Using values-based payments to strengthen transition

The Washington Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) identified engaging students in targeted-employment planning earlier in their school career as a priority strategy. The goal is to increase the number of students who enter jobs or postsecondary education at school exit. To do this, DDA developed a Job Foundation report to guide partnership between school staff and the adult service system. This starts the second year before school exit and is earlier than job development would typically begin with the vocational rehabilitation system. The Job Foundation document establishes a plan for employment.

Starting in fall 2020, DDA will provide a values-based payment to a student’s chosen service provider at completion of the Job Foundation report during a student’s second-to-last-year in high school to set the stage for referral to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and establish a career path earlier in the transition process. Community-based employment providers will use their expertise to gather important foundational information about skills and supports needed for a job. They will partner with school staff to leverage vocational, academic, and life skill preparation being done in the schools on behalf of the individual student. The intent is that with a completed Job Foundation, a student and their team will have an actionable next step for employment and begin either a community-based assessment or job placement plan funded by DVR in their last year of high school.

The values-based payment initiative also emphasizes rapid employment after school exit for individuals who have high support needs. Employment providers will receive outcome payments in addition to the funding for services they receive from DVR if those individuals enter jobs quickly and work 10 or more hours per week. These value-based payments will be made using DDA funds.

Job Foundation
Second-to-last year of high school
Student age 19-20
- 428 out of 865 (2022 grads) DDA students complete work foundation report with a provider
- DDA puts into county contracts to administer this and outcome payment of $2,400 to provider

Job Development
Last year of high school
Student age 20-21
- Student referred to DVR through traditional methods (including school to work)
- Provide DVR/County/DDA with work foundation report
- DVR commits to opening plans in fall of final year. DVR/provider determine if community-based assessment is needed and if student is ready for it

Job by June
Graduated high school
Student age 21-22
Tiered outcome payment will be made for high acuity within the transition fiscal year if job placement is by:
- Sept 30 - $1,500
- Dec. 31 - $1,000
- March 31 - $500
- June 30 - $250
- Additional $1,000 when working 10+ hours per week
The Employment Framework

Member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key informants to participate in discussions and workgroups to determine a state’s course of action. 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, is used to guide the SELN’s strategy 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.

- **Leadership.**
  Clear and unambiguous commitment to employment in individual community jobs at all levels in the system.

- **Strategic Goals and Operating Policies.**
  Employment is supported by program goals and operating practices.

- **Financing and Contracting Methods.**
  State resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices support integrated employment.

- **Training and Technical Assistance.**
  Investment in the development and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce.

- **Interagency Collaboration and Partnership.**
  Building relationships to remove barriers to employment supports.

- **Services and Service Innovation.**
  Service definitions and support strategies are structured and aligned to facilitate the delivery of employment supports.

- **Performance Measurement and Data Management.**
  Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes.