

State Employment Leadership Network

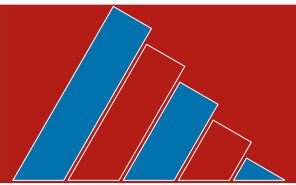
Accomplishments Report

A light blue outline map of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, is centered on the page. Overlaid on the map is the word "network" in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font. The word is split into "net" and "WORK", with "net" in lowercase and "WORK" in uppercase.

netWORK

Membership Year 2012-2013

From the Project Managers



As (lucky!) members of the SELN project team, we have a unique opportunity to work with a diverse set of players around the country. Our constant engagement with state and federal agencies impacts the work we do to improve individual, integrated employment outcomes for every person with intellectual and developmental disabilities seeking a job or career path.

The 2012–2013 membership year was active and challenging on many fronts. New expectations and difficult choices have thrown many states into chaos unlike any time in the past. Rising demand from individuals and families, as well as employers, is forcing publicly-funded support systems to make changes or find themselves out of business. Membership in the SELN helps states face these challenges head on.

More and more state systems and partners are acknowledging that employment must be the expectation for everyone. They are taking responsibility for determining how to balance the cultural, financial, political, and timing issues to achieve real and sustainable change.

Our field is working through a great period of upheaval as outdated practices are left behind in support of a new 21st-century outlook. Current trends and changes in service systems reflect the beginning of a transformation that puts consumers first, and respects the need to make wise investments with public dollars. SELN states are leading the transformation by developing:

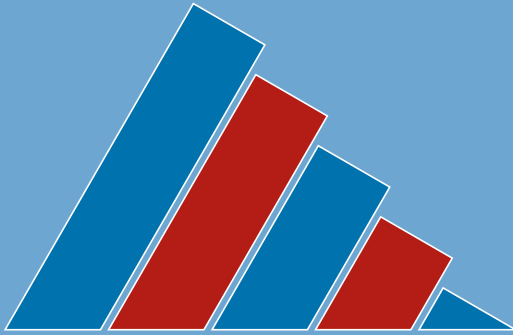
- Business leadership networks to connect businesses to qualified job candidates
- Employment First training requirements for case managers and providers
- New employment waiver service definitions
- Creative ways to share employment success stories

In this report, you will read about how and why such transformations are taking place. We hope the 2012 Accomplishments Report gives you a sense of the challenges our member states face every day--and of how rewarding it is when we all take another step toward our goal of integrated employment.

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS

Suzanne Freeze, ICI

State Employment Leadership Network Accomplishments Report 2012–2013



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



www.seln.org

About the SELN

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

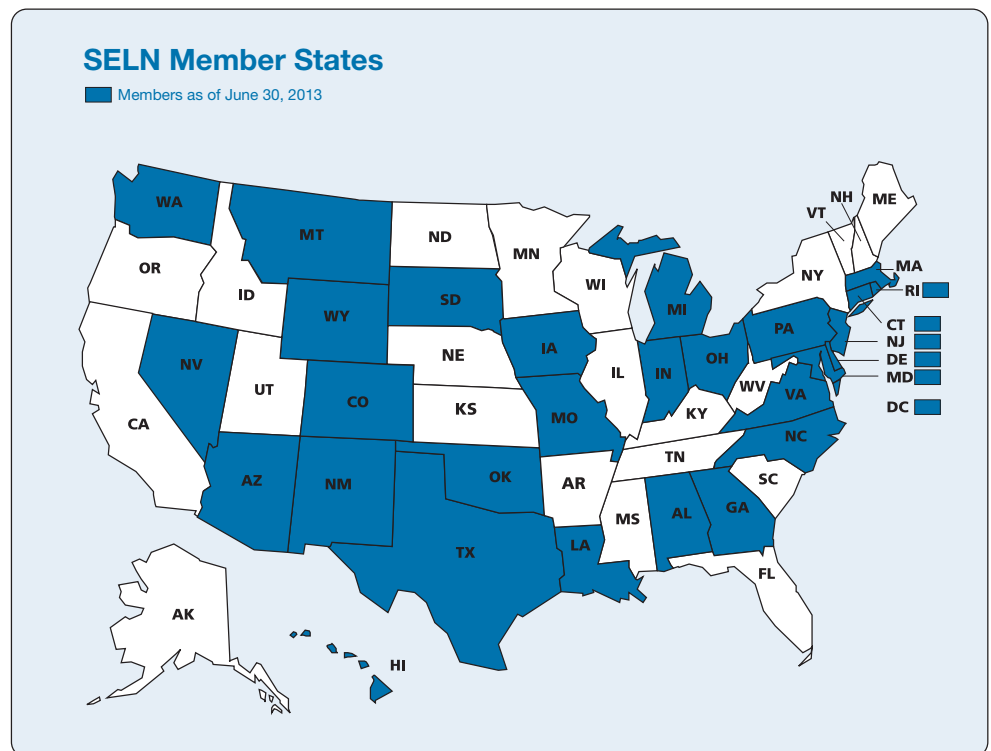
SELN members meet regularly to connect, collaborate, and share information and lessons learned across state lines and system boundaries. Participating state agency staff build cross-community support for pressing employment-related issues and policies at the state and federal levels. States commit to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

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

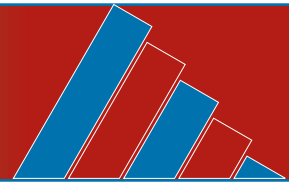
The SELN provides a forum for states to:

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

The 2012-2013 membership year concluded with 28 member states.



What Does Employment Really Mean?



Network members often request feedback on state definitions of employment, including service descriptions and critical outcomes. Clarifying the term 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.

SELN activities are guided by the beliefs that 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.

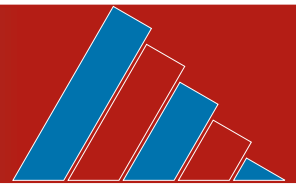
Employees with disabilities are on the business's payroll, and are paid in the same manner as their non-disabled coworkers.

Research, data, and experience all fuel the SELN's long-term outlook. While systems change does not happen overnight, it is never too late to start. Each person receiving public funding can and should be supported to explore integrated employment. 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. Employment is the key to making this happen.

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.

SELN activities are guided by the beliefs that 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 Employment Framework



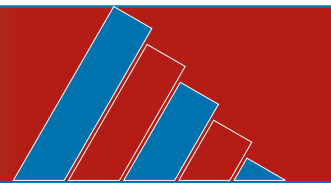
SELN member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key partners to participate in employment-related discussions and workgroups. The objective is to assist each state in determining a course of action that will improve employment outcomes among people receiving supports.

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





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

LEADERSHIP.

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

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATING POLICIES.

Employment is identified as the preferred outcome in state developmental disabilities policy, and is supported by program goals and operating practices that are clearly designed to achieve that objective.

FINANCING AND CONTRACTING METHODS.

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

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

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

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP.

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

SERVICES AND SERVICE INNOVATION.

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

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND DATA MANAGEMENT.

Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes. Information is gathered on key indicators across employment and other related systems and is used to evaluate and track results, inform policy, and improve provider contracts and service agreements. Data are shared with other state agencies to report results and improve quality.

Data Trends Show the Impact of Network Activities: Marking Progress



Annually states submit data for the National Survey of Employment and Day Services. State IDD agencies report the number of individuals participating in integrated employment services. While participation in services is not a direct measure of employment, these data help us understand trends and provide a measure of state investment.

TREND 1

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

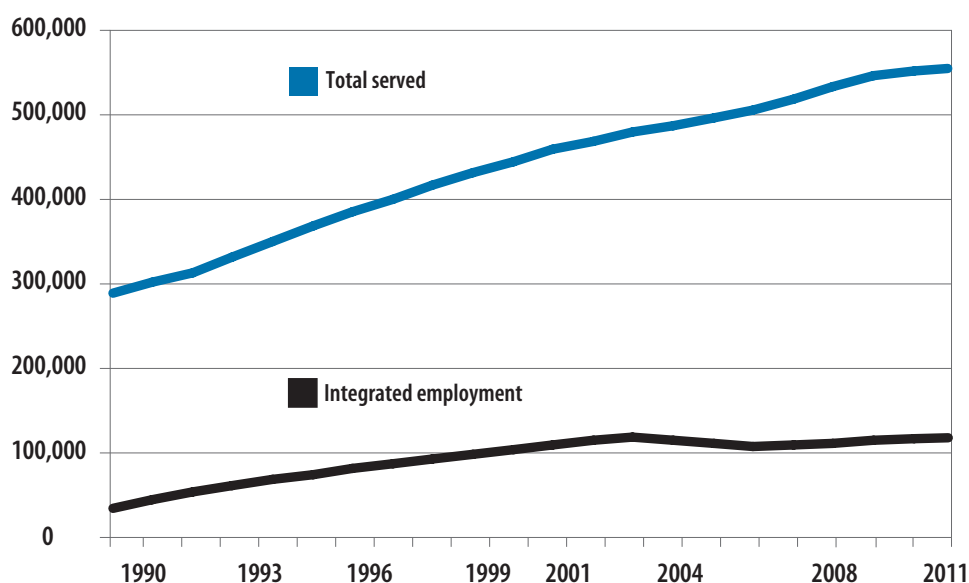
As shown in chart 1 below, the number of individuals who participate in any employment or day supports has increased steadily since the 1980s (total served), reaching an estimated 570,400 in 2011. Participation in integrated employment services, however, has not grown at the same rate and, beginning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

This data contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employment outcomes at many levels around the country.

A cultural and generational shift must occur to reflect the new expectations for employment in our publicly-funded systems.

