



State Employment Leadership Network

About the SELN

Launched in July 2006 as a joint initiative of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the SELN supports states to improve integrated employment outcomes. The SELN is a membership-based network of state developmental disability (DD) agencies committed to making changes in their service systems.

The SELN is a community of practice where members meet to connect, collaborate, and share information and lessons learned across state lines and system boundaries. Participating state agency officials build cross-community support for pressing employment-related issues and policies at state and federal levels. States commit to work together and engage in a series of activities to analyze key elements in their systems to improve the integrated employment outcomes for their citizens with developmental disabilities. With the membership year running July 1 – June 30, states focus the work over twelve months based on a customized work plan unique to each state's circumstances. The SELN helps states develop, implement, and support integrated employment initiatives that are designed to improve employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.

Why work is important

People with disabilities are standing up and demanding system changes that allow for greater opportunities for economic self-sufficiency. Employment is key to making that happen. As we hear over and over from self-advocates and families, people want: “REAL WORK for REAL PAY”.

The SELN provides a forum for states to:

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

In addition to ongoing individualized consultative calls with member states, the Network membership meets monthly to discuss relevant topics, and share updates and emerging strategies. The following list illustrates the range of topics from recent discussions:

- ❖ Workforce development competencies/ training efforts underway in states
- ❖ Wage data comparisons across state DD agencies and state unemployment insurance
- ❖ Transition from school to work, including updates from special education resources
- ❖ Postsecondary options and projects
- ❖ National service experiences as an option on the path to employment
- ❖ Employer-run support services
- ❖ Understanding and using labor market information
- ❖ Collaborative work across DD agencies and the vocational rehabilitation system
- ❖ Accessible transportation options

States are focused on a variety of systems-change activities including:

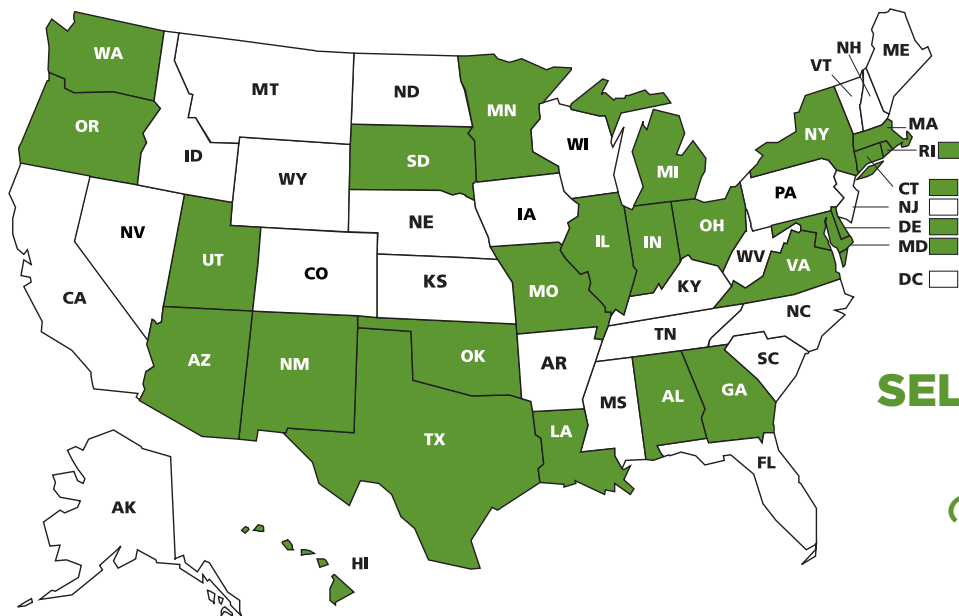
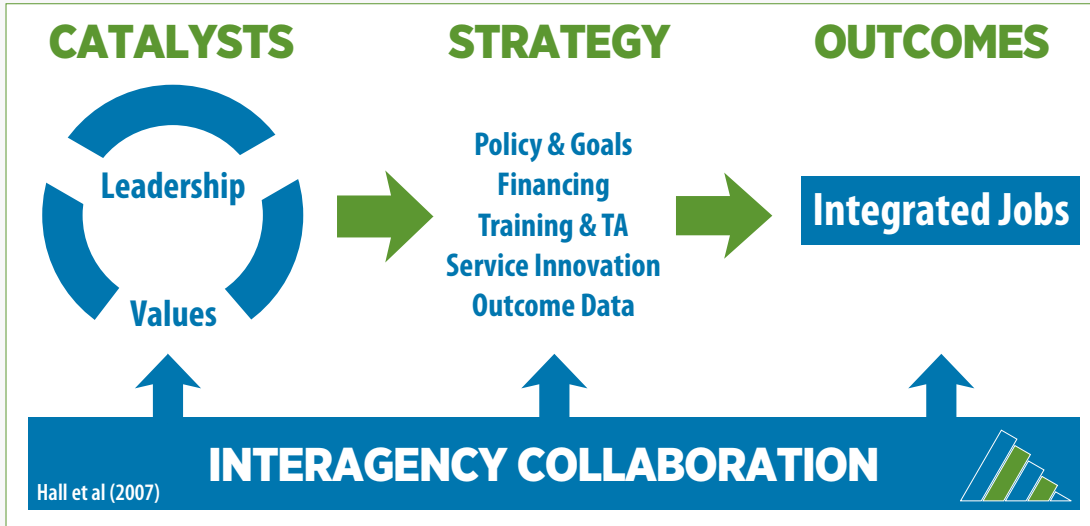
- ❖ Waiver service definitions
- ❖ Employment first policies and strategies
- ❖ Funding and rate methodology changes
- ❖ Sharing data across state agencies
- ❖ Collecting and reporting on employment-outcomes data
- ❖ Implementing core competency training for employment-related staff

The Employment Framework

The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, is used to guide SELN strategic implementation for system improvements. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

Elements of a High-Performing Employment System

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



SELN Member States
(as of 7/2022)



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The SELN is a joint program of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.

For additional information:

Wesley Anderson | wanderson@nasddd.org
Suzanne Freeze | suzanne.freeze@umb.edu

www.selnhub.org