

Accomplishments Report

Membership Year 2015-2016



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

State Employment Leadership Network Accomplishments Report 2015-2016



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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.selnhub.org





Ten years can seem like a short horizon in some contexts, and very long in others. It is all a matter of perspective. In celebration, together we close the State Employment Leadership Network's tenth year and every one of the prior years' work. The anniversary marks a milestone of important growth and learning. We have selected a few highlights to share!

In 2006, our first year, the joining of the original thirteen member states signaled a strong commitment to uncovering and resolving state systems' challenges. The work of improving competitive integrated employment for people with significant disabilities is messy and critical.

We were pleasantly surprised and reassured that so many states would step forward to build the new venture, a true membership-driven community of practice. Each state recognized the need for vast improvements in quality services leading to real jobs and greater financial security for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In the years that followed, new states joined the SELN. In total, we have worked with 39 states through their investment in SELN membership. See our maps (on pages 2 & 3) to learn which states have been involved since 2006. This cadre of determined stakeholders in different parts of the country has established the rich foundation upon which we are building employment and economic opportunities, leading to greater quality of life for individuals and families.

The SELN was the first national organization to shine a spotlight on the need to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes in partnership with state intellectual and developmental disability systems. Data shows that states in the network are exhibiting positive change earlier than states not involved with the SELN.

Over the last decade, the SELN has consistently reinforced the core message that employment efforts are about creating opportunity for every individual in relationship to their family life and in balance with a community role and economic security. We have also helped state and national partners recognize the importance of persistent efforts over time to influence the needed cultural and political changes. We will continue that focus as new regulations and expectations challenge our current systems.

Each state recognized the need for vast improvements in quality services leading to real jobs and greater financial security for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

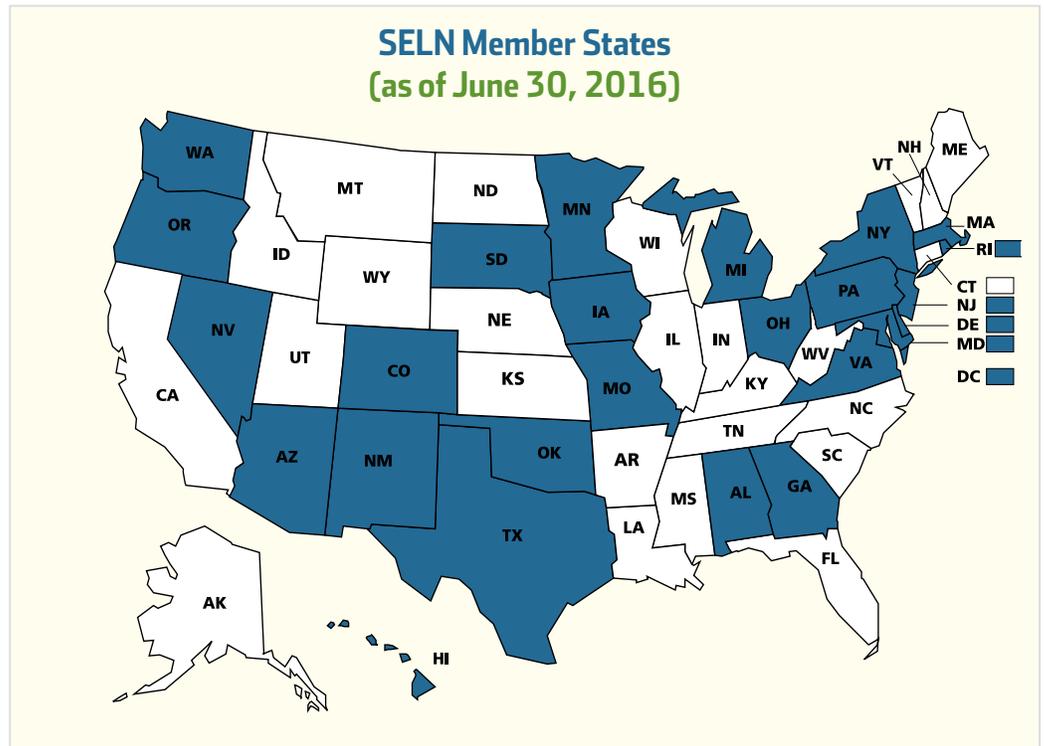
Suzanne Freeze, ICI

Rie Kennedy-Lizotte, NASDDDS



The SELN is a membership-based network of state IDD agencies committed to making changes in their service systems and improving competitive integrated employment outcomes. The project is organized to deliver technical assistance and support to participating state agencies during the membership year which runs July 1 through June 30. Responsibility for day-to-day management of the Network is shared by ICI and NASDDDS. Member states complete a strategic employment assessment process to pinpoint priorities to address through customized state level technical assistance. SELN members also share responsibility for identifying issues of common concern across states and designing the network's action agenda.

The SELN is a peer-based network striving to meet states where they are by basing customized technical supports on the culture and needs of each member state itself. In 2006, we shifted the employment conversation from "if" to "how," steadily growing our members during very difficult economic times and sustaining an extremely stable membership base over ten years. When people work together they synthesize many points of view, producing better results. The conversations and shared learning are what make the SELN work and we look forward to the next 10 years together!



“Monthly leadership calls keep us focused and on-track.”

“It’s valuable to have national-level information. It places a different emphasis on our work.”

The SELN provides a forum for states to:

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



SELN HISTORY

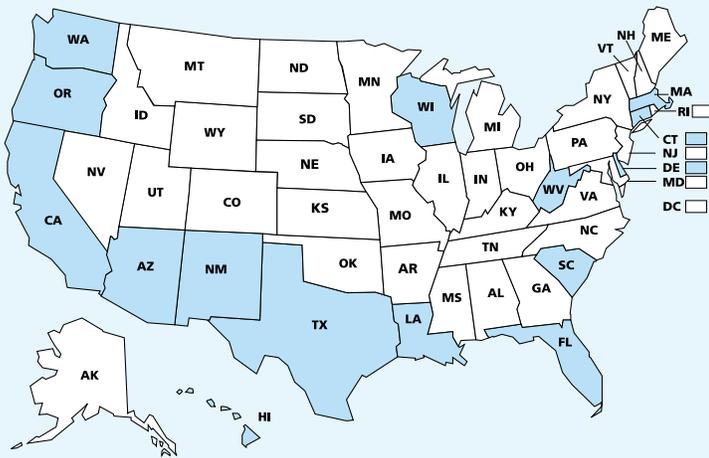


The SELN has influenced a shift toward clearer employment expectations. A renewed focus was needed and the SELN answered that call. The SELN has played a major role in starting a national employment dialogue across the country.

Since that time many other organizations have also joined the effort and are working with state and local systems. This includes federal funders and partners, advocacy organizations, membership associations,

and private consultants. In prior years an emphasis was placed on high level federal employment policy such as accessing public benefits or dictating service definitions. The SELN has focused on the dynamic between federal entities and states, and across states. SELN activities break down state to state barriers and move the dialogue to shared learning. Discussions of employment have moved from simply being about services to recognizing the massive organizational and cultural shifts needed to achieve improved outcomes.