Chart 1: Total Served in Day and Employment Services and Total receiving Integrated Employment Services



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2011, www.statedata.info

TREND 2

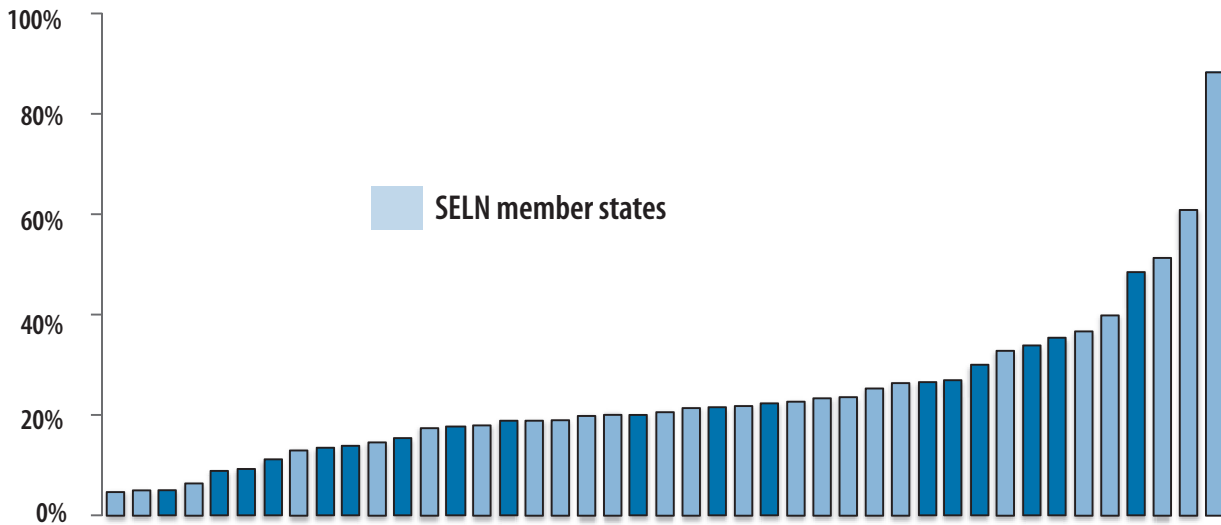
States across the country represent a diverse set of experiences.

Despite the long-term national reliance on day supports as reflected in chart 1, an increasing number of states continue to address integrated employment as a priority outcome of services. 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 can be learned from the range of investments. Chart 2 below illustrates the range of individuals receiving employment services across states. The bars represent the different percentages of individuals receiving employment services by reporting states*. The lighter blue bars represent state members of the SELN (as of June 30, 2013).

It is important to note that each state is working at the pace reflecting the commitment and leadership in this arena. Each bar below represents a range of experiences and investment in integrated employment services. It is critical that states continue to support the desired outcome of individual integrated employment over time to see real change in their system.

Chart 2: Percent of individuals receiving employment services

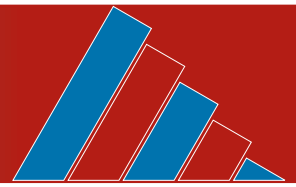


Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services 2011, www.statedata.info

SUMMARY

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

- Identify key staff accountable and responsible for results
- Work to build training and competency-development
- Understand how to capitalize on partnerships with other systems
- Track outcome data to guide decision-making



Welcome New Members!

SELN members work with project team staff to identify their state's strengths, barriers, and challenges around individual integrated employment outcomes. To give focus and structure to this process, the project team uses the State Strategic Employment Assessment, including a survey to collect feedback from a wide variety of partners, and a survey specifically for individuals and families.

Following a site visit to gather additional feedback for comparison to the written materials such as policies and procedures, the SELN project team creates the Findings and Observations Report, which the state uses to devise realistic employment goals. Finally, the project team works with the state to develop a strategic workplan for reaching these goals and measuring their impact.

The SELN community is growing. This year, five new member states joined: Alabama, Georgia, Pennsylvania (renewed), Rhode Island, and South Dakota.

The project team works with the state to develop a strategic workplan for reaching these goals and measuring their impact.

ALABAMA


In its first year of membership, Alabama received technical assistance and leadership from the SELN that helped the state advance employment outcomes for people with developmental and other disabilities. The Division of Developmental Disabilities has developed a strategic plan, and SELN membership has brought a more formal approach to the process.

Along with membership in the SELN, Alabama became a member of the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) community of practice in January. The community of practice is a place for states to discuss policies and practices that lead to increased integrated employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities.

At the recommendation of EFSLMP, Alabama formed its own interagency planning committee to advance Employment First in the state. This interagency team is made up of representatives from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (VR), the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), the Alabama Medicaid Agency, Department of Post Secondary Education, and Office of Workforce Development.

An Employment First bill was introduced in this year's legislative session. Even though it was well received, the legislative session ended before the bill was adopted. Plans are underway to again introduce Employment First legislation in next year's session.

This workgroup meets monthly, and is developing strategies to eventually eliminate funding for sheltered workshops and encourage more community-based, integrated services.



The Division is collaborating with ADECA on a Disability Employment Initiative grant, and is waiting for the application results. These funds will be used to create employment resource coordinators in all Department of Mental Health (DMH) regional offices across the state, as well as to fund other activities that impact employment services.

The Division has a dedicated employment coordinator with a background in employment and work experience with Alabama VR. The coordinator chairs a supported employment workgroup that. This workgroup meets monthly, and is developing strategies to eventually eliminate funding for sheltered workshops and encourage more community-based, integrated services. The group will review and plan changes to waiver services and rates that support integrated employment in the community.

The Division has strengthened its partnership with VR. The two agencies are sharing in strategic planning to improve employment services and outcomes for individuals who are exiting day services and sheltered employment. The two agencies are also working closely to improve transition services.

One successful outcome from this partnership is Project SEARCH, an internship program aimed at people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Alabama just completed its first year of Project SEARCH, and worked closely with two school systems. The program has now grown to include six school systems, and is well positioned to continue expanding across the state.

Alabama has a strong chapter of APSE, the Association of People Supporting Employment First. The DMH employment coordinator serves as president of Alabama APSE, and several DMH staff are APSE members. They work closely with the chapter to host trainings and provide other support and technical assistance. The commissioner of Alabama DMH and commissioner of Alabama VR presented at this year's Alabama APSE conference.

Byron White, SELN Lead State Contact


*Courtney Tarver, Associate Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities,
Alabama Department of Mental Health*

GEORGIA

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) joined the SELN in October 2012, with the goals of strengthening supported employment polices/practices and increasing the number of individuals employed in integrated competitive employment. During its first membership year, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD/DD) established a statewide SELN-Supported Employment (SE) workgroup and completed the SELN's new member review and assessment process.

Input and feedback from self-advocates, family members, providers, employers, state agencies, and regional staff on employment-related services were collected for the assessment. The SE workgroup is developing a comprehensive workplan to implement the focus areas identified in the SELN Findings and Observations Report.

The SE workgroup and the Department are hosting three sub-committees focusing on systems change in the areas of leadership, funding, and provider capacity-building. The sub-committees and SE workgroup meet regularly to address the barriers Georgians with disabilities are facing in reaching their employment goals.



One area noted in the SELN report is improving partnerships and collaborations with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) to allow braided funding and services for shared customers. To this end, DBHDD and GVRA signed a memorandum of understanding and began developing a shared vision about how to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Together, DBHDD and GVRA seek to maximize individual choice and satisfaction, establish the efficient use of resources that promote best practices, and increase employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This collaboration emphasizes improving access to VR funds for initial employment supports, with DBHDD/DD providing long-term supports post-placement.

The SE workgroup uses SELN technical assistance to facilitate discussions with partners around the state employment stakeholders. This helps to establish consensus on a common set of data elements, such as hours worked, gross wages, and length of employment. This collection of outcomes data will allow the Division to compare its results within each of its six regions, as well as with other states across the country.

Byron Sartin, SELN Lead State Contact

Charles Li, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Input and feedback from self-advocates, family members, providers, employers, state agencies, and regional staff on employment-related services were collected for the assessment.

PENNSYLVANIA

In January, the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Disabilities (ODP) launched an initiative to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities, and to establish Pennsylvania as a high-performing employment state. This means that state policies will support competitive employment in the community for citizens with disabilities. Pennsylvania enlisted the SELN to assess its employment service delivery system, to help identify priorities and goals, and to provide technical assistance to make needed changes.

ODP participated in the SELN new member process, including completion of the self-evaluation tool and distribution of the Strategic Employment Assessment Supplement Survey for stakeholders. Three hundred and twelve surveys were completed. In addition, 177 people attended focus group meetings throughout the state to share information about the service delivery system.

Pennsylvania included individuals with developmental disabilities in the assessment process; 100 individuals and family members participated in focus groups, and 412 provided feedback through the Individual and Family Member survey. The SELN project team is assembling a Findings and Observations Report from the data collected. Upon receipt of the report, a core team, consisting of ODP staff and agency partners, will review the report, determine priorities, and formulate a workplan, which will include a timeline to complete the necessary



changes to the state's service delivery system.

In spring 2013, ODP began working with internal and external stakeholders on the Futures Planning initiative: "Today's Vision... Tomorrow's Reality." Teams were established to review mission and vision statements and recommend service system redesign. The SELN will provide technical assistance to ODP to prioritize goals and develop an action plan for the initiative. More information on the initiative is at <http://www.odpconsulting.net/odp-futures-planning>.

One stated goal of the Futures Planning initiative is to make Pennsylvania an Employment First state, meaning that employment is the first priority and preferred outcome of people with disabilities. A draft Employment First plan has been written to define expectations and outcomes. Definitions for employment services terms, such as business development and career assessment, have been rewritten to promote Employment First.

