



Issue 5

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LEAD Center Highlights Year One Outcomes

The LEAD Center completed its inaugural year on September 30, 2013, working in close collaboration with its funding agency, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), to advance sustainable individual and systems-level change resulting in improved, competitive integrated employment and economic self-sufficiency outcomes for individuals across the spectrum of disability. Through partnerships with a dynamic collaborative of disability, workforce and economic empowerment organizations, the LEAD Center staff exceeded expectations by delivering on a comprehensive, high-impact workplan focused on promoting leadership, economic advancement and employment for people with disabilities. Major accomplishments of Year One include:

- Established partnerships with seven national organizations across different projects, 13 subject matter experts, and 16 knowledge transfer dissemination partners.
- Identified systems issues and developed policy recommendations and tools to improve integrated service delivery, employment and economic advancement outcomes for adults with

disabilities.

- Hosted the first National Policy Roundtable on July 17 and 18 in Washington, D.C.. The Policy Roundtable brought together federal agency leaders, state and local agency policymakers and practitioners, and subject matter experts on cross-system collaboration to build a progressive vision that promotes the effective leveraging of resources, through blending and braiding, across multiple systems to improve employment and socioeconomic advancement of individuals with disabilities. Recommendations from roundtable participants will be shared with appropriate federal and state agencies to encourage greater flexibility in cost sharing among multiple agencies to address all of the employment-related needs of jobseekers with disabilities.
- Organized the first Knowledge Translation Annual Consortium meeting to explore the creation of a national consortium of federally funded disability employment-related Training and Technical Assistance Centers to increase collaboration and information sharing to improve employment and economic outcomes of people with disabilities.
- Launched the LEAD Center Website - www.LEADCenter.org - featuring the latest news from the LEAD Center, a resource center, blogs, social media engagement, calendar of events, an overview of the LEAD Center's 2013 webinar series including webinar registration and links to [archives](#) and more.
- Generated more than 2.1 million monitored impressions through traditional, online and social media during its first year, helping increase engagement with and interest in the LEAD Center.
- Provided training to 3,185 participants via online and on-the-ground training events.
- Developed a strategic plan to test both integrating financial capability services for people with disabilities into municipal social service agencies in two cities to identify best practices and also the design of a strategic approach for integrating financial capability services in workforce centers across the country.
- Researched a national employer's return-to-work and workplace flexibility policies at both its corporate and regional levels. The resulting data will be used to develop model policies and practices for enabling workers with disabilities to remain in or return to the workforce.
- Completed a survey of United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) corporate members to identify policies and practices related to workplace flexibility and mature workers.
- Completed a Secret Shopper demonstration pilot, collecting data from secret shoppers/job seekers with hidden disabilities to better understand gaps in American Job Center (AJC) service delivery for this population. Information from the pilot will be used to develop educational materials on serving customers with hidden disabilities to be disseminated to all AJCs.
- Conducted Centers for Independent Living (CIL) Pilot in five CILs to foster greater partnership between CILs and AJCs and to increase utilization of AJC services by CIL customers seeking employment.

To hear more about the LEAD Center's first year, listen to the [LEAD Center Inaugural Year in Review](#) webinar held on October 23, [available through the LEAD Center webinar archive](#).

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LEAD Center Presents at NASWA Meeting on Equal Opportunity in the Workforce System

Michael Morris, co-chair of the LEAD Center Public Policy Team, and Bobby Silverstein, LEAD Center Subject Matter Expert, presented on October 30th at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) conference on Equal Opportunity in the Workforce System to local Equal Opportunity (EO) officers and senior staff from 32 states. LEAD Center's presentation focused on preliminary findings from research on state workforce investment board experiences in meeting the requirements of Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Section 188 is used to address how WIA grant recipients (which includes American Job Centers) are complying with and implementing, the applicable federal non-discrimination requirements for persons with disabilities.