**Original Member States
(2006–2007)**



**Past or Current Member States
(2006–2015)**



SELN TEN-YEAR REVIEW

In December 2015, the SELN project team contracted with Limelight Analytics, an evaluation and measurement firm recently formed by Dr. Mindy Hightower King, Dr. David Mank and Dr. Teresa Grossi from the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community participated as sub-contractors on the work.



Limelight Analytics was engaged to assist the SELN in answering key questions:

- As the SELN reaches its ten-year anniversary, how has it been most helpful to state networks? In

what ways does it need to shift its objectives or approaches?

- As the SELN looks forward, how should it evolve (in both focus and service delivery strategies) in order to best meet the needs of the state networks it supports?
- What is the potential impact of offering a different service structure that involves the delivery of different services based on states' readiness and capacity?

The review involved telephone interviews with contacts in 25 of the 26 SELN member states. The results of the review will be shared with the NASDDDS board and the SELN community in the fall of 2016.



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

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

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

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in 2014, improved services for individuals with disabilities to help them find and obtain competitive integrated employment. This language and specifically the term “competitive” used in WIOA is beginning to emerge in more and more state IDD policies, rules, and guidelines to staff in the field. State IDD systems have recognized the importance of highlighting the nature of employment services, as well as how and when to emphasize customized workplace supports to meet individuals’ needs as well as business needs.

The SELN will be hosting discussions with member states in the coming year to learn more about how service needs and community feedback are driving decisions about “what is employment” across the country.

What does Employment First mean?

Employment First means employment is considered the option of choice for citizens with disabilities, rather than services in a sheltered workshop, a day habilitation program, or another segregated or non-inclusive setting.

States with Employment First agendas prioritize competitive integrated employment supports over other options and emphasize exploring employment and career pathways.





The members' individual and collective interests drive specific Network activities and products. Technical assistance and support is furnished

through several channels: network-wide online events, audio teleconferences, monthly member meetings, individual state calls, access to technical documents and online resources, state site visits, and direct discussion with content experts.

The SELN project team uses a "right time, right information" approach to meeting member needs. Challenges to systems change are often cyclical, and re-emerge as players change or certain catalysts enter the scene. By meeting member states where they are and acknowledging what will be most useful at that particular point in time, resources can be directed as needed. Themes emerge across all network and state-specific activities driving the areas of focus for upcoming membership years. What follows is a summary of the 2015–2016 activity areas.

Network Meetings 2015–2016

Monthly online meetings provide SELN members with routine opportunities for networking and discussion of common challenges and success strategies. Many states wrestle with similar challenges, but address them differently given the politics, culture, timing, and economy in their state. The meetings are a time for building awareness, networking, sharing, and learning how to continue the discussion through channels such as the Hub.

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

Topics this year included:

- ▶ The Role of State and Local IDD Systems in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regulations
- ▶ Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative and Strategy Design across the IDD and vocational rehabilitation systems
- ▶ Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities
- ▶ Sheltered Workshop Licensing Application and Implication
- ▶ State Employment Systems Performance Composite Indicators
- ▶ Conflict-free Case Management
- ▶ Key Policy Themes from the Impact of 2011 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Bulletin
- ▶ Assuring a Competent Workforce to Deliver Employment Services
- ▶ National APSE as an Advocacy Partner
- ▶ Supporting Families in an Age of Competing Demands

"What I enjoy most about these events is the opportunity to meet other individuals throughout the nation, the opportunity to network and to learn about efficient and effective practices from other states."

–Duane Shumate, Missouri



Annual Meeting October 2015

Inclusion and Employment: Fitting the Pieces Together

The 2015 SELN Annual Meeting in Alexandria, VA provided attendees an opportunity to explore the work of systems change through three lenses: how past experiences have shaped where we are today, what present actions and commitments states are involved in and why, and how to address future challenges. In this age of continual change, the pressures to keep up can often be daunting and complex.

During annual meetings, the SELN project team provides a platform for focused dialogue on the role of state IDD systems, particularly those states looking to innovate. The meeting goals include:

- ▶ Improving members' understanding of current priorities
- ▶ Networking and relationship-building across member states
- ▶ Gathering strategies and resources to share
- ▶ Energizing members' and colleagues' efforts

Guest speaker Sharon Lewis, former Principal Deputy Administrator of the Administration for Community Living, and Senior Advisor on Disability Policy to the Health and Human Services Secretary, joined the SELN Annual Meeting as the featured dinner speaker and provided a unique federal level perspective to states' systems change activities. Ms. Lewis challenged attendees to embrace the principles reflected in recent regulatory changes, using this time of great flux to catalyze a wide variety of support for their state's employment and community integration goals.

The project team hosted small group discussions to identify unique challenges across states and share actionable items each contact could take back

to their in-state colleagues. Different from past years, the bulk of the meeting's second full day consisted of attendees rotating through various small group topics to address core policy and practice questions, and dialogue with each other. The key topics for the meeting included:

- ▶ Community life engagement
- ▶ Supporting families and lifespan activities
- ▶ Engaging job seekers with disabilities
- ▶ Funding realignment
- ▶ Using data to measure outcomes

The annual meeting also provided an opportunity to launch the SELN's new online community, the SELN Hub. Attendees were invited to become new Hub members and join the platform's three-month beta test. The Hub serves as a central repository for materials and resources, provides a channel for member questions and answers on a wide range of systems change topics, and informs the network of member states through up-to-date information.

The annual meeting continues to serve as a prime networking and information-sharing event in during the membership year. The SELN project team looks forward to hosting this event each year and ensuring the experience provides an excellent use of time for our SELN contacts.





Data Users Group

Performance and accountability are system fundamentals when assessing whether service and outcome goals are being achieved. SELN member states are supported to focus on the features needed for data collection, analysis, and reporting through data user group meetings.

Additionally, members are asked to share the tools, techniques, and strategies that have facilitated successful performance management in their own state. Several states completed new employment reports that provide a historical perspective on the evolution of employment services and outcomes in their state, the current data picture, how their state compares nationally, and important catalysts to consider as the basis for systems change. These reports also reinforce the need to clearly articulate the goal of Employment First efforts, how to collaborate with other state and local systems to achieve employment goals, and options for collecting feedback from staff, families, individuals and advocacy organizations.

This working group met five times throughout the membership year to focus on:

- ▶ StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes (2014)
- ▶ Discussion of member data-related needs
- ▶ How to use current data while making system improvements
- ▶ Examples of outcome data use and reporting
- ▶ Elements of an outcome data system

State Funding Practices: Funding Realignment in State Intellectual and Developmental Disability Systems

All states are exploring how current funding practices are hindering or helping people to attain competitive integrated employment outcomes. States need to assess their employment goals, understand basic funding structure elements, and analyze whether funding supports the goals, and how to change the funding structure to meet future needs.

In March 2016, the SELN released the **“Funding Statement: An Essential Strategy to Support Integrated Employment.”** Through specific work with several SELN member states and our knowledge of state system’s historical funding practices, this document describes how states should think differently about the funding of employment services.

The following components are highlighted in the funding statement’s graphic: existing or needed inputs, evaluating information gathered through discussion activities, developing preliminary outputs, and implementing plans to achieve system level outcomes. These essential components must be considered within the context of the state’s unique policy and fiscal environment and regularly revisited to assure they are being addressed.