ODP is collaborating with other agencies to improve outcomes. It is working to streamline Medicaid waivers among the Department of Public Welfare agencies by developing cross-office collaboration to align service definitions and rate structures. Additionally, ODP is collaborating with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to increase employment for people with intellectual disabilities who are served by both agencies.

Another highlight of the membership year was the Pennsylvania Disability Employment Summit (PADES), held in October 2012. The goal was to bring together business leaders, human service providers, government agencies, and people with disabilities to discuss employment opportunities. Participants also suggested ways that agencies can assist the business community to include people with disabilities in the workforce.

Governor Tom Corbett made the opening announcement at PADES, and spoke about his commitment to employment for people with disabilities. As a result of the summit, a business roundtable was formed. It provides a forum for businesses and government to support each other in the employment realm.

Diane Cashman, SELN Lead State Contact

Fred Lokuta, Deputy Director, Office of Developmental Programs

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

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RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island joined the State Employment Leadership Network in March 2013, to further the Employment First initiative launched by the State's Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). BHDDH is completing the SELN new member process, with a site visit scheduled for September 2013.

BHDDH hired a director of policy implementation to focus on Employment First and Housing First. The Department also hired a full-time employee to coordinate community development and planning.

BHDDH organized the Rhode Island Employment First Task Force to improve employment outcomes for working-age youth and adults with developmental disabilities and behavioral health issues. The newly created task force will address the recommendations of the SELN based on the self-assessment and stakeholder survey. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Office of Rehabilitation Services, and Department of Education are included in the task force.

Three advisory committees, focusing on transition, developmental disabilities, and behavioral health, guide the task force. Each committee lead is responsible for inviting providers, advocates, individuals and family members, employers, and educators to participate in monthly workgroups. These participants advise the committees on advocacy, policy, procedures, and implementation strategies.

BHDDH is planning an event to be held at the Rhode Island State House this fall, where the governor will declare October Disability Employment Awareness Month. BHDDH partners in state government and local business leaders will participate in the ceremony.

Michelle Brophy, SELN Lead State Contact

Craig Stenning, Director, Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota has made significant progress as a result of SELN membership, which began in January 2013. In the first year of membership, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) completed the Strategic Employment Assessment, and distributed the SELN supplemental survey to self-advocates, family members, and many other partners. The project team made an on-site visit to gather additional data for the Findings and Observations Report.

After making an online presentation on the highlights from the visit and the report to the South Dakota Employment First Alliance (EFA), the project team returned for a daylong meeting to further discuss the report, map areas of focus, and identify priorities. The EFA is developing a workplan to address these priorities areas, which include:

- Assisting providers to transition to integrated community-based services

The newly created task force will address the recommendations of the SELN based on the self-assessment and stakeholder survey.

- Building a culture of expectation of employment as the option of choice for people with disabilities
- Creating a marketing strategy
- Reviewing employment service definitions

DDD recently established the Office of Community Living to target additional resources and enhance efforts in advancing South Dakota's community-based system. A program specialist was hired to coordinate efforts to assist people with transitions from living and working in segregated settings into integrated community settings, and an increased focus on employment for youth transitioning from school to adult life.

South Dakota is assessing the impact of the cost-share for waiver services, which has been considered a disincentive to employment. The reimbursement structure for services is changing to encourage providers to assist people to become employed outside of sheltered workshops. The new structure will focus more on supported employment and integrated, competitive employment, and will include reviewing service definitions for consistency throughout the state. The myriad uses and importance of data collection and reporting is also being explored.

Governor Dennis Daugaard formed the Employment Works Task Force as part of an initiative to increase employment of South Dakotans with disabilities. Laurie Gill, Secretary of the Department of Human Services, chairs the task force. It brings together a broad group, including self-advocates and family members, the business community, legislators, representatives of state government, service providers, and nonprofit staff. Governor Daugaard is also focusing on how state government can be a model employer.

South Dakota is in the initial stages of developing a pilot program for post-secondary education, which is chaired by Dan Lusk, director for DDD. The vision statement for this pilot is to increase the participation of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in post-secondary educational experiences, thereby improving their employment outcomes.

Ashley Schlichenmayer-Okroi, SELN co-Lead State Contact

Julie Hand, SELN co-Lead State Contact

Dan Lusk, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities, South Dakota Department of Human Services

DDD recently established the Office of Community Living to target additional resources and enhance efforts in advancing South Dakota's community-based system.

Continuing to Advance: SELN Member State Initiatives and Accomplishments



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

ARIZONA

Over the past year, Arizona remained dedicated to integrated employment as the primary consideration for working-age adults. To this end, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has continued to lead and participate in a statewide partnership working toward a consistent Employment First approach for individuals with any type of disability.

In support of that effort, DDD has partnered with other state agencies and stakeholders who are developing the state's first business leadership network: Untapped Arizona. This network supports businesses by connecting them to qualified job candidates who meet their workforce needs and providing technical assistance to support employers in hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. Untapped Arizona is in the process of hiring an executive director, creating a non-profit organization, with a board of directors to represent Arizona business leaders committed to workplace diversity.

DDD continues to prioritize efforts to enhance the transition of young adults with intellectual disabilities from school to work. A state-level community of practice on transition (CoPT) meets monthly, and supports three local CoPTs, with several others in the start-up phase. DDD's nine district employment specialists regularly participate in local high school transition fairs, job fairs, and other events highlighting employment. All DDD employment staff are members of the Arizona Department of Education's Secondary Transition Mentoring Project, working with local school districts on collaborative transition planning. A new Transition to Employment service description was released for public comment, and will be available as a new contracted service in the next year. Additionally, DDD co-sponsored the 12th Arizona Transition Conference, drawing over 800 participants.

This year, DDD launched a joint project with the state's Rehabilitation Services Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Through a memorandum of understanding, DDD provided matching funds to allow the VR program to obtain additional federal funds and hire dedicated staff to work with youth in the foster care system. The project established a system of coordinated planning and service provision for youth, beginning at age 14, to ensure their successful transition to meaningful and sustained employment, education, and community living.

DDD is raising awareness of the value of employment internally with mandatory training; all DDD support coordinators and their supervisors participate in a computer-based training. A daylong training course for field staff is in development. Externally, the state is raising awareness by sharing individuals on-the-job success stories and these have been featured on local TV and newspapers. Success stories will be a standing feature on DDD's website.

Finally, DDD has initiated the process of reviewing employment service rate-settings. This is being done with an eye to building rates that will encourage the provision of integrated and competitive employment services and support.

Linda Tasco, SELN Lead State Contact

Larry L. Latham, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Arizona Department of Economic Security

This network supports businesses by connecting them to qualified job candidates who meet their workforce needs and providing technical assistance to support employers in hiring and retaining workers with disabilities.



COLORADO

The Colorado Department of Human Services/Division for Developmental Disabilities (CDHS/DDD) joined the SELN in July 2011, with support from the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. Since then, the DDD has developed a comprehensive workplan to address the focus areas identified in the SELN Findings and Observations Report.

The DDD continues to work with the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and a stakeholder workgroup to implement the workplan. The initial phases of implementation focus on communication, messaging, leadership, interagency collaboration, and a webinar series on employment outcomes hosted by the SELN.

The CDHS has identified improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities as a strategic goal. Statewide Supported Employment numbers are reviewed monthly through a formal performance measurement process called “C-Stat” at the Department of Human Services. The DDD is using this data to inform policy and identify technical assistance and training needs across the state.

The DDD set a goal of 23% of individuals receiving supports being in supported employment services, and this goal was met in February 2013. Data showed an increase in people receiving employment services, from 21.3% in July 2012 to 24.5% in June 2013. The DDD has added a focus on improving individual employment outcomes, and has set a goal of increasing success in this area from 9% to 13%.

The DDD continues to be involved in other activities and initiatives to increase employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. The DDD and DVR held a series of statewide roundtable discussions and presentations on employment in 2012, and another series in 2013. The DDD’s Facebook page highlights employment news and success stories. The DDD offers resources and technical assistance on improving employment outcomes to providers across the state.

Michele Craig, SELN Lead State Contact

Lori Thompson, Assistant Director, Program Services, Div. for Developmental Disabilities

Barbara Ramsey, Director, Div. for Developmental Disabilities

Statewide Supported Employment numbers are reviewed monthly through a formal performance measurement process called “C-Stat” at the Department of Human Services.



CONNECTICUT

In the past year, the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has focused on working collaboratively with the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) to improve employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) served by both agencies. A formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DORS continues to benefit the agencies and the individuals referred.

The MOU requires that central office executives from each agency meet at least twice a year to share data, discuss outcomes, and plan strategies to enhance joint services provided to people with intellectual disabilities. The agreement also requires that regional staff from both agencies meet at least quarterly in each region as a means to increase communication and collaboration. These meetings ensure that joint training occurs on a regular basis, and that an infrastructure is developed so that questions and concerns are addressed jointly in a timely manner.

The MOU requires that central office executives from each agency meet at least twice a year to share data, discuss outcomes, and plan strategies to enhance joint services provided to people with intellectual disabilities.

DDS has provided DORS with funding to continue benefits counseling for individuals with intellectual disabilities who are not receiving DORS services. The service may be accessed through a new referral process that tracks and documents the number of monthly referrals received.

DDS uses industry-based projects to provide on-site training and competitive jobs for the individuals served. It continues to contract with a private agency to provide additional training programs specific to individuals with autism and IDD. These industry-based collaborations with DORS and private agencies include partnerships with Walgreens, CVS, Mohegan Sun, Mystic Aquarium, Home Goods, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, & Lowe's. The training programs continue to grow, as shown by the addition of several trainings, new business partnerships, and ongoing opportunities for individuals to be hired in competitive work settings offering fair wages and benefits. Training and technical assistance is provided to job developers who participate in the regional networks by the APSE CT chapter and by DORS Ticket to Work staff.

