to Employment First for people seeking services. This commitment was shown last year by DDA's substantial investment of funding and staff time to capacity and partnership-building, and extensive training and technical assistance to support systems-change efforts. A broad-based cross-disability public-private Employment First leadership team meets monthly to guide strategic approaches to implementing Employment First for youth/adults with disabilities.

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.

Developments

- More states issuing policy guidance
- More efforts to renew outdated policies and goals

Opportunities

- Ideal time for policy activities with key partners
- Increase in understanding of expectations across systems

Challenges

- Inconsistent definitions of integrated employment
- Non-work day program/segregated services reappearing
- Conflict between old and new systems and policies

transitioning out of high school with a desire to work in the community.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities is in the process of a complete system reform, including transitioning from a contract-based model of provider reimbursement to a Medicaid-based, fee-for-service (FFS) model; the system-wide shift to FFS is expected to take place in July 2015. Under the new system, adults seeking division-funded services, including employment services, must be enrolled on one of two Medicaid waiver programs. One key activity is development of a new service plan that indicates an individual's path to employment, a written explanation when someone is not pursuing employment, and information about how to address barriers for unemployed individuals or those who are not receiving employment services.

Hawaii

The Hawaii Developmental Disabilities Division presented the draft Employment First policy to Hawaii's Self-Advocacy Advisory Council for review and input by its members. The members provided key recommendations that the department will incorporate into subsequent revisions of the policy.

Montana

The new Montana Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) Medicaid waiver includes work and day services, and makes it possible to collect outcome data on individuals' hours, wages, and (work) location. DDP collaboratively developed a new Supports for Community Working and Living waiver (effective October 2014). This is an all self-directed waiver offering two options: Agency with Choice and Employer Authority. This new waiver is capped at \$20,000 annually, and screening priority is given to individuals

Nevada

Collaboration between Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services, the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED), the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), and State Developmental Services continued with the Customized Employment Project. This braided funding strategy is person-centered, and develops new positions in Nevada businesses based on job seekers' strengths, interests, and skills. BVR provided funding for job development and the NCED provided job creation/development services, while the state IDD agency identified the individuals to be served and provided ongoing service coordination along with follow-up supports after case closure.



STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATING POLICIES (continued)

New York

New York's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities was involved in efforts to create a statewide employment plan to significantly increase competitive employment outcomes for individuals receiving publicly funded services. The plan includes several key activities, such as ending new enrollments in sheltered workshops, creating a six-year timeline to phase out funding for sheltered workshops, new professional development and training options for staff, and the collection and use of service and outcome data.

Oregon

As a renewing SELN member, the Oregon Developmental Disability Services (DDS) team completed the strategic employment assessment process, including resource evaluation and a site visit to evaluate current efforts and realign resources for future activities. DDS is involved in major systems change work, and is supporting a multitude of activities toward Oregon's Employment First goals. These activities include building community capacity and supporting local Employment First leadership teams, increasing the number of employment specialists working in the field through core competency-based training, and promoting leadership among provider agencies by implementing an Oregon Employment Learning Network.

Wyoming

Wyoming Behavioral Health Division (BHD) has invested in major Medicaid waiver redesign for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As the state generates a cost savings from the redesign, more people on the waiting list will be offered services. New employment services are included in this system redesign, and are funded at a higher rate than congregate day services, with more flexibility in service delivery. BHD expects waiver participants who are unemployed or underemployed to explore new employment options to find jobs that meet their goals.

IT WAS A YEAR OF EXPERTISE

"Developmental Disabilities Services supported capacity-building and expertise development within Developmental Disabilities Administration, Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the provider community to create ongoing sustainable systems change. There now is an infrastructure of government and provider staff, families, people with disabilities, and other government and community partners who are energized and equipped to support and celebrate employment outcomes."

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.