SELN Hub info (www.selnhub.org)

In response to member requests, the SELN Hub was developed. The Hub is a closed online community affording users from member states an opportunity to dialogue candidly with others and within the relationships established through their state's membership. It grew out of the need to expand beyond the more traditional website approach to information-sharing, using enhanced tools for relationship-building, sharing knowledge, and highlighting timely and relevant discussions across the country.

Topical questions, shared publications and resources, and noteworthy news are featured. The SELN project team also considers how to synthesize topically-focused conversations with individual states into Hub activity for the full user base's access.

ThinkWork!

ThinkWork describes an array of projects and activities related to employment for people with IDD at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The SELN is one of those projects. ThinkWork has an active online and social media presence, and promotes work across projects during conferences and other public events.

The core belief of ThinkWork: People with IDD should have the chance to find and maintain fulfilling work in the community, and to build financial security.

SELN member states are kept apprised of various ThinkWork branded activities through shared resources and meeting discussions. The popular "44 Series" of online events is one example of an interactive ThinkWork knowledge translation strategy that reaches various audiences and communities. Visit www.thinkwork.org for more information.

Membership Year 2015 - 2016 Activity

86 members from 27 states have engaged in exchanges on topics such as: employment first, person-centered planning, consistent engagement with families, shifting from group to individual outcomes, raising the employment bar during individual plan of service meetings.

Resource request examples: post-school employment outcomes, new employment and community engagement service definitions, relationship between public benefits and employment.

ThinkWork!

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



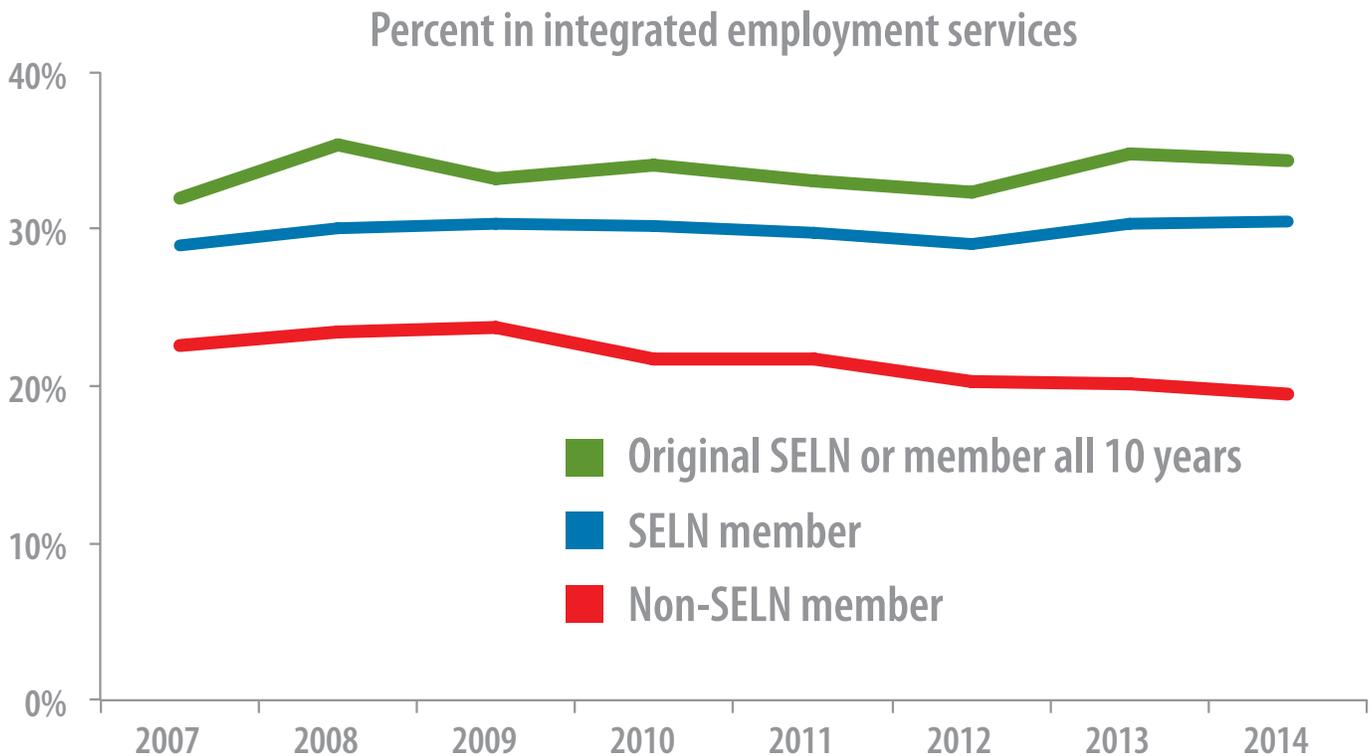
“Build it and they will come.”

NETWORK IMPACT:

What do the data trends show?

TREND:

More people are experiencing employment supports in SELN member states than non - member states



Source: ICI national survey of state IDD agencies 2014

As shown in the graphic above, the percent in integrated employment services in SELN member states, including six member states who have been in the SELN since 2006, has steadily increased over the last four years. The chart above depicts an average of the states with complete survey data between 2007 and 2014.

During the same time period the percent in integrated employment in non-SELN member states shows consistent declines. While participation in employment services is not an exact measure of the number of people actually working, service utilization is a useful

indicator of employment exposure and experience, closely tracking with employment participation. Through SELN membership, states establish a priority for employment at all systems levels. Data trends provide a backdrop for understanding the impact of the state activities described throughout this report.

- **Original SELN or member all ten years (n=6)**
- **SELN member (n=6)**
- **Non-SELN member (n=20)**
- Must have complete survey data between 2007–2014



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

The framework sets an organizational tone for capturing the critical aspects of systems change in states. The elements represent practices and outcomes that enable states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

Elements of a High-Performing Employment System

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



ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM-STATE ACTIVITIES



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

LEADERSHIP

Alabama

Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities (ADMH/DDD) created the Employment First website employmentfirst-bama.org to encourage participants, families, and providers to embrace the Employment First philosophy. To show Employment First in action, the website features information on Project GATE and Project SEARCH.

Project GATE, a partnership with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the ADMH, was developed as a pilot with potential for implementation statewide. The project illustrates how to partner with a local business and braid funds and services between the IDD and VR systems. Project SEARCH is a one-year internship program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school whose goal is competitive employment in the community.

Also featured on the site is the Employment First: Real Jobs, Real Wages video, produced with funds received from the Alabama DD Council. Between January 2016 and July 2016, the site had received about 1,280 site visits and 2,360 page views.

Arizona

Over the past year, the Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has hired its first statewide employment services manager. This means that the division now has two management-level staff positions dedicated to employment initiatives. One reason for this new hire was to broaden the footprint of employment across DDD, through internal and external consistent messaging.

Other duties of the statewide employment services manager are establishing an employment website linked to other key sites with Employment First efforts within the Arizona Department of Economic Security, providing monthly success stories to apprise the director's office of progress, and developing articles about employment for the division's family and consumer newsletter. This manager also co-chairs the statewide Employment First strategic planning core team, and serves as lead developer of employment-related resources for families, plan members, and support coordination staff.