DDS hosts an Employment Steering Committee (ESC) comprised of consumers, family members, providers, DDS staff, and other participants from DOE, DORS, the DD Council, and APSE. The ESC meets at least quarterly to discuss division employment goals.

DDS continues to improve its rate and reimbursement systems to strengthen employment outcomes among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) receiving support. The funding incentives created last year continue to be refined and improved.

Amy M. Blazawski, SELN co-Lead State Contact

Jordan Scheff, SELN co-Lead State Contact

Terrence Macy, Commissioner Connecticut Department of Developmental Services



DELAWARE

Employment for people with disabilities was a leading initiative in Delaware this year. After being named the chair of the National Governors Association, Governor Jack Markell promptly announced his initiative called A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities.

House Bill 319, the Employment First Act, was signed into law this year. The Act requires agencies that provide services to people with disabilities to consider employment in an integrated setting as the first option. The bill establishes an Employment First Oversight Commission as part of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities to review goals and objectives and prepare an annual report.

Collaborating with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Department of Education (DOE), the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) continues to advance employment opportunities for school-age transitioning students via the Early Start to Supported Employment Transition Program (ESSE). Schools are encouraged to refer all eligible students who have a post-school goal of employment to the ESSE. The ESSE begins two full years prior to a student's exit from school, with a goal of integrated employment when they leave.

Representatives from DDDS, DVR, DOE, and two service providers (Community Integrated Services and POW&R) presented at the 2012 Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities National Employment Conference. The presentation, A New Contact Sport, described this unique transition program and the success of strong collaborations.

During the year, the DOE entered into technical assistance agreements with the National Secondary Transition Technical Center (NSTTAC) and the National Post School Outcomes Center (NPSO). A primary focus is to strengthen the collaborations between the ESSE program and the 19 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in Delaware.

Ten of the LEAs are participating in a pilot program established by the DOE, with technical assistance from NSTTAC and NPSO. In May, the DOE pulled together a team, including DDDS day and transition staff, to attend the NSTTAC Annual Capacity Building Institute. Stronger collaborations between the systems that support students before and after they exit school will lead to students being better prepared to enter the work world.

Implementation of the significant changes being made to service systems in Delaware is a shared responsibility. A multi-stakeholder workgroup was established and meets on a monthly basis. This group was instrumental in refreshing existing day service and employment definitions, and establishing new ones. These definitions were used in a Medicaid waiver amendment to change the current Supported Employment Services definition, and will be included in the upcoming Home and Community Based Waiver renewal.

Knowing that the new definitions will result in major shifts in service provision, the SELN helped devise a multi-pronged training strategy. The resources of DDDS, DOE, and DVR will be pooled to provide training and technical support. The focus is to increase awareness and responsibility for promoting individual integrated employment. Service providers will be assessed and recommendations made to shift service models towards improving individual integrated employment outcomes.

The presentation, “A New Contact Sport,” described this unique transition program and the success of strong collaborations.

Marissa Catalon, SELN Lead State Contact

*Jane Gallivan, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
Delaware Health and Social Services*



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District of Columbia Department on Disability Services (DDS)/ Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) made substantial progress this year in advancing a statewide Employment First agenda. DDS, with the help of many committed partners and stakeholders, crafted an Employment First vision statement. Using this vision statement, the mayor officially proclaimed DC an Employment First state.

DDA is partnering with DC's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to increase the number of people who benefit from services from both the DDA system and the vocational rehabilitation system. Together, they have continued their work with DC's Secondary Transition Community of Practice (CoP). That is, they are working with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, as well as representatives of the public, charter and non-public schools, child welfare, and juvenile justice, to develop and disseminate a secondary transition toolkit. This toolkit enables youth with disabilities to transition effectively into employment and continuing education.

DDA renewed its Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) waiver with new service definitions and rate structures. This was an important first step for promoting integrated jobs in the community, and creating incentives for community employment. DDS also created a broad-based cross-disability public-private Employment First leadership team that meets monthly to develop strategies and guide implementation of Employment First. The SELN provides technical assistance in support of the work of this team as it proceeds with capacity building and data collection.


Members of the Employment First leadership team collaborated to offer two full-day Employment First summits. The first one introduced Employment First; the second showcased how Employment First strategies are being implemented in DC. Team members participate in the Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP's) Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program's webinars. They are also active on ePolicyWorks, an online forum to discuss policy and practices from different states.

DDA and RSA, together with school and community partners, offer Project SEARCH to youth and young adults in DC. Project SEARCH is a combined education and work experience program for students with disabilities who are in their last year of high school as well as young adults. Project SEARCH is now in six sites five in federal government agencies and one at a large local university.

Additionally, DDS has organized two Employment First Communities of Practice (CoPs). One CoP is for the customized employment trainers' network that DDS established in 2012. The other CoP is for people who are newer to customized employment. DDS also offers monthly webinars on customized employment topics and runs monthly meetings for the trainers' CoP.

During the past year, DDS was approved as an Administrative Employment Network (EN) by the Social Security Administration. Community service agencies that provide employment support services in DC can enroll in

DDS, with the help of many committed partners and stakeholders, crafted an Employment First vision statement. Using this vision statement, the mayor officially proclaimed DC an Employment First state.



the Administrative EN so that they can accept Tickets to Work through DDS to pay for flexible job retention supports without having to become an EN themselves. DDS started the Administrative EN by enrolling a small group of provider agencies. However, now that it is established, DDS will be able to enroll additional agencies that provide employment services and are interested in serving people through Ticket to Work.

DDS hosts bi-monthly meetings of a newly formed chapter of APSE, offering opportunities for capacity building with networking. DC APSE provides webinars or other resources as part of every meeting. The meetings promote Employment First for community providers, DC government staff and partners, and people with disabilities and their family members.

Finally, DC was selected to be one of the states involved in the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Employment Learning Community. This group will provide additional support and guidance as DC continues to promote employment outcomes for people supported by DDA.

Rebecca S. Salon, SELN Lead State Contact

Laura L. Nuss, Director, Department on Disability Services

Cathy R. Anderson, Deputy Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration

HAWAII


Hawaii is updating its State Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) strategic plan. This process includes the participation of Hawaii's Developmental Disability Council (DDC), as well as the adoption of DDC's strategic plan. Emphasis will be placed on improving integrated employment outcomes.

To address the state's challenges and opportunities, DDD formed an internal employment committee, with representatives from the case management, provider contracts, fiscal, and planning teams. An Employment First policy is being finalized, and will be disseminated to DDD staff, individuals, and their families to communicate the DDD emphasis on employment outcomes and supports.

Hawaii completed the second year of its Medicaid Home and Community Based Services HCBS waiver renewal, which includes expanded employment services. The new services were introduced statewide via a presentation at the 2012 Pacific Rim Conference and articles in DDD employment newsletters. The focus for FY 2014 will be to increase the number of individuals who access these services and attain competitive employment or self-employment.

DDD continues to collaborate with the State Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to clarify each agency's functions and joint responsibilities. A written procedure was developed and was jointly issued to DDD case managers, DVR counselors, and family members.

To address the state's challenges and opportunities, DDD formed an internal employment committee, with representatives from the case management, provider contracts, fiscal, and planning teams.



DDD also continues to collaborate with the University of Hawaii Center on Disability Studies (CDS). This effort provides benefits counseling training for provider agencies, and an introduction to benefits counseling for individuals, families, guardians, and case managers. Additionally, CDS provides one-to-one benefits counseling sessions for individuals and their families.

The Arc of Hawaii's three-year grant from the WalMart Foundation has ended. The purpose of the grant project was to connect individuals receiving special education services with integrated employment options. The grant project yielded valuable lessons, which will be applied in several ways:

- Initiating collaboration among schools, DVR, and DDD while individuals are in school.
- Helping students apply for DDD eligibility before they leave the school system.
- Providing teachers and families with information on DDD services for transition.
- Using HCBS waiver employment services for after-school and weekend work experiences.

DDD will continue to conduct presentations at high schools to introduce students to the benefits of working. At these events, DDD staff tell students about how DDD services can help them reach employment goals, and discuss eligibility criteria.

DDD will also foster interagency collaboration for the Oahu-wide Transition Fair for Youth. The first transition fair was conducted in FY12, and it is now an annual event, rotating its location among the school districts each year.

Finally, Hawaii DDD clients earning minimum wage or more slightly increased from 2011 to 2012 by approximately 9%. This is due in part from DDD's continued support and advocacy for employment and the State's improved economy.

David Fray, Chief, Hawaii Developmental Disabilities Division, Hawaii Department of Health


INDIANA

Indiana was one of the first states to promote Employment First as an outcome for individuals receiving disability services. Originally a grassroots activity, the emphasis on Employment First is now fully embraced by state leadership.

In late 2012, the Indiana Training and Employment Results Network program was launched at the Indiana Government Center, and is slowly being introduced across the state to eligible vocational rehabilitation consumers. This program focuses on increasing the opportunities for people with disabilities within state government. The program's growing success further emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts between agencies to reach successful employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

In 2013, a new governor and administration entered office with continued emphasis on job creation and

Employment First training is now a requirement for all case managers, which will increase the state's capacity to support individuals in integrated employment.



employment-focused initiatives across the state. New leadership also came to the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. The Bureau of Developmental Disability Services (DDS) continues to focus on systemic changes; Employment First training is now a requirement for all case managers, which will increase the state's capacity to support individuals in integrated employment.