During the past year, LEAD Center has been building a partnership with NASWA and its Equal Opportunity (EO) Committee with representatives from more than 30 states. Don Wehbey, the NASWA EO Committee Liaison and NASWA's Labor Market Information Director, helped LEAD identify EO officers in selected states to be interviewed about their Section 188 activities and Methods of Administration (MOA) of equal opportunity requirements. State and local WIA plans must describe how best to provide physical, communication and program access to effectively serve individuals with disabilities without discrimination.

The NASWA conference provided LEAD Center presenters the opportunity to highlight promising practices identified for state and local EO officers. The focus of practices being implemented by AJCs included marketing and outreach strategies, partnerships with the disability community, cross-system collaboration, staff training approaches, registration and orientation, collection and analysis of data, individualized resource mapping, person-centered employment planning and monitoring. Also highlighted at this conference were continuous improvement related to providing customized employment services including using discovery at an individual and group level, the tie-in between employment services and building individual financial capability and involvement in the Social Security Administration's Ticket-to-Work program.

LEAD Center experts will continue to work with NASWA and the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Civil Rights Center and ODEP to create an online Community of Practice and build the capacity of the workforce investment system at a state and local level to serve effectively job seekers with disabilities.

[Download the LEAD Center PowerPoint presentation from the NASWA Conference.](#)

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December TASH Conference Features LEAD Center Presentation

Lisa Mills, LEAD Center Subject Matter Expert, Lisa Jones, WIA Policy Manager from the Office of Employment and Training at the American Job Center in Springfield, Ill. and Rebecca Salon, LEAD Center Project Director, presented at this year's TASH conference on December 13th on *Helping American Job Centers Offer Group Discovery and Customized Employment Services*. TASH is one of the LEAD Center's national partners. TASH's conference - themed "A Movement United" - brought together research, practice and advocacy experts to build bridges among stakeholders to create opportunities for people with disabilities across their lifespan to live, work and learn in integrated inclusive settings.

The session focused on the work of LEAD Center Subject Matter Experts, with support from TASH, in assisting the state workforce systems and local AJCs in Illinois and Kansas to offer small group facilitated discovery, customized employment and customized self-employment in collaboration with their partners. The presentation highlighted significant barriers to employment and the expected benefits for jobseekers with disabilities when the workforce system and local American Job Centers are able to offer discovery and customized employment services in collaboration with other systems that provide employment services to people with disabilities.

In addition to providing an overview of the work of the LEAD Center and the resources it provides, this session focused on the role that AJCs can play in assisting job seekers with disabilities in gaining employment, how small group facilitated discovery can be used in AJCs serving people with disabilities, barriers to employment, how customized employment can be used as a universal employment strategy for all job seekers, and how multiple state systems can collaboratively support the funding and delivery of discovery and customized employment/self-employment services.

The session was attended by various leaders including representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation for the state of Illinois, disability professionals working in public and private organizations, school staff working with youth in transition, people with disabilities and family members of people with disabilities. Attendees provided very positive feedback about the work being done with the AJCs and several of the other LEAD Center projects that were mentioned.

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Centers for Independent Living Join with LEAD Center to Create American Job Center Partnerships to Advance Employment for Jobseekers with Disabilities

To help increase employment rates for job seekers with disabilities, the LEAD Center in its first year initiated a strong collaboration with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP), and ODEP to develop a grassroots action plan and first-of-its-kind pilot project with Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

to increase employment opportunities and outcomes for job seekers with disabilities. Participating CILs demonstrated past experience in working with job seekers with disabilities on employment, held expertise in benefits planning, had established linkages with AJCs in their areas, and each agreed to work with 10 job seekers with disabilities. Selected CILs represent both rural and urban geographic areas across the country and served people across the spectrum of disability.

The five CILs participating in the LEAD Center project included Disability Rights and Resources, Birmingham, Ala.; IndependenceFirst, Milwaukee, Wisc.; Paraquad, St. Louis, Mo.; Montana Independent Living Project, Helena, Mont.; and Community Resources for Independent Living, Hayward, Calif.