Developments

- Increase in accurate service pricing
- Appropriate levels of funding for integrated employment
- Sample rate setting models shared across the SELN

Opportunities

- More in-depth discussions possible
- More respect for accurate methodologies
- Reduced complexity in funding strategies
- Increase in efforts to capture accurate cost-data across activities

Challenges

- Complex funding issues, unique to states
- Rate determination and units of service is difficult
- Time and collaboration slows changes in funding structure

The model incorporates retooling service definitions and reimbursement rates, and increases collaboration with Iowa's Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Department for the Blind, and others. Community conversations were held in five regions to gather input about employment for people with IDD. Participants made recommendations for service definitions for prevocational, supported employment, and day habilitation, service provider standards and staff qualifications for all the above, and changes to Medicaid rates, to support quality staff and quality services.

Ohio

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities is developing a new service model based on a system that supports informed choice, community integration, and competitive employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. Expert consultants will work with a statewide stakeholder group to develop potential funding models, service definition revisions for all adult day services, provider qualifications and rate methodologies that support integrated employment and day services.

Florida

The Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities received its second \$500,000 allocation in non-recurring funds for supported employment job coaching and other activities related to jobs and internships. Through this allocation, 176 individuals found competitive employment and internships. These additional resources assist paid staff in supporting individuals to experience community-based employment and explore career options.

Iowa

The Iowa Division of Mental Health and Disability Services continues to work on a Medicaid employment service rate redesign model to tip the balance toward integrated community employment.

South Dakota

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)'s financial workgroup has made significant progress through outreach to self-advocates, family members, partners, and other key stakeholders. Their feedback has helped the agency develop outcome-based definitions for employment services and rates that are reflective of state values. Due in large part to the testimony of an outspoken self-advocate, the cost share for earned income over \$400 for CHOICES waiver participants was removed as of July 2014. The removal of this disincentive for self-advocates to work had been identified as part of DDD's SELN workplan, as well as part of Governor Dugaard's Employment Works Task Force.

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.

Developments

- ▶ States recognize the negative impact of decreased professional development options
- ▶ Front-line staff are eager to learn new skills and build competencies

Opportunities

- ▶ More national support for competency-based training and certifications
- ▶ Renewed interest in investing in professional development and training needs
- ▶ More discussion of real and actual costs during review of funding methodologies

Challenges

- ▶ Limited funding restricts access
- ▶ Lack of professional development and training is a major liability

participation plans for everyone served. Over 400 people served by DDA have positive personal profiles to date.

New Mexico

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division spent significant time and resources on training and technical assistance for a variety of stakeholders throughout New Mexico. Training topics covered a range of issues, such as using discovery or customized employment services, completing vocational assessment profiles, accessing Social Security benefits, offering job development resources, and promoting strong team collaboration practices. The results of the training and technical assistance efforts included more competent employment staff in the field, as well as producing increased collaboration across systems leading to streamlined referrals to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and a toolkit for teams to access person-centered planning tools.

Ohio

Department of Developmental Disabilities has made a strong investment in training and technical assistance for a variety of audiences. Through Project Transformation, consultants work directly with facility-based provider agencies shifting from segregated to integrated services. Providers and other agencies will be supported in helping more people transition to integrated employment and day services through web-based and in-person training and technical assistance.

Oklahoma

With the support of leadership and executive staff, Oklahoma strengthened the existing Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Department of Developmental Services collaboration through a joint training program for DRS program managers. These training efforts ensure local staff and DRS counselors are more educated about individuals with intellectual disabilities and can support them in reaching employment goals. Also, training activities were offered to reinforce the value of work and how income and public benefits may intersect.

Colorado

The Division for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities organized multiple sessions of a three-hour required training in-state, with the goal of increasing the understanding of the value and key role support coordinators have in assisting more individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become employed. Ninety-two employment service providers, day service providers, and staff from vocational rehabilitation department participated in the three trainings.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Services/Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Department of Rehabilitation Services have a train-the-trainer initiative. This prepares the agencies' staff and providers to use the customized employment discovery process and completing positive personal profiles and individual job search/community

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.