Multiple state agencies, including the Family and Social Services Administration, began working with the Department of Workforce Development to implement the Disability Employment Initiative grant across the state. This grant funds states to develop and implement a plan for improving effective and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in the workforce.

Kristina Blankenship, SELN Lead State Contact
Nicole Norvell, director, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Indiana Family & Social Services Administration

IOWA


Iowa's fourth year as an SELN member was a busy one. With SELN assistance, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) implemented a plan to engage employment-service constituents in expanding the array and provision of employment services, reimbursement, and outcome measurement. DHS released a stakeholder brief regarding Iowa's integrated employment funding system and the accompanying capacity-building study, prepared for DHS by the SELN project team.

DHS held five public forums throughout Iowa to solicit feedback from diverse participants; an intensive workgroup of providers, case managers, family members, and funders was formed out of the process. The workgroup is looking at Medicaid employment service definitions, capacity building, and rebalancing the funding structure to create incentives for integrated employment. The SELN project team is providing technical assistance, along with other subject matter experts.

The workgroup is looking at Medicaid employment service definitions, capacity building, and rebalancing the funding structure to create incentives for integrated employment.

Iowa is in its second year of a Partnerships in Employment systems change grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). This grant supports improvements to employment opportunities for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Four school-district pilots and six provider-agency pilots have been implemented. The school pilots receive consultation through grant funds in the areas of: job development, employer development, and strategies for placing and supporting students. This work is closely aligned and coordinated with technical assistance from the SELN.

Iowa is also in its second year of the Employment First Leadership State Mentor Program (EFLSMP), awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. This has brought in technical assistance from



national experts, including the SELN, in policy development, systems change, organizational development, and provider transformation. Eleven provider agencies are receiving one-to-one mentoring from EFLSMP consultants.

Through the EFLSMP, DHS also originated a parents-and-family coalition to drive demand for individual, community-based employment. Rate restructuring continues, with twice-monthly consultation from experts on revising Iowa's Medicaid waiver language to move the state toward an Employment First perspective.

Iowa's AIDD and EFLSMP projects together funded six provider pilot programs including training and implementation on customized employment. Ten candidates with significant disabilities and no prior integrated work experience are now working in the community. Four work at least 20 hours a week, and the others average 14 hours a week. Their wages average \$7.65 per hour.

The adult mental health and disability services system redesign has defined a menu of core services to be accessible statewide, including employment services. Last year, the SELN helped a group of DHS staff and other agency participants to reach consensus on collecting and reporting hours worked and gross wages earned across job settings.

A new cooperative agreement between Iowa Medicaid and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services now funds employment services for workers with disabilities seamlessly across systems. The Iowa Department for the Blind and Iowa Workforce Development are also interested in collaboration.

Over the next SELN membership year, Iowa will focus on engaging business and industry partners, strengthening transition services, aligning all funders with Employment First, and developing a common data and outcome reporting system.

Lin Nibbelink, SELN Lead State Contact

Rick Shulz, Division Administrator, Mental Health and Disability Services


Iowa Department of Human Services

LOUISIANA

During the 2012–2013 year, the Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) continued its efforts to improve employment outcomes for individuals with IDD. The Employment First consortium of partners committed to common goals continued to meet with newly formed subcommittees focused on rates and data.

Training and education were also provided to Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) in order to provide a greater understanding of the various OCDD waivers, support coordinators, and the Employment First initiative. OCDD worked in collaboration with LRS and the Louisiana Department of Education to bring the focus on employment for individuals with IDD to the transition summit that was held this year.

OCDD worked in collaboration with LRS and the Louisiana Department of Education to bring the focus on employment for individuals with IDD to the transition summit that was held this year.



OCDD partnered with other organizations to host the second Employment First summit. The summit offered training and education on integrated community employment to individuals and families served by OOOD and to service providers.

This coming year, OCDD will focus on providing training and technical assistance to support coordinators and service providers on community employment. OCDD will be revising definitions including adding career planning based on CMS guidelines, and providers will be trained on the new definitions.

Rosemary Morales, SELN Lead State Contact

Laura Brackin, Assistant Secretary, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals

MARYLAND

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) continues to work on key systems-change priorities. The Employment First committee, chaired by DDA and the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), meets regularly to collaborate on system improvements in the delivery of employment services.

A regulations committee reviewed and finalized proposed changes to DDA regulations in support of Employment First. Recommendations from the committee have also been used in the development of Maryland's waiver renewal. The Employment First committee is developing recommendations for the state's employment service rates and structures by gathering information from other states' experiences.

DDA, with support from its partners, is launching an employment outcomes database for all day and employment providers. The data will capture specific outcomes (hours worked, wages, type of employment, and other non-employment activities people are in) for all day or employment services twice a year.

The Organizational Change Peer Network, funded through the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, continues to support agencies as they offer customized employment services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Quarterly meetings are held to facilitate information sharing, knowledge building, discussion, and strategic thinking among the members.

The Federal Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities selected Maryland to be one of the states involved in the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Employment Learning Community. This group will provide additional support and guidance as Maryland continues to promote employment outcomes

DDA, with support from its partners, is launching an employment outcomes database for all day and employment providers. The data will capture specific outcomes for all day or employment services twice a year.



for people supported by DDA.

DDA and the Division of Rehabilitation Services, with support from MDOD, are revising the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two agencies. The revised MOU will help align state and local systems, and identify ways providers can access funding for employment services. It will also streamline the eligibility process for people requesting employment services.

Dave Benjamin, SELN Lead State Contact

Frank Kirkland, Special Advisor to the Director

Patrick Dooley, Acting Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration

Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has continued to support expansion of integrated community employment opportunities and to phase out the use of center-based work services. The Employment First policy adopted in 2010 remains a foundation for supporting and increasing integrated employment opportunities across the state.

This past year, every DDS Area Office developed local employment plans to increase community employment and reduce the reliance on center-based work programs. These plans identified specific strategies to help facilitate employment options, and helped elevate the focus on employment with all stakeholders and partners.


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The plans included development of specific job placement goals with each local provider. This enabled DDS to set targets for new individual job placements and new group placement opportunities. The data were tracked throughout the year, which provided a good mechanism to keep the focus on new placements and track progress.

Another focus area has been ensuring that young adults transitioning from school with work experiences and with the goal of community employment receive the supports they need to secure a job. DDS has entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. The MOA allows the two agencies to collaborate, plan employment initiatives together, and share the costs of those initiatives strategically.

Other key initiatives and activities over the past year include:

- DDS developed and adopted new standard rates for employment services, including individual supported employment, group supported employment, and center-based work services. These new rates will take effect at the beginning of FY13 and represent a big shift in how services are purchased and business is done.
- A new web-based real-time individual job placement data collection process was implemented. The



process helps document progress and provides useful information about types of jobs, hours worked, wages, and benefits. It also provides a system for tracking job retention.

- DDS supported staff training and capacity building activities for providers. The department sponsored 11 days of comprehensive training for employment specialists, providing staff with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver quality integrated employment services. A forum on Project Search also took place, to provide information about an effective model to facilitate transition to employment.
- DDS continues to support an effective peer-to-peer training program (“Explore, Prepare, Act”), developed in partnership with self-advocates and conducted by self-advocates. This curriculum promotes the benefits of employment and provides individuals with information about the steps they can take to be more active in their job search. More than 300 individuals participated in these trainings.

The DDS cross-stakeholder statewide planning team and workgroup continues to meet regularly to keep a focus on community employment and to identify priority areas and recommend action plans. Time was spent this year reviewing accomplishments and progress based on DDS’s original strategic plan in order to assess and pinpoint current needs and determine next steps.

Margaret Van Gelder, SELN Lead State Contact

Elin Howe, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services


MICHIGAN

In February 2013, Michigan’s Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Administration (BHDDA) launched a pilot “employment data dashboard” with five local Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs). The employment data dashboard will track average monthly hours worked and average earnings received by individuals supported with Medicaid funding at each local Community Mental Health Service Program. Employment status will be noted as earning over minimum wage by Individual, Community-based Small Group, Ability One Contracts, Clubhouse, Community-based Large Group and less than minimum wage in Large Group or Facility Based.

These five CMHSPs serve 15 of Michigan’s 83 counties. Two CMHSPs have provided consistent monthly feedback, which led to BHDDA’s decision to include similar data tracking from all CMHSPs beginning January 1, 2014.

Proposed draft language for an Employment First policy or legislation has been offered by joint advocacy organizations. A statewide forum for discussion and vetting will be used to gain consensus from a wide range of participants.

BHDDA is working closely with statewide autism workgroups also focused on increasing employment outcomes. This partnership has helped incorporate specialized strategies, such as discovery and customized employment, into school and adult services. The workgroups and BHDDA continue to build on individual interests, skills, and



talents to achieve more integrated outcomes for job seekers with autism.

Michigan collaborated with multiple state agencies and stakeholders to submit an application for a federal PROMISE grant (Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income). This grant has a strong focus on developing effective navigators helping youth and their families navigate the maze of agencies and services to achieve positive expectations. The goal is to increase earnings, education, and assets to achieve a more promising future.

As a participant in the National Core Indicators (NCI) project, Michigan is adopting and using the NCI performance and outcome measures. This is helping state agency staff to understand the experience of people with developmental disabilities who are served by the community mental health system.

The indicators also show performance in key areas, including employment, health and safety, and community integration. BHDDA will use the NCI measures to help focus oversight activities and to guide quality improvement priorities and collaborative efforts.

Joe Longcor, SELN Lead State Contact

Lynda Zeller, Deputy Director Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration

Michigan Department of Community Health


Proposed draft language for an Employment First policy or legislation has been offered by joint advocacy organizations. A statewide forum for discussion and vetting will be used to gain consensus from a wide range of participants.