Colorado

Effective July 1, 2016, Colorado passed Senate Bill 16-077: Concerning a Collaborative Multi-agency Approach to Increasing Competitive, Integrated Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and Advancing Employment First Principles Across the State. The bill states that all persons with disabilities are capable of working in a competitive integrated employment setting, and supports adherence to an Employment First framework for publicly funded services.

Employment First in Colorado means a paid job in the general workforce as the first and preferred outcome for all working-age people with disabilities, regardless of the level of disability. The legislation calls upon publicly funded agencies and systems to align policies, service delivery practices, and funding and reimbursement structures to achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes.

An advisory committee will be created to drive development of a strategic plan and to monitor results. The legislation also references the importance of Colorado maintaining membership in the SELN to ensure access to timely and relevant resources in support of their state's work.

Maryland

Maryland's Developmental Disability Administration's (DDA) leadership team and regional offices have taken the philosophy of Employment First and put it into action in the past year. Employment is the first category on the proposed individual's person-centered plan as a recommendation from the Person-Centered Plan Work Group that is made up of advocates, families, and providers. The DDA has received positive feedback from individuals and families in making employment the first topic of conversation.

The DDA also shared the changes to the Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver, making employment the first topic discussed during a person's person-centered planning meeting. This was shared during various town-hall meetings the DDA had across the state and during the Employment First strategic plan roll-out, where DDA had over 240 people in attendance.

LEADERSHIP (continued)

DDA has worked hard to make sure employment and community integrated employment outcomes are discussed in every forum DDA is presenting, whether it be about the waiting list, transitioning youth, or person-centered supports. Employment is always a topic on the agenda, showing DDA's commitment to improve outcomes in this area.

Nevada

In 2016, Nevada's Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) received a grant from the Nevada Governors Council on Developmental Disabilities to help implement the state's Strategic Plan on Integrated Employment (2015–2025). The plan was developed by a taskforce coordinated by ADSD. Taskforce members were appointed by Governor Sandoval to help Nevada create a system for work and life success for individuals with IDD.

The taskforce examined and evaluated employment programs, resources, funding, and training and employment opportunities for individuals with IDD. The group gathered information through key informant interviews, surveys, and focus groups. This data was then used to craft the strategic plan.

Governor Sandoval directed the Commission on Services for Disabilities to provide oversight for the strategic plan, and the commission created a subcommittee to work on implementation. ADSD's role will be to see that all the voices expressed in the feedback are honored.

New York

In 2015, the New York Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) hosted approximately 40 public outreach events. These were venues for gathering feedback from over 2,000 individuals, family members, and providers on sheltered workshop transformation across the state. This input continues to be used to develop guidance to providers on transformation and realignment of services.

For example, all workshop providers now must submit a proposal to OPWDD for how they will support the employment and meaningful community activities of individuals with developmental disabilities currently receiving workshop services. Sheltered workshop providers must submit transformation proposals by July 2017.

Pennsylvania

On March 10, 2016, Governor Wolf signed an executive order establishing an Employment First policy in Pennsylvania. This order makes competitive

integrated employment the first consideration and preferred outcome of publicly funded services for people with disabilities.

Under the direction of the order, the secretaries of the Pennsylvania departments of education, human services, and labor, along with other agencies, joined an interagency workgroup. The group developed a plan to align funding, policy, data collection, and practice toward an emphasis on competitive integrated employment.

Fifteen interagency events funded by an Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) / Office of Vocational Rehabilitation agreement will take place throughout the Commonwealth. One of these, called Experience the Employment Connection, will create a full day of shared experiences focused on interagency collaboration, and will establish more effective Employment First local coalitions.

Texas

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) released a new Employment First-themed video on its website in April 2016. The video's target audience is hiring managers at Texas businesses, and it portrays the value to the employer of hiring individuals with disabilities.

Through stories, the video shows how employees, customers, communities, and the bottom line all benefit from a diverse workforce. DADS staff routinely use the video in presentations for both smaller and larger groups, providing a concise and compelling Employment First message for new audiences.

Texas

In February 2016, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission acknowledged through policy that earning a living wage through integrated, competitive employment in the general workforce is the priority and preferred outcome for working-age Texans with disabilities who receive public benefits. The long-awaited policy confirms the state's commitment to helping all individuals access an integrated employment pathway.

The policy serves as a public statement about what is valued and expected from the paid support system. It also acts as a catalyst to shift the current culture from segregated, facility-based services to integrated, individual employment.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATING POLICIES

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

Arizona

Over the past year, Arizona DDD created a five-year strategic plan. This plan builds on DDD's planning efforts over the past several years, and sets forth employment goals and objectives that will enhance the fulfillment of the division's mission to help individuals that receive services, known as members, find jobs. The plan covers four broad goals:

- ▶ Support opportunities of members' choices and quality of life
- ▶ Ensure that members get the best possible support for the money spent
- ▶ Achieve open, ongoing, clear communications among members, families, providers, stakeholders, and DDD staff
- ▶ Make DDD a place where people "live to work" and grow professionally

Within these goals, there are objectives and activities that will help measure progress being made. One of the most important objectives is to increase the number of members who are employed in integrated and/or competitive employment by 10% by the end of 2020. An overview of the 2016–2020 Strategic Plan is available on the DDD website.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Department on Disability (DCDD) amended its HCBS waiver, and implemented new regulations to embed its Employment First vision throughout services to offer a flexible range of wrap-around services that support Employment First and community life engagement. The District now requires that all day and residential services provide opportunities for persons seeking employment and meaningful non-work activities in the community.

DC also requires that every person receiving day services have a customized employment vocational assessment (i.e., a Positive Personal Profile and Individual Job Search and Community Participation Plan), which is used to guide the development of individual program plans and daily schedule

Iowa

The Iowa Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS), along with the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise, has redesigned employment services using technical assistance from the SELN, a partnership with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and an Employment First workgroup. The goal is a service and funding system that is individualized and flexible over the person's life, and that coordinates the use of all available resources, with the goal of people accessing individual jobs.

Changes implemented under the redesign include service definitions matching 2011 policy guidance from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, a revised rate methodology, redistribution of Medicaid resources from facility-based to community-based services, and support for providers to increase the array and quality of employment supports and services, through staff training and higher-qualification standards.

Maryland

DDA recognized the need for a clear statewide direction for all Employment First efforts. On July 13, 2015, DDA hosted an Employment First kickoff meeting with over 100 stakeholders. Following the kickoff, 175 stakeholders formed eight committees to develop the priorities, outcomes, and goals for Maryland's Employment First strategic plan.





On June 17, 2016, after a year of research, meetings, and negotiating, DDA unveiled the work of the committees, consultants, and other stakeholders in a five-year strategic plan. The work described in the plan will move Maryland forward with becoming an Employment First state, not just in just policy but also in practice. An accessible version of the plan is available on DDA's website.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has finished its second year of implementation of its four-year plan "Blueprint for Success," continuing to increase the state's investment in individual, integrated employment. This year, Massachusetts accomplished one of the major goals outlined in this plan, no longer funding sheltered workshops as of 7/1/16. This is a turning point in the transformation of employment and day program services.