Developments

- ▶ Federal partners are engaged and momentum is high
- ▶ State partners are working together to make tough decisions
- ▶ State agencies are submitting collaborative grants
- ▶ Partner agencies are braiding funding or using sequential funding
- ▶ More open discussion amongst partner agencies and stakeholders
- ▶ Improved relationships and partnership with employment agencies
- ▶ Greater collaboration amongst member states through the SELN

Opportunities

- ▶ SELN states are communicating and collaborating directly
- ▶ SELN states have a greater understanding of successful strategies through sharing and learning about member states' best practices
- ▶ Collaborative partnerships in states are leading to greater problem-solving solutions and successful practices
- ▶ Community partners are networking more frequently and effectively

Challenges

- ▶ Complex systems are difficult to understand and navigate
- ▶ More collaboration between schools, VR, and businesses is needed to prepare youth for employment
- ▶ Staff turnover impacts knowledge transfer and collaborative discussions

Alabama

The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) is participating in Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy's Vision Quest with an interagency collaboration team. The division continues to complete formal memorandums of understanding with each agency to better identify roles. In addition, DDDS is working with vocational rehabilitation, the developmental disabilities council, and the state's Department of Education to expand Project SEARCH.

Connecticut

Department of Developmental Services participated in innovative cross-agency collaboration activities with key partners (such as Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind, Department of Aging, Department of Mental Health) as a major aspect of the Employment Practices Improvement Collaborative (EPIC) training. The goal of EPIC is to build capacity of staff in multiple agencies to provide basic skills and/or employment readiness life skills to young adults (ages 16–24) within all state agency systems.

Florida

The governor signed Executive Order 13-284 mandating the creation of an interagency cooperative agreement among specific state agencies and other disabilities service organizations to ensure a long-term commitment to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Georgia

To support statewide-integrated employment goals, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) initiated an Interagency Transfer Agreement with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). The agreement will allow a more seamless sequencing of services across systems while maximizing both



INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT AND COLLABORATION (continued)

state and federal resources. Additionally, DDD has prioritized state funding for young adults transitioning from high school, and continues to use a collaborative approach in working with GVRA to support the transition to adult life.

Missouri

In the past year, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Office of Special Education collaborated on the development of the Transition Capacity Building Institute, a three-day summit to improve transition education and services. The event will engage special education directors and teachers, general education administrators, teachers, and counselors, and staff from the local VR and DDD agencies. The summit will focus on continuous improvement models used to support strategic planning at the school or district level. Participants will learn how to move through a process of reviewing data, highlighting strengths and needs, and developing an improvement plan with goals and evaluation components to provide quality transition services.

Pennsylvania

The Department of Public Welfare, Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) collaborated with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to improve employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. Key activities included a joint bulletin that ensures that people can receive employment services from OVR without the risk of losing waiver services, the development of a joint Release of Information form to streamline referral processes, and joint training for ODP support coordinators and OVR rehabilitation counselors on the agencies' policies and practices.

New York

In New York State, better partnerships now exist between the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and the state education department, specifically ACCES-VR and the Office of Special Education. These collaborations will help the state to achieve better competitive employment outcomes for youth transitioning from high school to adult life.

Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), Division of Developmental Disabilities engaged in interagency collaboration, capacity building, and stakeholder involvement. The state entered into a landmark Consent Decree with the US Department of Justice to move forward a shared vision for integrated employment outcomes. BHDDH, Rhode Island Department of Education, and Office of Rehabilitative Services developed a transition timeline for individuals ages 14–22.

IT WAS A YEAR OF SUPPORT

“The majority of our efforts in advancing supported employment have involved offering technical assistance to understand the Developmental Disabilities Department (DDD) and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) systems, providing training, and providing resources. Also, supporting local DDD and DVR staff to work collaboratively, even on an individual case basis.”

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.