MISSOURI

The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), along with key partners such as the Show-Me-Careers (SMC) project, has invested significant time and resources to improve integrated employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) across the state. DDD is engaging in several activities to increase the competency of employment specialists by offering free access to the web-based College of Employment Services (CES) training. The numbers of certified benefits management specialists are being increased through a training collaboration with the Region VII Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center.

All transition youth and employment coordinators in the state have completed the CES training, and a quality enhancement process is in place to track compliance and ensure additional training in areas of challenge. Missouri developed new individualized support plan guidelines mandating that employment/career readiness be addressed for individuals from 14–64 years of age, with statewide training to support those efforts.

The Show-Me-Careers (SMC) project targets youth ages 16–30 with IDD who are transitioning from secondary



or post-secondary educational settings to integrated community employment. The project, part of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Partnerships in Employment grant, developed a framework to identify, expand, and share effective school-to-work practices. It provide a compass to guide and focus local consortium efforts. The framework also gives a context through which to review and identify funding, policy, and other changes that are needed to expand these practices on a community and statewide basis.

Eight Missouri pilot communities were chosen through a competitive application process to test ideas on how to bring real and lasting change in the area of transition from school to adult life. Pilot communities developed plans tailored to their local needs and resources. Each community pilot site has begun activities around the guiding principles of the Partnerships in Employment framework.

Julia LePage, SELN Lead State Contact
Bernie Simons, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities
Missouri Department of Mental Health

Missouri developed new individualized support plan guidelines mandating that employment/career readiness be addressed for individuals from 14–64 years of age, with statewide training to support those efforts.


MONTANA

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

With the help of the Montana SELN project team, the Division implemented significant changes to day and employment waiver services effective July 1, 2013. Before July, the waiver offered supported employment and day habilitation as work/day service options. There are now more specific waiver services for supported employment services, including individual employment support, follow-along support, co-worker support, and small group employment support. Prevocational services and day habilitation services were redefined as well.

The Division formed a workgroup charged with providing guidance for a new employment outcome data collection system. This system will be used to track and improve performance management.

With the help of the Montana SELN project team, the Division implemented significant changes to day and employment waiver services.



Additionally, the Division along with the VR system drafted and awarded a contract for the development of curriculum for employment specialists (to be implemented by the end of the fiscal year). This training option will improve base-knowledge between the two systems, particularly given shared providers.

During the 2013-2014 membership year, Montana will focus on improving the transition experience for youth as they move from school to employment or to post-secondary education.

Kelly McNurlin, SELN Lead State Contact
Jeff Sturm, DD Program Director, Disability Services Division
Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services

NEVADA

Nevada's tenure in the SELN has enhanced its capacity to develop, implement, and support an integrated employment initiative that has improved employment outcomes and momentum in the state.

During the 2012 membership year, Nevada Developmental Services moved from the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services to the Aging and Disability Services Division within the Department of Health and Human Services. This change aligns similar services options within the same Division.


The Aging and Disability Service Division (ADSD) has collaborated extensively with state agencies, including the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) and the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED). This collaboration is helping Nevada to engage individuals with disabilities in work in the community for competitive wages. With the support of this collaboration, thirteen Nevada agencies accelerated their organizational pace to help individuals engage in competitive work.

Also, a collaborative customized employment project uses a person-centered and braided funding strategy to carve positions in Nevada businesses based on each job seeker's strengths, interests, and skills. BVR provides funding for job development, the NCED provides job carving and job development services, and ADSD identifies the individual to be served and provides ongoing service coordination and follow-along supports. More information on this customized employment project and a success video can be found on the NCED website (nced.info/cep).

In 2012, the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) created an Employment First Ad Hoc Committee (EFAHC) to continue working on barriers and solutions identified during the 2010 Employment Policy Summit. The EFAHC is working to create a cohesive team approach with all agencies involved with disability support.

Community Based Career Exploration Summer Camp has been another collaborative achievement across

A collaborative customized employment project uses a person-centered and braided funding strategy to carve positions in Nevada businesses based on each job seeker's strengths, interests, and skills.



Nevada. This program brings together the resources of the BVR, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living, Washoe County School District, NCED, and NGCDD to produce a one-week summer camp experience where children engage in activities that introduce them to the world of community work

Another innovative program is Pathways to Work, a collaborative effort between High Sierra Industries (a community provider), ADSD, and BVR. Pathways to Work provides intensive soft skill development to prepare individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to leave facility-based settings and enter the competitive workforce.

The Home and Community-Based Services waiver renewal for IDD reflects a modified core employment services definition and new career planning service to generate an increase in paid support for integrated employment outcomes across the state. With technical assistance from the SELN, the Division offered a one-day learning event on career planning to over 24 community providers and 57 participants in three regions as part of an introduction to a new Career Exploration waiver service. During this session participants explored the role and importance of purposeful and deliberate planning for employment, strategies and tools that support a person centered approach, how to place an emphasis on strengths and interests, understanding how interventions vary over time as circumstances change, and utilizing a network of engaged team members to develop a range of realistic options for an individual.


Rosie Melarkey, SELN Lead State Contact
Jane Gruner, Administrator, Administrator
Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division

NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) has continued to engage in the Employment First initiative announced by Governor Chris Christie in April 2012. This initiative embraces the philosophy that competitive employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred post-education outcome for people with any type of disability.

A workgroup of leaders from the various divisions of DHS has begun meeting regularly. These divisions are the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the Division of Disability Services (DDS), the Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired, and the Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services. The workgroup discusses issues related to employment for people with disabilities, and coordinates efforts to support competitive employment.

DDD has developed a new, uniform, and standard plan of care ; a planning tool has been developed to assist individuals and their families in choosing employment paths, addressing potential barriers, and identifying services and supports.



During National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October 2012, DHS released an Employment First video and over 20 additional videos—one for each working day—of people with disabilities in the workforce. The DHS website launched an interactive Employment First toolkit that provides resources to individuals with disabilities who are working and need support, or who wish to work and need some direction.

Representatives from DHS met with the New Jersey Business Action Center (BAC), created by Governor Christie to consolidate all economic development activities under Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno. At the meeting, DHS and BAC staff discussed Employment First and the supports, services, and resources that are available to businesses and employees with disabilities through DHS. This resulted in DHS involvement in several BAC events, and has led to continued discussions of the benefits that hiring employees with disabilities can bring to businesses.

DDD has developed a new, uniform, and standard plan of care that will be used for everyone receiving services. This includes a mandate that at least one outcome identified in each individualized service plan (ISP) must be employment related. A planning tool has been developed to assist individuals and their families in choosing employment paths, addressing potential barriers, and identifying services and supports. DDD has also updated New Jersey's waiver system to include career planning and prevocational training.

DDS has hired per-diem peer mentors to assist individuals with disabilities who are leaving nursing homes to attain employment. DDS also manages NJ WorkAbility, a Medicaid buy-in program with over 9,000 individuals with disabilities participating.

In addition, DDS oversees Disability Benefits 101 (DB101), a custom-designed website in English and Spanish. New Jersey is one of the few states to have such a website, which allows individuals with disabilities to learn about the impact that working and earning income will have on their public benefits.

This year, DHS worked with the SELN to finalize the Findings and Observations Report and began developing a workplan. The SELN project team visited New Jersey to present their findings and share approaches from other states. The team also provided guidance as DDD explored their intention to shift state funding from sheltered workshops into other services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Jennifer Joyce, SELN Lead State Contact

Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner Division of Developmental Disabilities

New Jersey Department of Human Services



NEW MEXICO

New Mexico's Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) has worked with the SELN this past year on developing employment outcomes, data collection, and reporting systems. In fall 2013, a new module to capture community inclusion data will be added to the Therap platform. Therap is a web-based data management system used by DDSD to facilitate reporting on employment and other important community integration services in New Mexico.

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

Building a sustainable, competent workforce is a critical element in the systems-change work in the state. Several years ago, with assistance from the SELN, New Mexico developed and implemented a curriculum to enhance the competency of employment staff. This curriculum is now being revisited for quality improvements and to more deeply embed professional development efforts across the state.

Mila Mansaram, SELN Lead State Contact

Pat Syme, Bureau Chief

Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

Cathy Stevenson, Director, Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, New Mexico Department of Health

Regional ELNs have planned and sponsored local events to highlight career successes of people with developmental disabilities, and to recognize employers who hire them.



NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina, through support from the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, continued its focus on increasing integrated employment outcomes and improving employment policies and systems during the 2012–2013 year.

The NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) is the lead agency for SELN membership. This year, the DMH/DD/SAS renewed its memorandum of understanding with the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). Partnerships with DVRS and other state agencies like the Division of Medical Assistance and the Department of Public Instruction are stronger as a result of joint efforts and SELN support.

The Employment First steering committee continues to develop a statewide policy while providing education to families, individuals, and provider communities. This year, the state also developed the North Carolina Employment First Technical Assistance Center. The center guides training and consultation around best practices in employment services.

The SELN assisted North Carolina in reviewing proposed service definitions. The Network provided input and suggested language, with a particular emphasis on approaches that will align with the move towards Employment First and are inclusive of best practices for the IDD population.

In conjunction with the Council's initiatives, North Carolina began discussion and strategies on a workplan for school-to-work transitions. The goals are to increase the number of students leaving school and going directly into integrated employment, and to support individuals transitioning from center-based programs to integrated employment.

A large focus this year has been on understanding employment services within a managed-care context. The SELN has provided invaluable resources, ranging from state comparisons to guidance around contracts and performance improvement projects.

The DMH/DD/SAS will continue to address common themes and goals as identified in the state workplan, supported through the SELN's Findings and Observations Report. These include developing a better outcome data-collection system and stronger relationships with other state agencies.