The Commonwealth will continue to work collaboratively with all committed stakeholders to expand integrated employment opportunities for people with IDD, and concurrently re-design community-based day-support services to offer inclusive employment exploration and skill-building experiences to serve as a pathway to obtaining a paid job in the community.

Missouri

Provider transformation has been a priority this year for the Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Through DDD's membership, the SELN project team has been working with two state-operated providers on transforming their service models from facility-based to community services, with a primary focus on employment and community integration.

Based on a site visit and a staff survey, the SELN prepared a comprehensive written analysis of each provider's program, with a series of recommendations for transforming the service model to one with primary emphasis on integrated employment and community life engagement. Each of the providers has used this analysis to develop and begin implementing a strategic plan. The transformation of these two programs will serve as a model for other service providers in Missouri.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is shifting from a contract-based system of service reimbursement to a Medicaid-based, fee-for-service reimbursement system. The changes impact service options, and DDD has provided direction in the form of formal documents.

In March 2016, DDD issued the Supports Program Policies & Procedures Manual. The manual contains the policies and practices governing all aspects of the supports program within the approved Comprehensive Medicaid Waiver (CMW). It provides uniform direction and guidance about the new fee-for-service reimbursement system.

The CMW provides statewide reform for Medicaid services, shifts the focus of services and supports to community-based, and allows New Jersey to draw down increased federal funds. The program helps the state to better serve adults with developmental disabilities, and significantly reduces the number of individuals waiting for supports and services.

The supports manual also details the policies used to implement New Jersey's Employment First efforts, including the Pathway to Employment. The manual explains how support coordinators can use the Pathway to Employment to inform their work on individual service plans. More information is available on the DDD website.

Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) employment workplan includes a goal to increase community-based work options for transition-age youth. Through discussions around the state, DDS staff have provided information on how to improve the individual planning process and help students develop a path to employment. A statewide presentation on communicating with youth and families also included information on the DDS pre-employment services and the importance of fostering independence in transition-age youth through local efforts. The presentation reinforced state-level policy and how local counterparts are responsible for key implementation strategies to support such youth.



Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) formed a state-level person-centered planning (PCP) workgroup to revise processes for those seeking employment supports. The workgroup included self-advocates, family members, providers, and social case workers.

A new individual service plan format was developed that is person-focused and outcome-driven. A two-page section of the plan highlights employment, to help discover a person's interests and goals.

In addition, BHDDH started developing a PCP webpage. The webpage will provide detailed information on the guiding principles of PCP, instructions on how to facilitate a PCP meeting, best practices in generating person-centered responses, and links to videos that demonstrate different aspects of PCP.

South Dakota

South Dakota Department of Human Services (DDHS), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has continued to implement outreach strategies for their supporting families work established in 2015 through the "Supporting Real Lives Across the Life Span" online folders. Strategies have included the development of resource materials and presentations to self-advocates, families, special education teachers and directors, early intervention coordinators, case managers, and direct support providers. Presentations and materials emphasize the importance of creating a culture of expectation for employment and considerations to make during each life stage that will promote life experiences that lead to employment. Some of the resources have been integrated into a standardized individualized support plan developed by the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Washington

At an employment summit in 2011, Washington's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) set a goal to increase the number of people with disabilities in individual jobs by 50%. This drove a 48% increase in the number in individual jobs, falling just

shy of the goal. Following a statewide meeting on employment in June 2016, improving wages and hours was identified as the next priority. DDA has committed to a top priority of increasing clients earning minimum wage or better from 64% to 66% by June 30, 2017. Additionally, DDA has also committed to increasing the average hours worked per week from 12 hours to 13 hours by June 30, 2017.

“Our work in South Dakota has really benefited from membership in the SELN. It has created a lot more structure for us...it helped us prioritize and strategize around what we wanted to focus on first, we've been making a lot of progress in the last two years and much more than we had made in the three years prior to joining SELN. It's very exciting and we have a great network in our state who's passionate about employment and each year we have been evaluating our progress and establishing new goals. It's really helped us to keep moving forward.”

–Julie Hand, South Dakota

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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

Colorado

In spring 2016, Colorado Division for Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) offered a four-part online series on job coaching and support strategies to help job coaches support individuals seeking community-based employment. The series was inspired by conversations with provider staff around the state, who recognized job coaches as key facilitators and consultants on an individual's career path.

Employment and training specialists from the Institute for Community Inclusion's Training and Technical Assistance team led 147 participants through workshop-style sessions that focused on facilitating natural supports and social inclusion, building accommodations, creating maintenance and fading strategies, and using positive behavior supports. The content focused both on seasoned job coaches who now need to learn new skills, and new staff developing competencies for the first time.

Colorado DIDD will continue to offer online, interactive sessions for employment staff through the 2016–2017 membership year, beginning with a job coaching question-and-answer session in August 2016.

Delaware

Delaware DDDS and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation developed a joint training policy for providers of employment services. The policy sets the expectation that employment professionals demonstrate competency in supporting persons with disabilities to obtain and maintain integrated employment.

Training strategies include the use of the online College of Employment Services, mentoring, intensive in-classroom training, and APSE's Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) certification. This year, Delaware sponsored 20 employment professionals to take the CESP exam.

Hawaii

Hawaii's Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division (DOH-DDD) used federal Department of Labor support to give staff around the state extensive training on delivery of customized employment. The training was provided to a cadre of paraprofessionals from various agencies and departments, including vocational rehabilitation counselors, DDD case managers, Medicaid waiver provider agency employees, and American Job Center staff.

The customized employment training curricula, developed as a result of the training, will be used to build further capacity throughout the state.

Massachusetts

MA DDS continues to make a significant investment through technical assistance and other capacity building initiatives to assist providers in delivering high-quality integrated employment services. This includes comprehensive training for employment specialists, job developers, and program managers, and technical assistance and consultation for providers to enable them to strategically implement organizational changes to shift from center-based work to integrated jobs in the community.

Another important focus of training and consultation has been on the re-design of community-based day services to align with the new expectations of the Home & Community Based Services Community Rule and offer more inclusive experiences in the community to support a pathway to employment. Additionally, DDS funds six regional employment collaboratives across the state to engage in employer outreach to identify new job opportunities, streamline access to job openings, and support a job developer's network that facilitates sharing of job leads among partners.



Ohio

The practices and processes outlined in Ohio's Employment First Transition Framework are beginning to spread throughout the state. The framework identifies common processes that assist professionals to plan, prepare, empower, educate, and connect across systems. The goal is to consistently assist youth with disabilities to realize meaningful community employment and other valued aspects of adult life.

Through direct training and technical assistance, framework tools are being promoted and used by almost all of the 16 state regional multi-agency support teams. Employment providers are asking for more information about transition practices, and attending events that highlight the use of the framework tools and processes.

At a state level, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Ohio Department of Education are planning to follow Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) lead to include these practices in agency guidance through training, technical assistance, and job guides.

Oregon

Oregon has a unique regional outreach and training focus, with eight transition network facilitators (TNFs) employed by the Department of Education and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and five Office of Developmental Disabilities (ODP) Services regional employment specialists. They provide technical assistance (TA) and training around current and new policies, and gather information about what is working/not working in the field and in their region.