Developments

- ▶ New services and service categories are being developed which brings clarity to employment options
- ▶ States are working to simplify the service options across funding streams and funders
- ▶ Service definitions in federal waiver applications are becoming more streamlined and consistent with priority employment outcomes

Opportunities

- ▶ Redundancies, duplication, and confusion are being reduced
- ▶ Staff, including new hires, realize the importance and role of service definitions

Challenges

- ▶ State data is demonstrating growth in non-work services
- ▶ The debate about whether segregation is “okay” continues

Delaware

A subcommittee of the Day Provider Committee designed a new Individualized Day Service: Community Participation waiver. The Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) is ready to submit a draft definition and service guidelines to CMS with a future Waiver Amendment package. DDS began revising quality standards for day services with a much stronger focus on outcomes versus environmental factors.

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Services, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDS/DDA) created a robust Community of Practice (CoP) on Supporting Families Across the Lifespan, whose members engage in Employment First and Person Centered Thinking implementation and advocacy, and who serve in an advisory capacity to DDS/DDA leadership

in program and policy development. Members of DC's statewide self-advocacy coalition, Project ACTION!, also are involved in Employment First initiatives, in the CoP, and on leadership and advisory boards.

Missouri

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) convened an ad hoc committee with representatives of contracted employment service providers, case management entities, vocational rehabilitation, and DDD. This ad hoc committee developed recommendations on new services, service definitions, expected outcomes, and training requirements for employment service providers.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services worked with community colleges to transition from a compensatory education program to create a pilot project to include individuals with IDD in vocational education tracts. The pilot combines the community college vocational education with the long-term supports to assist with the transition from school to work. Legislation passed to transition all community colleges to similar projects.

Nevada

Use of funding through the Rehabilitation Service Administration allowed the Washoe County School System, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities to fund the VOICE program (Vocational Opportunities for Inclusive Career Education). Individuals participate in hand-on activities in the business community, learn public transportation skills, and engage in vocational classroom assignments in order to secure integrated jobs.

New York

New York has focused on infrastructure and capacity building over the past year. Over 2,000 staff (employment, day habilitation, residential, and Medicaid service coordinators) of provider agencies have received training in the new Pathway to Employment service, or have participated in the Innovations in Employment Training series.

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.

Developments

- ▶ Improved reporting criteria and an increase in robust data systems
- ▶ Increased understanding of the value of outcome data, not just service data
- ▶ Renewed interest in how to determine the value of investments and realistic expectations from that work

Opportunities

- ▶ Consistent opportunities to discuss value of outcome and service data
- ▶ Simple access to varied data sources for widest picture of landscape
- ▶ Technology options are available and more affordable
- ▶ New staff engaging in meaningful dialogue across program and technical departments

Challenges

- ▶ States not yet able to determine a return on the investment and what outcomes are being achieved
- ▶ Lack of interest and understanding among key decision-makers
- ▶ Complexity of sharing data across systems

Missouri

The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities developed new performance measurement reports and data collection practices to assist with analysis of service utilization, efficiencies in employment service delivery, effectiveness of services, and amount of technical assistance provided.

Ohio

The Department of Developmental Disabilities launched a new web-based employment data collection system to capture employment outcome data for all people in employment services. Providers and county boards report on individual-specific employment services used, occupations, hours worked, and wages earned. The information collected will be analyzed to identify policies and practices that lead to successful employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Virginia

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services recognizes the critical need for employment outcome data in Virginia, as well as the importance of setting realistic, measurable, and attainable goals, and measuring the impact of Employment First. Efforts have been focused on a unified data collection tool that gathers data over different disability populations, captures accurate annual baseline data, and identifies key targets to increase (such as the number of individuals who enroll in supported employment each year and the number of individuals who remain employed in integrated work settings at least 12 months).

Washington

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) continues to improve the existing comprehensive data system to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes. Working with partners and stakeholders, DDA determines the key employment indicators for discussion so everyone, including those who have not been involved in the past, has a better understanding of the role and importance of employment services, as well as the outcomes for each of the service categories.