Finally, with help from the SELN, North Carolina is exploring braided funding mechanisms. These will help to maximize resources and share responsibilities among state agencies in financing employment supports for individuals with IDD.

A large focus this year has been on understanding employment services within a managed-care context. The SELN has provided invaluable resources, ranging from state comparisons to guidance around contracts and performance improvement projects.

Emery Cowan, SELN Lead State Contact

Dave Richard, Director, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, Department of Health and Human Services



OHIO

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) joined the SELN in July 2011 with support from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council. Ohio is in its second year of implementing its Employment First initiative, which was launched via governor's executive order in March 2012.

The governor's Employment First Taskforce approved nine recommendations to guide successful implementation. The Employment First Advisory Committee, a diverse group representing public and private organizations, is working to put these into practice. The recommendations made by the governor include revising agency policies to remove barriers to community employment and develop processes for blended funding for integrated service delivery, coordinating with school-based services, and instituting a data-collection system to track employment outcomes.

DODD launched an Employment First website, www.ohioemploymentfirst.org, to provide information related to the initiative, including updates on benefits counseling, opportunities for trainings, and other events. The site will eventually host data results as well.

Ohio's inaugural Employment First Conference took place in June 2013, reflecting a great deal of statewide interest in Employment First. The conference provided a platform to interact with participants from a variety of backgrounds, and made community employment efforts visible to a large, diverse group.

DODD is developing an Employment First rule, which will ensure all individuals with developmental disabilities have opportunities to pursue community employment. The rule presumes all working-age adults are capable of community employment, and outlines a person-centered planning process. Person-centered planning identifies strengths, interests, and abilities, and identifies a path to community employment. The rule also directs county boards of developmental disabilities to implement an Employment First policy at the local level that sets benchmarks for success.

The Employment First Advisory Committee's training plan for providers took a creative approach to professional development planning. The committee asked local communities to apply to become teams of "Local Leaders." Six teams were selected, and include members from county boards of developmental disabilities, self-advocates, employment providers, employers, vocational rehabilitation staff, educators, and others.

These teams will receive assistance to complete a needs assessment, prepare a professional development action plan, and create a local interagency agreement. DODD will use the information gathered during the assessment process to build a statewide training plan.

A national expert, Dr. Rob Cimera, is currently developing DODD's data collection system. It will track data on individuals in employment services, including hours worked, wages earned, and duration of job placements. This system will allow DODD to make data-driven policy decisions about employment services.

Kristen Helling, SELN State Lead Contact

John L. Martin, Director, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

The rule presumes all working-age adults are capable of community employment, and outlines a person-centered planning process.



OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) remained an active SELN member through the previous year, strategically aligning key activities under new leadership. DDSD's overarching philosophy and system infrastructure is intended to reduce reliance on public supports. DDSD's system of supports is predicated on the belief that the overall goal of publicly-funded services is full-time employment in the community at prevailing wage; this has been reinforced in state rules and policies for more than ten years and provides a solid foundation for increased outcome expectations across the state.

DDSD's system of supports is predicated on the belief that the overall goal of publicly-funded services is full-time employment in the community at prevailing wage.

DDSD remained committed to the goal of building a focused state workplan with input from key system partners to strengthen an Employment First focus statewide and increase the capacity to support more individuals in integrated employment. To achieve this DDSD led a cross-agency workgroup focused on identifying priority areas for systems change. The group met regularly and utilized time with the SELN project team to weigh different options, analyze the state's current performance against target goals, and determine which of the top priorities could and should be realistically addressed.

Because of DDSD's novel approach to funding - utilizing a performance/outcome-based system that reimburses providers for consumer outcomes, staff are often called upon to share insights and lessons learned with other states. DDSD staff and partners from other state systems commit considerable time to this cross-state collaboration by addressing questions and dialoguing on using a similar approach in other states.

Through a close working relationship with other systems, in particular the vocational rehabilitation and the education systems respectively, key targets include: improving the understanding of the value of work and how income and public benefits may intersect, building a stronger approach to transition for students leaving high school and accessing adult service systems, and collecting better employment outcome data for more detailed analysis of return on investment. DDSD is acutely aware of the need for improved data collection and reporting to support initiatives and priority goals.

Regina Chace, SELN Lead State Contact

JoAnne Goin, Division Administrator, Developmental Disabilities Services Oklahoma Dept of Human Services



TEXAS

In FY 2012, the Promoting Independence Advisory Committee's Subcommittee on Employment for People with Disabilities met monthly. This group provides input into activities of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), with a goal of developing Employment First policies. These policies support competitive employment in integrated settings as the preferred outcome for individuals with disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

The subcommittee includes disability employment stakeholders (e.g., long-term care providers, case managers/service coordinators, advocates, individuals with disabilities) and representatives from the following state agencies:

- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)
- Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
- Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
- Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Among other activities, the group drafted an Employment First vision and principles to guide its work.

DADS continued to negotiate a data exchange with TWC, and will combine the resulting new information with internal service data and DARS data. The goal of the data exchange is to track employment outcomes of individuals receiving services, and to evaluate outcomes in the context of service use and costs. This area represents years of work between the different systems, and will greatly assist DADS with making data-driven decisions.

DADS also drafted a document called "Guide to Employment for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Conditions," and anticipates posting it to the DADS website in fall 2013. The guide provides information about obtaining and maintaining competitive, integrated employment to individuals with IDD, their families, and support staff. Many of these people offered input as the guide was developed.

HHSC, DADS, DARS, DSHS, and DFPS collaborated to improve employment services coordination, including piloting a service planning tool. The tool guides an individual and their support team to consider the individual's interests and strengths, and the supports available to them, before applying for DARS vocational rehabilitation services. Agency staff are evaluating the pilot, and have begun to prepare regional training based on preliminary results.

DADS is implementing a five-year Money Follows the Person Demonstration Employment Pilot Project. This will provide short-term administrative funds to intermediate care facilities for individuals with IDD and/or Medicaid

The goal of the inter system data exchange is to track employment outcomes of individuals receiving services, and to evaluate outcomes in the context of service use and costs.



1915(c) waiver providers.

This funding will assist provider agencies in shifting their focus from facility-based and non-work services to employment services. It will also create policies and practices within these agencies that are consistent with an Employment First philosophy. DADS is soliciting proposals from providers for participation in the pilot.

The Texas legislature passed several bills to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities:

- S.B. 1226 directs the HHSC (the parent agency for DADS, DARS, DSHS, and DFPS), TEA, and TWC to jointly adopt and implement an Employment First policy and establish an Employment First task force.
- S.B. 45 directs HHSC to add employment services to all of the Medicaid waivers operated by the state.
- S.B. 617 directs TEA to require that each school district (or shared services arrangement) assign at least one employee to serve as a transition and employment designee for students in special education programs.
- S.B. 7 outlines a system redesign for long-term services and supports through managed care expansions. It also describes quality improvement strategies and goals, including requirements to measure and promote employment outcomes.

Adrienne Nevola, SELN Lead State Contact

Chris Adams, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services


VIRGINIA

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) continues to lead Virginia's efforts to improve employment outcomes for people with all forms of disabilities through a broad-based systems-change initiative. The Virginia SELN Advisory Group, made up of advocates, providers, and state agencies, identifies roadblocks and disincentives in the current system of employment programming.

The group is developing strategies for implementation of a system that prioritizes employment as an outcome of services. As a result of these efforts, DBHDS was able to produce a strategic plan for Employment First for Virginia's Department of Justice settlement agreement. This plan, which is consistently evaluated for effectiveness and updated, outlines a process for realistically increasing integrated employment opportunities for people receiving disability services. This is seen as the roadmap to Employment First.

One of the essential elements of a successful Employment First initiative in Virginia is a strong collaborative effort by all state agencies involved. In November 2012, with facilitation by SELN project team members, Virginia held its first meeting of the Interagency Employment Workgroup.

This plan, which is consistently evaluated for effectiveness and updated, outlines a process for realistically increasing integrated employment opportunities for people receiving disability services.



At this meeting, the group had commissioner- and director-level attendance and support from the major state agencies involved with employment, including DBHDS, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Department of Education, the Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This group continues to meet on a regular basis to discuss how to best coordinate efforts.

In January 2013, the State Board for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities approved an Employment First policy. This policy directs case management within the Community Service Board system to offer employment as the first and priority option for people receiving day services. The annual performance contract for Virginia's system of Community Service Boards now includes measurable goals for integrated employment outcomes.

In October 2012, Virginia held its second annual Employment First summit. Individuals with disabilities and representatives from employment service organizations, advocacy groups, community service boards, and state agencies met to discuss programs and efforts to provide integrated employment. Attendees identified steps to help change the employment system for people with disabilities in Virginia.

This past year, in recognition of the National Governors Association's initiative called "A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities," the governor issued Executive Order 55. This order instructs state agencies to collaborate on increasing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to engage in integrated work. State government employers participated in workshops to help them understand the benefits of employing people with disabilities.

With the help of the SELN project team, Virginia is developing its data collection procedures to improve employment service options. DBHDS has signed memorandums of understanding with a number of state agencies to share and develop baseline data to evaluate progress.

Adam Sass, SELN Lead State Contact

Olivia Garland, PhD, Deputy Commissioner

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services



WASHINGTON

The state of Washington's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is a national leader in employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The state IDD system is often recognized for its sustained leadership and commitment to employment for all working-age adults as the best way to achieve personal development and economic self-sufficiency.