The TNFs help school districts focus on successful transition to employment and/or education, offer TA to educators for students with disabilities who are of transition age, establish relationships with community partners, and implement training and professional development for educators. The regional employment specialists provide TA and training around current and new policies, and gather information about what is and is not working in the field and in their regions.

Pennsylvania

This membership year, ODP and the SELN have hosted a series of four online events for the Commonwealth's 1500 supports coordinators and supports coordination organizations. The sessions were crafted to help supports coordinators plan with individuals with an intellectual disability or autism to engage in competitive integrated employment.

South Dakota

In 2015, South Dakota created the Person Centered Employment (PCE) Planning Guide. This guide is now being shared during initial case manager trainings in May and June of 2016, beginning in May. The 2015 South Dakota Person Centered Planning Guide has been widely disseminated and discussed.

In addition, DDD has drafted an administrative rule that will require each individualized support plan (ISP) to identify the participant's desired employment outcome. The ISP will include a section that will tie this requirement to the various paths to employment identified within the PCE Guide. DDD is in the process of creating a self-advocate and family version of the Person Centered Employment Guide.



ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT AND COLLABORATION

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

District of Columbia

DC's Developmental Disabilities Administration and Rehabilitation Services Administration worked together effectively to implement a DDA/RSA Service Coordination Protocol, which significantly streamlines the referral and intake processes between the two agencies. Key staff from both administrations also have been colocated, including intake staff. Finally, all DDA employment providers are required to become RSA providers to better ensure continuity for people who may be served by both agencies.

Georgia

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities collaborated with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agency to finalize a new memorandum of understanding (MOU). A key feature of this MOU is the use of shared funding to hire dedicated VR counselors and benefits navigators, provide joint supported employment training, and establish a shared supported employment website.

The new staff hired under the MOU will work in two regions of the state, and will use their knowledge of what services are available across the IDD and VR systems to assist individuals and families in maximizing available options. Georgia is using the new positions to ensure that individuals in high school have early access to the world of work, and learn the benefit of community-based employment as the preferred option for those in this age group.

Massachusetts

DDS continues to strengthen its collaboration and partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to facilitate access to integrated employment services for individuals with ID by using resources across systems. This past year, the Memorandum of Agreement between DDS and MRC was updated and outlined expectations for joint service planning and coordination, and sequencing of funding whereby MRC provides the upfront job development and job coaching activities, with the commitment from DDS to provide funding for the long-term ongoing

employment services. Regional meetings with all managers and key staff were held, liaisons identified across area offices, and goals established for referrals and joint service delivery, with a particular emphasis on assisting transition-age young adults to move directly from school into integrated employment.

Michigan

Partnerships and collaboration have increased through joint work fueled by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program project, which is funded by the federal Office of Disability Employment Policy. This work builds on past Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration (BHDDA) efforts, such as workgroups, interagency agreements, and round tables that brought stakeholders together to discuss employment policy and strategy, and to spread the energy and excitement generated by this recent Employment First progress.

Nevada

ADSD and Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) have collaborated to ensure that the person-centered planning process for each individual receiving IDD services includes discussions of employment outcomes. During the planning process, individuals are introduced to BVR services, and are referred to BVR. This occurs at least annually for each person receiving IDD services.

Additionally, ADSD has collaborated with BVR and three private agencies to pilot the Pathways to Work program. The program supports individuals to move from center-based employment services to integrated community-based jobs at or above minimum wage. A cooperative agreement has resulted in blended funding for individuals participating in the pilot. The collaborating systems plan to expand this program to a statewide and systemic way of funding and providing employment services.

Ohio

DODD and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) entered the third year of their Employment First partnership. During the 2015–2016



SELN membership year, this partnership helped more than 384 people with disabilities obtain community jobs. Additionally, 204 people who are currently employed have accessed services like job coaching through OOD.

The Employment First Partnership has been instrumental in improvement made to referrals, outreach, and collaboration with the local county boards of developmental disabilities. This has resulted in a greater number of employment outcomes and individuals served.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma DDS and Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) jointly worked to develop new supported employment services and ongoing supports in response to WIOA regulations. Slated to be in effect in fall 2016, the new DRS services will be available to people with significant disabilities, and DDS will continue to provide ongoing longer-term supports for individuals with IDD. Viewed as a significant change in the state, these new intensive services improve options for those who may need additional assistance securing employment.

Oregon

Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) work together as a strategic unit. All three programs work together on the same “work streams,” which are divided into categories such as policy, training, communications, and quality assurance. The Employment First Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Plan includes metrics and achievement outcomes that all the programs collaborate and report on.

In addition, the three programs hold regular training sessions for statewide staff, such as the Better Employment Success Together trainings. In these trainings, facilitators review policy and plan overlap between ODDS/ODE/VR. Better Employment Success Together also explores effective and collaborative transfers from DD to VR services and vice versa.

Oregon also has more than 26 local Employment First teams throughout the state, made up of educators, providers, county staff, families, and self-advocates.

Pennsylvania

A memorandum of understanding about a budget agreement was developed between the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the ODP. ODP state funds will match OVR federal funds at nearly a 4:1 federal-to-state ratio.

This funding will be used to add an additional OVR counselor in each of OVR’s 15 district offices who specializes in customers with an intellectual disability and/or autism, and to increase paid work experiences for transition-age students

with an intellectual disability. The funds will also provide outreach to parents and families to increase awareness about employment, as well as expansion and innovation initiatives to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes.

South Dakota

The SD Employment First Alliance (SD EFA) serves as an employment advisory committee to DDD and is comprised of many stakeholders and partners, including self-advocates and family members, employment providers, vocational rehabilitation staff, the Department of Human Services (DHS) business specialists, Transition Services liaisons, benefits specialists, Department of Education staff, and SD advocacy personnel, to name a few. DDD organizes quarterly meetings via Skype, with an annual face-to-face meeting to review progress and identify priorities for the upcoming year.

Once priorities are identified, subcommittees are established and continue to work towards the desired outcome. Past subcommittee work has included the development of the Person-Centered Employment Guide, efforts to increase interagency collaboration, development of performance measures, and messaging and outreach that resulted in the Life Span folders and resources.



ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



SERVICES AND SERVICE INNOVATIONS

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

Alabama

The Alabama DDD renewed the Intellectual Disabilities Home and Community-Based Services waiver, adding benefits planning as a service. The service will educate participants on work incentives and benefits management in relationship to paid community employment. During a series of community roundtables, families, participants, ADMH/DDD employees, and providers cited issues with implementation of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Work Incentives Planning and Assistance grant. Waiver participants were experiencing delays in service due to the volume of work for the certified work incentive counselors (CWICs). The new service decreases wait time, and reinforces the state's Employment First message.

District of Columbia

DDA launched two tools in the spring of 2015: Assessing a Person's Interest in Employment, and Pathways to Employment and Community Integration Benchmarks. This year, the DDA focused on integration of these tools in the individual service planning process in order to increase the focus on employment.

National Core Indicator data now shows that the number of people who express interest in employment and who have a corresponding goal in their ISP has more than doubled. 74% (up 37%) of people in DC report wanting a job, and 78% (up 58%) report that they want a job and have employment goals.

Delaware

In 2016, DDDS began implementation of the 1915(i) State Plan Amendment Pathways to Employment (P2E) program. P2E serves youth ages 14–25 with IDD, physical disabilities, and/or visual impairments. The program funds critical services and supports that enable these young people to obtain and maintain integrated employment.