Two primary goals of the CIL Demonstration Project were to: 1) to facilitate access to local AJC services for job seekers with disabilities by providing coaching and support on available AJC employment and training services—following the job seekers through the AJC process until employment goals are reached, and 2) to provide free disability awareness and technical assistance to AJC staff as requested.

The CILs began working with job seekers in June 2013. Online reporting and training instruments were developed for CILs to record jobseeker profiles and trainings provided to AJCs while monthly conference calls were held with CIL representatives, LEAD Center and ODEP staff.

The CIL Demonstration Project proved to be very successful as CILs have worked to date with 50 job seekers with disabilities, **resulting in employment for 15 of those jobseekers, nearly one-third of the pilot participants**, since June 1, 2013. Jobseeker ages ranged from 16 to 63 years old and represented a diverse cross section of people with disabilities.

CILs have cultivated partnerships with 16 AJCs and provided trainings to 74 AJC staff and Workforce Investment Board members. In addition, NAWDP has published two articles about the CIL Demonstration Project in their e-newsletter, disseminated each time to more than 3,500 workforce development professionals working in both the private and public sectors. The LEAD Center presented a panel discussion at the NCIL National Conference in Washington, D.C., in July 2013 on the CIL Demonstration Project with three of the five project CILs participating as panelists.

To provide educational and other information for the CILs, the LEAD Center developed a CIL-AJC Toolkit in collaboration with ODEP and NCIL, “Improving Employment for Job Seekers with Disabilities through the American Job Center System.”

Best practices established and lessons learned while the demonstration project is ongoing will assist the LEAD Center, ODEP and NCIL in the development of a replicable model of the project for other CILs across the United States to follow. The final report about this project will be published on the LEAD Center website in 2014.

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2014 LEAD Center Webinar Topics Announced

In 2013, the LEAD Center provided a nine-part monthly webinar series on Promoting Employment, Promoting Economic Advancement and Promoting Leadership/Public Policy to nearly 2,700 individuals, workforce development professionals and policy makers. In 2014, the LEAD Center will continue to provide webinar training on emerging best practices, employment and economic advancement innovations and public policy developments and implications through a new nine-part monthly series designed and delivered by national experts.

The 2014 LEAD Center monthly webinars will be provided through three mini-series focused on economic advancement, leadership/public policy and employment. The Economic Advancement mini-series will provide information and training on the link between economic advancement and employment, including tax assistance supports for workers, emerging best practices in integrating financial capability strategies within publicly funded employment services and identifying economic advancement goals during the Discovery process.

The Leadership/Public Policy mini-series will take a deeper look at Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act as a tool for implementing promising practices regarding equal opportunities, and the impact of Medicaid Managed Care and health care transition on the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Finally, the Employment mini-series will share findings from the LEAD Center's inaugural year pilot employment project with select Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the power of strategic partnerships to secure better employment outcomes, advanced training on customized employment strategies and lessons learned from employers providing flexible work arrangements to improve the productivity and retention of employees with and without disabilities.

Registration for upcoming webinars can be found on the LEAD Center website at www.leadcenter.org/webinars.

Did you miss a webinar, want to revisit a topic important to you or need to access training materials? The [LEAD Center Webinar Archive](#) provide easy-to-access archives of the completed webinars, including PowerPoints, transcripts, and answers to questions asked post-webinar.

We look forward to you joining us for the 2014 series.

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[LEAD Center Debuts New Monthly Policy Update on Employment, Health Care and Disability](#)



POLICY UPDATE

Employment, Health Care & Disability

DECEMBER 19, 2013

The LEAD Center Policy Update – Employment, Health Care and Disability is a monthly update focusing on the intersection of disability, employment and health care policy. Its purpose is to provide policymakers, disability service professionals, individuals with disabilities and their families with information about relevant policy developments regarding Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and related topics, with a focus on improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

The LEAD Center Policy Update – Employment, Health Care and Disability is a project of the LEAD Center in collaboration with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network.