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

Along with belief and leadership, achieving typical employment for all in the workforce requires serious, sustained commitment to training, technical assistance, and tracking and publishing data on employment outcomes. Other priorities include communicating success stories, ensuring rewarding and meaningful employment opportunities for each young adult leaving school, and demonstrated continued commitment to innovation. Current innovative projects include iPad Learning, the Roads to Community Living Autism cohort, the Employment Professional certificate program through Highline Community College, as well as a variety of School to Work transition projects throughout Washington State.

DDA works with counties, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and local school districts to ensure that school transition programs lead to employment, particularly for people between ages 18 and 21. A statewide stakeholder workgroup developed and described a) the essential elements of integrated employment, b) a consistent allocation methodology for county employment services based on individual support need, and c) a common understanding of the supports integral to achieving employment service outcomes. Based on this work, DDA began using information about each individual's support need acuity (high, medium, and low) and wage-earning history when determining the total allocation to each county for employment.

DDA has also partnered with the state's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to evaluate the return on investment in employment support services, and to establish a statewide network that provides benefits planning funded by multiple systems. The Roads to Community Living grant is also supporting a project to develop best practices in employing people with the most severe disabilities, as well as piloting work on assistive technology to help in developing work skills.

Washington collects monthly data online on employment outcomes, wages, hours, benefits, places of work, etc., and has collaborated with the SELN to make the data available across the state. DDA is also working with the Institute for Community Inclusion on a data study that investigates agency expenditures on employment supports in hopes to find answers to questions such as:

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

- How are funds expended to provide individual employment services?
- Is there a relationship between expenditures on individual employment services and outcomes?
- What do longitudinal data tell us about expenditures on individual employment services over time?
- How do expenditures for individual employment vary based on personal characteristics, including cognitive performance and assessed support needs for community access and employment?
- Does individual employment act as a vehicle for shifting consumers to benefits programs that are less costly to states, e.g., from SSI to SSDI?

Branda Matson, SELN State Lead Contact

Evelyn Perez, Assistant Secretary,

Developmental Disabilities Services Administration Washington Department of Social and Health Services

WYOMING

The Wyoming Department of Health - Behavioral Health Division was instructed through legislation in 2013 to redesign the waiver system and develop a new Supports Waiver and Comprehensive Waiver for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These new waivers will replace the current Adult Developmental Disabilities and Child Developmental Disabilities waivers, and will serve more people from the wait list as the state incurs cost savings from the redesign. Stakeholder input identified the need for waivers that follow along closely with national trends and best practices in supported employment.

The Division has worked with the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities at the University of Wyoming to sponsor a pilot job coaching and job-development training curriculum.

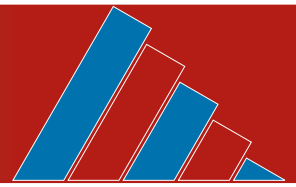
The services funded by the new waivers include supported employment follow along and employment discovery and customization. These services are funded higher than congregate day services, with more flexibility in service delivery. All day services are now in 15-minute units, so services can be sequenced according to a person's needs throughout the day. With these changes, the Division expects waiver participants who are unemployed or underemployed to explore new employment options to find jobs that meet their goals.

The Division has worked with the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities at the University of Wyoming to sponsor a pilot job coaching and job-development training curriculum for up to 30 people. Twenty-seven people completed a Virginia Commonwealth University job coaching and job-development training course. Next, the graduates will participate in bimonthly calls to discuss their training, share success stories, and brainstorm ideas.

The Division plans to increase provider qualifications in the new waivers, requiring at least one employee from each supported employment provider to successfully complete training from a nationally recognized entity.

Jamie Staunton, SELN Lead State Contact

Chris Newman, Senior Administrator, Behavioral Health Division Wyoming Department of Health



Workgroups

Data Users Workgroup

The goal of the Data Users workgroup is to increase each state's strategic access and use of available service and outcome data. Discussions and activities were based on examples of data work and questions participants brought to each meeting. Participation is voluntary and includes active discussion. The workgroup held three discussions (October, February, April) in 2012-2013 and over 20 states participated.

Each session focused on a specific data-related issue impacting state intellectual and developmental disability systems. Staff from select SELN states shared knowledge gained from their experiences planning and conducting state data-related activity.

October 2012: highlighted New Mexico's data management plan progress. The group addressed questions such as:

- What are/were the drivers or catalyst for addressing data management activities?
- What are the state's data management goals?
- What activities are underway to address those goals?
- What reports will be generated and how will they be used?
- Why add fields to the state's current platform?
- What are the challenges in embedding this work into an existing MIS system?

February 2013: hosted open dialogue time with member states with each sharing an update on current data management activities, challenges, and successes. Participants addressed key questions during the group dialogue to help build momentum for this critical area of a state's infrastructure:

- What are your state's data management goals?
- Where are you in achieving them?
- What's working well and successes?
- What is getting in the way?
- What are the next steps?

April 2013: Texas provided information on data sharing between state systems and the last three years of work by describing:

- The typical long and winding road to share data, including legal hurdles.
- The importance of defining shared goals across systems to drive priorities.
- Key data-sharing elements for the written agreements.
- Plans for reporting and using the resulting information.



Supporting Individuals with Criminal Backgrounds in Employment Workgroup

This workgroup explores the intersection between employment supports and the criminal justice system across member states. Involvement with the criminal justice system increases the difficulties people with intellectual and development disabilities face in obtaining employment. To be effective, state agencies should be aware of the available resources and the promising strategies.

The workgroup provided access to content experts and resources, and an opportunity for SELN member states to dialogue on the topic. Three presentations facilitated by Randy Loss, PA's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, were offered. Fifteen states participated in the workgroup.

Demystifying the criminal justice system with Dr. Beverly Frantz, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University

Dr. Frantz provided an overview of the criminal justice system and tips on how to navigate individuals through the system with minimum harm including:

- What happens when someone with an intellectual or developmental disability comes into contact with the criminal justice system as a witness, victim, or defendant?
- Does it make a difference if one person has a disability and the other person does not?
- If both people have a disability?
- Can a single agency support both the victim and alleged offender?

Community resources with Melanie G. Snyder, executive director of the Lancaster County (PA) Reentry Management Organization (RMO)

The discussion focused on how to support former offenders with IDD in the reentry process including:

- What are “collateral consequences” of a criminal record?
- What are the common barriers and needs that arise as a result of incarceration and reentry?
- How do you identify local/regional resources in your area that may help with criminal justice-involved IDD clients?
- What are the potential challenges in collaborating with criminal justice resources and ways to overcome them?

Employment for people with criminal backgrounds with John Rakis, consultant

John Rakis presented on the importance of building trust among community employers and the public through networking and marketing including:

- How does familiarity with local employers improve offender employment outcomes?
- How to discuss the employment potential of an individual with a criminal background?
- How to prepare an individual with a criminal background for job interviews and interaction with future employers?

Continued discussions are planned for the 2013-2014 membership year.



Monthly Meetings 2012

Monthly meetings provide SELN members with the opportunity to talk about common areas of concern or effort. Many states wrestle with similar challenges, but address them differently given the politics, culture, and economy in their state. The meetings are a time for building awareness, 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.

2012 Meeting Topics

- Melanie Jordan from the ICI provided an update on Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) grants.
- SELN members from Arizona (Linda Tasco), Oklahoma (Regina Chace), and Virginia (Adam Sass) shared their thoughts and experiences on the importance of a state-level employment lead in their states. Staff in Missouri (Nancy Nickolaus, Megan Fitzgerald, and Kristy Freed) shared details on how employment leads at the local and regional levels increase individuals' access to employment services.
- David Hoff from the ICI provided an overview of the public workforce development system. He offered examples of opportunities for connection with each state's IDD system of supports, and clarified why connecting with that system should be pursued.
- LeAnn Moskowitz from the Iowa Department of Human Services led a conversation on reasons that the funding system for employment supports, including rates and methodologies, was revised in her state. She offered advice on gathering information for agency leadership, capitalizing on grassroots support, and dealing with resistance.
- Colleen Gauruder and Ralph Lollar from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provided an overview of the CMS's Informational Bulletin (Bulletin) regarding 1915c waiver employment and employment related services.
- Michael Murray, the Diversity Program Manager from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, shared ideas on increasing federal employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the country.
- Dan Berland from NASDDDS addressed the impact of the Affordable Care Act on developmental disabilities agencies nationwide



Annual Meeting

The 2012 Annual Meeting was held in Alexandria, Virginia. SELN state lead contacts and developmental disabilities agencies directors gathered to discuss funding systems that prioritize employment services.

Facilitated dialogues emphasized ways to define and implement:

- Employment system goals
- Critical elements comprising each funding rate
- Continuous improvement practices

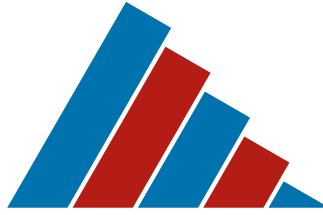
An output of the meeting was a document called “State Intellectual and Developmental Disability Agencies’ Funding Rates for Employment and Day Services.” The document will be used in conjunction with the next series of SELN Funding workgroup meetings, providing a small group of states an opportunity to explore the reasons, processes, and players involved in revising funding methodologies.

From Insights to Action

Our systems of support are facing the startling reality that what took decades to build must now be revisited and redesigned. At the core of many systems change efforts is a commitment to helping individuals craft meaningful lives with employment viewed as an integral aspect to be addressed. Employment First statements are being put to the test. Creativity is the new dominant value and legacy thinking is being faced head on. We continue to reinforce the importance of starting, of working through the elements in the Framework for Employment and valuing the role and influence of key partners, particularly individuals and family members. The glimpse in to states’ systems change in this report reflects the hard work and commitment needed to make transformation happen, and we value your active participation.

“There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth.
We are all crew.”

—Marshall McLuhan



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State Employment Leadership Network



www.seln.org