230 youth have enrolled in P2E during the program's first year. Preliminary observations include the following: conversations with youth and their families about work as a real option are happening earlier, youth are obtaining increased opportunities for authentic work experiences, and youth and their families are engaging in benefits counseling and financial literacy coaching.

Delaware

Delaware has invested in best practice programs such as Project Search and the University of Delaware's Career and Life Study Certificate (CLSC) program, one of the national Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. Delaware's two Project Search sites and the CLSC program have successfully supported over 90% of the 2016 graduating students into integrated employment.

Georgia

DBHDD Disabilities added supported employment to the list of available services under Georgia's Family Support plan. This service allows an individual who is not eligible for Medicaid or state service funding to access employment supports. Individuals on Georgia's Planning List or those transitioning from a Project Search program are also able to access supported employment services more quickly through this option.

Hawaii

During the 2015–2016 membership year, DOH-DDD, in alignment with its 2015–2017 strategic plan, made several changes to service delivery, including the renewal of the 1915(c) waiver for individuals with IDD.

A new service, Discovery and Career Planning, will support individuals to acquire integrated employment. This service will also generate information to share with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and assist with planning career options when entry-level jobs have been attained. Discovery and Career Planning is a 1:1 service that takes place in the community, allowing



individuals and service providers to engage in meaningful, integrated activities.

Since many participants and families choose not to work for fear of losing benefits and supports, DOH-DDD incorporated benefits counseling in the new Discovery and Career Planning process. This will encourage more waiver-eligible participants to pursue work as a life goal.

Michigan

In Michigan, policies, procedures, and priorities are changing to address several areas. These include extending billable activities for employment beyond time spent face-to-face with job seekers to include on-behalf-of services, clarifying access to services for follow-along supports, greater use of performance and outcome-based payments, and significant changes anticipated in the Medicaid Provider Manual following approval of the 1115 Waiver.

Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (MDHS), in collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Education, developed a guidance document clarifying that waiver-funded supported employment services can be used to support transition-age youth in competitive integrated employment when other funding is not available. The guidance document highlights key questions and areas to consider when determining whether or not other funds are available, and gives examples of how different agency services can work together to support competitive employment success for youth.

Missouri

Missouri Department of Mental Health, DDD gathered feedback on the state's Individual Support Planning Guide, and will issue a revised version. The guide will reflect an increased focus on employment, clarify expectations based on regulations, and align with the division's Employment First policy.

New career planning questions have been added, and will be mandated for use during planning processes and team meetings. These questions ensure that plans without employment outcomes

include a rationale for why employment was excluded, and explain what efforts will be made to promote career planning in the future.

The revised guide emphasizes compliance with Title II of the ADA, the Olmstead ruling, and the HCB Community Setting Rule, and stresses the importance of providing documentation, particularly when an individual is not employed or does not report an interest in employment. For those receiving group employment services, a new requirement asks staff to document the justification for group services over individual employment.

New Mexico

Partners for Employment is composed of the New Mexico Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD); the New Mexico Public Education Department; the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; and the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability. This year, the partners worked with Marc Gold and Associates (MGA) to reintroduce the concepts of systematic instruction to New Mexico's providers when training individuals with IDD to perform complex tasks. Systematic instruction provides consistency when training an individual to do specific tasks.

Six three-day trainings were held across the state. In addition, ten staff members from a variety of agencies were chosen to complete additional work and become certified in systematic instruction by MGA. The certified staff will become the ambassadors of this approach as capacity continues to grow in the New Mexico service system.

New York

OPWDD continues to implement the 2015 Transformation Panel recommendations. These include rate restructuring to support an Employment First philosophy, and a new Home and Community-Based Waiver service, Pathway to Employment.

The service is available to individuals interested in competitive employment or self-employment. It offers an individualized planning process that helps people identify a career or vocational direction. The outcome of this service is documentation of



the participant's stated career objective, a detailed career plan to guide individual employment supports, and preparation for supported employment services.

OPWDD data has shown a net gain of 325 individuals employed in integrated settings earning wages at or above minimum wage since the start of the Pathway to Employment service.

Ohio

DODD created a virtual community of practice called Loop Ohio. This online community facilitates statewide and local cross-system collaboration and learning, with a focus on promoting best practices in community development and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Loop Ohio provides a platform for community members and professionals to share ideas and resources, solve problems, break down barriers, connect across distance, and engage in ongoing learning. Loop Ohio currently has 1,400 members. Topics of conversation have included benefits, community engagement, local collaboration, and family support. For membership information, visit www.loopohio.org.

Rhode Island

The Division of Developmental Disabilities is supporting individuals to create their own employment path using a career development plan (CDP). The CDP identifies the participant's employment goals and objectives, and the services and supports needed to achieve those goals, and the state agency, provider, and natural supports assigned to help the person attain the goals. The plan also notes the obstacles to the participant working in an integrated, community-based setting, and



seeks to identify the services and supports necessary to overcome those obstacles.

Texas

The DADS Money Follows the Person pilot project has supported over 100 individuals to become successfully employed since 2015. Pilot funding is provided to one local IDD authority and one private home and community-based services provider to implement systems change within their own organizations. Providers' actions under the pilot include instituting new Employment First policies and practices, pursuing employment supports prior to any other paths, and providing integrated employment expectations during new employee orientations.

Both pilot sites are also certified rehabilitation programs with the state's vocational rehabilitation program, enabling smoother transitions across the two systems. The success of the pilot will serve as a road map for other organizations to shift toward individual, integrated employment outcomes over other options. The project will conclude in the fall of 2016 after a summative evaluation providing recommendations for replication by the Texas Center for Disability Studies at the University of Texas Austin.

Washington

Through the Pathway to Employment Transition Program, DDA closed the front door to prevocational services (PVS) on July 1, 2015. Between 2011 and 2014, the ARC of Washington State reported that Washington had experienced a decrease of 311 or 49% in the number of people accessing PVS. In light of this attrition, DDA has focused transformation efforts on assisting individuals currently receiving PVS to move into integrated jobs, and is helping providers transform their service model toward all community-based supports. DDA expects all people receiving employment support to be in integrated employment within three years or less.

DDA will continue to prioritize resources that help with the transformation of agencies, as well as supporting individuals in progress into integrated employment through the strategic use of outcome data, technical assistance to providers, and robust person-centered employment plans.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND DATA MANAGEMENT

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

Iowa

In alliance with Iowa's Partnerships in Employment grant, the MHDS collected employment outcome data and developed an aggregate baseline outcomes report and submitted it to the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment in April 2016. Data collected from 19 providers represents 12 of Iowa's 14 MHDS regions. Data elements include employment setting, hours worked, and gross earnings per individual in a given two-week period during the past year.

The MHDS regions and the Iowa Association of Community Providers are collecting quality-of-life outcomes, including employment data. This data will become part of a larger dashboard of MHDS outcomes and performance measures, to be studied statewide and regionally.

Maryland

DDA provided key data during a legislative review process, leading to the approval of an important bill: the Individuals With Disabilities - Minimum Wage and Community Integration Act (Ken Capone Equal Employment Act).