Maryland

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) SELN team developed and implemented a statewide employment outcome data collection system in October 2013. The system provides longitudinal data that supports Maryland's goals to improve participation in integrated employment and the quality of employment outcomes. Data is collected on approximately 12,000 people funded by the DDA for day and employment services.



For nearly ten years now, core teams in many states have been working to reignite the focus and attention on integrated employment outcomes. As a result, new conversations are taking place that, even last year, would not have been possible. Valuing work and its role for all people seeking a genuine community-based life is key for economic, social, and personal development. A job can provide opportunity in ways like no other experiences for those once relegated only to options of segregation and separation.

This report captures a sampling of Network and individual member state activities carried out day after day to ensure that the transformation to a person-centered, family-driven, community-based life is available to every person seeking that goal.

While the needle is moving slowly, it is indeed moving in the right direction. Concentrated effort, over time, represents the commitment needed to make necessary cultural shifts in this country. This intricate task of realigning priorities and resources requires constant care and attention from everyone who has a stake in systems change success—from leaders in executive positions, to frontline staff and family members providing daily support, to community businesses, the economic engines of our country.

Gone are the days of relying solely on public benefits and the one-way street of living in poverty. People with disabilities are repeating loud and clear that public support systems must make strong, viable integrated employment options a priority over segregated settings.

Real choice exists in these questions:

- “Where should I work?”
- “What kind of job or career path should I pursue?”
- “How can I best use my gifts and talents?”

Member states hear these voices and are strategizing to provide answers and solutions.

The debate of how to fund integrated employment and realign resources is occurring in every state. The time is now for the circle of people engaged in these conversations to expand so the benefits of work are well understood, strategically implemented, and monitored to ensure the highest level of quality and outcomes.

The SELN will continue to be a leader in offering insightful, member-driven support to states seeking the best outcomes possible for all those committed to excellence in this work.

IT WAS A

MULTIFACETED YEAR

“Our state has been employing multiple activities to implement Employment First, including policy alignment, provider development and technical assistance, strengthening collaboration with partnering agencies, statewide data collection, and funding system redesign. Also, supporting local DDD and DVR staff to work collaboratively, even on an individual case basis.”

IT WAS A YEAR OF

COMMUNICATION

“I attended numerous meeting, presented at webinars, staff meeting & training, spoke at public hearings & constantly & consistently communicating the message about increasing integrated employment, Employment First, CMS New Rulings & to collaborate with our partners to ensure integrated employment is the outcome for the individuals we serve.”

Visit www.SELN.org for hyperlinks for more information on the various state activities and projects.

SELN MEMBER STATE CONTACTS



SELN is a national organization of state and territorial leaders in the field of developmental disabilities. SELN is a national organization of state and territorial leaders in the field of developmental disabilities. SELN is a national organization of state and territorial leaders in the field of developmental disabilities.

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

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Beverly Baker	Deb Kruge	Lin Nibblelink
Donna Bouclier	Mary Lee Fay	Debbie Peabody
Kathy Brill	Scott LeRoy	Diane Perry
Nancy Brooks-Lane	Randy Loss	John Rakis
Katherine Carol	Dan Lusk	Sheli Reynolds
Tim Corey	David Mank	Shauna Roman
Michele Craig	Mila Mansaram	Melanie G. Snyder
Gail Fanjoy	Rosa McAllister	Jen Sulewski
Jill Gromen	Jim Meehan	Alina Szamatowicz
Angela Hamilton	Rosie Melarkey	Linda Tasco
Julie Hand	Joyce Millard Hoie	Donald Trites
John Harper	Nancy Molfenter	Darla Wilkerson
Jennifer Joyce	Ken Montrose	Amy Zlensky
	LeAnn Moskowitz	

**IT WAS A
COLLABORATIVE YEAR**

“Considerable effort has been made to ensure that self-advocates, family members, vocational rehabilitation, the state education department, developmental disabilities council, providers, and other partners have a voice in the development of definitions, rate structures, and messaging. The division is working to ensure that all stakeholders have a vision of the “big picture.””



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