The National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD) is a collaborative of disability, workforce and economic empowerment organizations led by National Disability Institute with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Grant No. #OD-23863-12-75-4-11.

MASSACHUSETTS TO CLOSE SHELTERED WORKSHOPS FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Massachusetts has issued a plan for moving people with intellectual disabilities out of segregated, sub-minimum-wage “sheltered workshops.” Under Massachusetts’ plan, entitled “Blueprint for Success: Employing Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Massachusetts,” the state’s administration on developmental disabilities will cease all new referrals to sheltered workshops beginning on January 1, 2014, and will close all existing sheltered workshops by June 30, 2015. Individuals currently working in sheltered workshops will, by June 30, 2015, transfer either to employment above minimum wage or to community-based day programs.

The plan comes, in part, as a response to new guidance from CMS restricting use of Medicaid funding for pre-vocational services offered in contexts such as sheltered workshops. Massachusetts plans to use federal Medicaid funding, via its Home and Community-Based Services waiver program, for many of the new services necessary to implement its plan, including supported employment and vocational coaching services. Federal Medicaid funding will cover approximately \$13.35 million, or half, of the estimated \$26.7 million necessary to implement the plan.¹

MINNESOTA RELEASES 2013 OLMSTEAD PLAN TO PROMOTE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

On November 1, 2013, Minnesota released a plan to bring its service programs in line with the requirements of *Olmstead v. L.C.*, a 1999 ruling by the Supreme Court which held that people with disabilities have the right to receive state-funded services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. The plan

¹ The full text of the plan is available at the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers web site, <http://www.addp.org/images/Nov2013Conferencal/blueprint%20for%20success%20full%20version%20final%2011.6.13.pdf>

The LEAD Center premiered a new valuable new monthly resource in November – the LEAD Center’s **Policy Update-Employment, Health Care and Disability**.

This monthly policy update will focus on the intersection of disability, employment and health

care policy. The LEAD Center's **Policy Update-Employment, Health Care and Disability** is intended to provide policymakers, disability service professionals, individuals with disabilities and their families with information about relevant policy developments regarding Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and related topics, with a focus on improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

The current December issue features stories on Massachusetts's sheltered workshop closures, Minnesota's Olmstead Plan, HHS Community Health Center grants, Michigan's Medicaid Expansion Plan, Ohio's Medicaid expansion enrollment, the Administration's extension of the health plan compliance deadline and the U.S. Department of Labor's Mental Health parity regulations. The inaugural issue ***featured stories on the opening of the ACA Exchanges, various state Medicaid expansion efforts and the Commission on Long-Term Care's final report to Congress.***

- [Download the December 19, 2014 Employment, Health Care and Disability Policy Update.](#)
- [Download the November 14, 2013 Employment, Health Care and Disability Policy Update.](#)

Each monthly update will be published to the [Resource Center](#) found on the LEAD Center website. Subscribers who [sign up](#) to receive LEAD Center news and information will receive notice of each newly published update.

The LEAD Center Policy Update-Employment, Health Care and Disability is a project of the LEAD Center in collaboration with the [Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#).

Want to share feedback or topics you would like to see addressed in a future issue? Please write us at info@leadcenter.org.

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Federal Agencies Join Forces on Groundbreaking Report on Women and Trauma

More than three dozen federal agencies joined forces for one of the largest collaborations in federal government history to create a new, groundbreaking report on Women and Trauma.

This second Working Document Report of the Federal Partners Committee on Women and Trauma entitled *Trauma-informed Approaches: Federal Activities and Initiatives* explores initiatives of various federal agencies in implementing gender-responsive, trauma-informed approaches and the progress the participating agencies have made since 2010 following the publication of the committee's first report. The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) co-chaired the committee, which included representatives from such agencies as the Departments of Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, Veterans Affairs, the Peace Corps and the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy. The report was also developed with support from the

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Center for Trauma-informed Care.