The act requires Maryland employers who pay employees with disabilities below the minimum wage to phase out use of subminimum wage in three to four years. It also amends Maryland state code so that after October 1, 2016, Maryland's Commissioner of Labor and Industry can no longer issue new Section 14(c) certificates. These certificates authorize sheltered workshops and other agencies to pay individuals with disabilities below the minimum wage.

Michigan

MDHHS collects data annually from the 46 local community mental health services programs (CMHSPs). Beginning October 1, 2016, CMHSP reports will include individual employment status, including competitive integrated employment, small group



integrated employment, and facility-based employment by disability type, hours worked, and wages received in FY 17.

New employment-related fields clarify type of employment and collect data on hours worked and wages. These file specifications were posted on the MDHHS website on June 30, 2016.

Michigan

A revised policy addressing the transition from special education to life in the community will be included in the FY 2017 contracts between MHDDS and the 46 local CMHSPs. This policy focuses on CMHSPs' engagement in the transition process for likely eligible youth, beginning at age 16.

CMHSPs will partner with local school districts to help youth achieve a more seamless transition into integrated community settings. Required annual data tracking criteria will be reported to MHDDS, including:

- ▶ Number of youth likely to move into the CMHSP system
- ▶ Number of post-age-18 students seeking integrated residential living
- ▶ Number of post-age-18 students seeking competitive integrated employment



Minnesota

As part of the state's larger employment goals, Minnesota developed two interactive data systems in conjunction with the Institute on Community Integration through the University of Minnesota. The first is the Community Waiver Recipients Dashboard, which shows waiver day service utilization and monthly average earnings. The second dashboard, Employer of Record, shows Home and Community-Based Service Recipients, Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disability recipients, and enrollees in Mental Health Targeted Case Management, Adult Rehabilitation Mental Health Services, and Assertive Community Treatment who have competitive employment or who are employed through a day service provider. The dashboard includes average and median monthly earnings.

Additionally, MN DHS has collected and used billing data from their Medicaid Management Information System as well as the MAXIS computer system used by state and county workers to determine eligibility to public assistance benefits and health care.

New Mexico

DDSD worked closely with the SELN team to create a new process for collecting outcome measures from provider agencies. During each quarter, providers report data for a two-week period, detailing how individuals are spending their time and the total hours engaged in each activity. If applicable, providers also report the type of work an individual is engaged in, the source of their paychecks, and their gross wages. Additionally, provider agencies report on the length of time an individual is in job development.

This information is sent from providers via a spreadsheet that can be automatically uploaded into a database. Twelve reports have been created so far. This new reporting process provides DDSD with a more informed picture of how paid staff support individuals, and the resulting outcomes.

Oklahoma

The 2012–2016 Oklahoma DDS employment workplan includes a goal to streamline the data collection process and increase dissemination of employment-related information. This goal reinforces the commitment to making outcome data public, using the resulting information to guide policy and practice changes, and strengthening how integrated employment expectations are communicated.

The renewed focus on improving the collection process will assist in obtaining reliable, timely, and accurate data for analysis. The distribution process includes annual reports out to all area managers to share with local teams, with follow-up from the state level to ensure the information is being used to make needed changes at the ground level.

Oregon

In 2016, ODDS launched a new online Employment Outcomes System (EOS) to collect data from providers on employment outcomes. The new website gives individuals with IDD, as well as other stakeholders, more information to enable them to make informed choices when choosing employment providers.





New features of EOS include a simple and clear provider contact page, and easy-to-use data tables that show employment outcomes by provider name and by county.

South Dakota

DDD authored a document entitled “Strengthening Employment Practices” which outlines SD’s employment rankings from various data sources such as the Disability Statistics Annual Report, the Institute for Community Inclusion, National Core Indicators, the Council on Quality and Leadership, and the SD Division of Rehabilitation Services. Given the frequent spotlight on other states’ challenges to improve employment outcomes, DDD generated this document to share with high-level state leadership staff using data-driven evidence on the need to make critically needed paid support systems improvements across the state.

Virginia

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) developed an outcome data collection system to track length of employment, hours worked, hourly wage, and the type of work supports individuals receive. During the past membership year, Virginia collected data from service providers, with the last two data requests yielding a 93% or better response rate.

Through analysis of the data and processes, and in collaboration with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, DBHDS is combining employment outcome data with vocational rehabilitation data for a more comprehensive picture of employment of people with IDD. These efforts have guided technical assistance (TA) across the state, including enhanced statewide training to community service boards and service providers. Training and TA goals are to improve employment service delivery, and to increase statewide expectations and bring Virginia closer to its Employment First goals.

Washington

DDA committed resources and continued to partner with the SELN to improve outcomes for individuals with high support needs to find and maintain competitive employment in the community at minimum wage or better. This work included analyzing data collected from monthly billing records. The data provides insight into which employment agencies are seeing the most success, as well as who has a job, their wages and paid work hours, long-term retention information, and how long it took to find the job. Revealing what it takes to find competitive employment for those with the highest support needs will improve options for everyone seeking supports.

The number of individuals with high support needs in integrated employment has risen over 200% in the past 5 years. DDA’s state and local improvement efforts include additional resources towards individualized county level training and technical assistance on community-based employment, person-centered planning, behavior supports, communication plans, and intensive job development.

“A really significant achievement that we’ve made in D.C., and I think our involvement and work with SELN has helped make this happen, was our declaration as an Employment First state. It paves the way for better conversations about employment and establishes higher expectations for people with disabilities. Employment First acknowledges that people with disabilities have a lot to contribute to their communities and to our economy.”

–Allison White, DC



While challenges and opportunities are abundant, how do states continue to move the needle and improve competitive integrated employment outcomes? We do this by:

- ▶ **Continually seeking input from those who use the system and those who make the system run to know whether you are hitting the mark.** Respect that input and show people you are responding to their feedback through your actions and words.
- ▶ **Collecting data on the results and outcomes of current investments.** Evidence of what works or does not work gains you leverage during budget requests or when advocating for certain systems changes.
- ▶ **Communicating often with all stakeholders with clear and distinct goals.** It takes effort to ensure everyone is working from the same set of expectations.
- ▶ **Reinforcing the highest levels of accountability.** Ensure robust quality management activities are balanced and used both for compliance and continuous improvement to determine what changes next.
- ▶ **Remembering great change only happens one person at a time.** Our success in this work is entirely connected to how well each and every individual with an intellectual or developmental disability is supported to thrive and grow.
- ▶ **Celebrating all of the small and big steps forward.** Make sure people know how important all of the work is and that you value their role in it.

**“Never, never,
never, never
give up.”**

–Winston Churchill



Visit www.SELNhub.org for links for more information on the various state activities and projects.

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**Colorado Four-part Online Series: Job Coaching and Support Strategies.
The Wonderful World of Job Coaching!**

Melanie Jordan
Lara Enein-Donovan
Jill Eastman

**Pennsylvania Four-part Online Series: Building Capacity to Support
Individuals Seeking Competitive Integrated Employment**

Jennifer Fraker
Stacy Nonnemacher
Dana Baccanti
Kristen Leary
Erin Hannaford
Joy Smith
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“Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find the way.”

–Abraham Lincoln



State Employment Leadership Network

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