The report quotes Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, sharing her perspective on the work and its importance to people with disabilities: "I was shocked by the sobering statistics. Thirty-seven percent of women with disabilities have experienced violence and abuse in their lifetime compared with 20 percent of women without disabilities . . . Part of the reason why this is such a big problem is because we are not considered credible witnesses, so if we go to the police, if we tell our parents, if we tell people in authority that something has happened, we are often discounted because of our disabilities."

[Read the report - *Women and Trauma: Trauma-informed Approaches: Federal Activities and Initiatives.*](#)

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LEAD PEOPLE Rebecca Salon, Project Director, LEAD Center

On October 1, 2013, Rebecca Salon joined the LEAD Center as Project Director. The LEAD Center is pleased that Karen McCulloh, who served as Project Director for the LEAD Center's inaugural year, is continuing as Director of Special Projects, following a year of extraordinary accomplishments.

Dr. Salon is a recognized national leader in policy, program development and advocacy with an emphasis on cutting-edge demonstrations that promote employment and economic self-sufficiency for people with significant disabilities. She has more than 20 years of experience with management of federally funded projects and has more than 35 years of experience working with people across the spectrum of disabilities. Salon also is working at the District of Columbia Department on Disability Services (DDS), where she is the lead for D.C.'s Employment First program initiatives.

Over the past six years, Salon has worked in D.C. government focusing on program, policy and partnership development to promote Employment First systems change, in addition to other initiatives through DDS's developmental disabilities and vocational rehabilitation administrations. This work has included creating and supporting Communities of Practice to promote and implement customized employment; coordinating Project SEARCH partnerships and programs within the federal government; overseeing and coordinating the activities of DDS's Medicaid infrastructure grant (MIG); fostering a collaboration between the workforce and vocational rehabilitation system on universal design practices in their respective roles; and working on multiple partnerships designed to promote employment for youth and young adults with disabilities. Almost all of her energies have been focused on creating opportunities for employment, community inclusion and economic self-sufficiency for youth and adults in the District of Columbia. She is actively engaged with the State Employment Leadership Network's

work in D.C. and was instrumental in creating an Administrative Employment Network (EN) at DDS to expand the job retention support that can be available to people with disabilities through the Ticket to Work program.

Salon previously was Executive Director of the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute, where she worked for 20 years in positions that spanned all of its programs and projects. Since 1988, Salon has been an advisor to Project ACTION!, a D.C.-based state-wide self-advocacy coalition run by adults with developmental disabilities, and has worked with a number of family advocacy coalitions in D.C. and Maryland. Her Master's and Doctorate degrees are from Syracuse University. Her doctorate degree is in special education with an emphasis on disability policy studies, advocacy and program quality. She also previously worked at Syracuse's Center on Human Policy and in a number of other non-profit management positions.

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LEAD PARTNERS National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)



The [National Association of State Workforce Agencies \(NASWA\)](#) recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate and partner with the LEAD Center on various projects and policy objectives. The LEAD Center/NASWA collaboration will support meaningful and effective participation of jobseekers with disabilities with services offered by American Job Centers and positively impact employment and economic advancement for our target audience of youth and adults with disabilities.

NASWA was founded in the depths of the Great Depression, in the early years of unemployment insurance and employment service programs. It is an organization of state administrators of unemployment insurance laws, employment services, training programs, employment statistics and labor market information. Throughout its more than [75-year history](#), NASWA has strengthened the workforce system through information exchange, liaison and advocacy.

The guiding principles of NASWA are:

1. Advance the state role in the workforce system;
2. Invest in training and professional development; and
3. Lead in coordinating local, state and federal roles.

A newly published history highlights NASWA's evolution as an organization, affirming NASWA's adaptability and commitment to serving its members. Click here for "[A History of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies: From the New Deal to the Twentieth Century.](#)"

[NASWA's 2012 Annual Report](#) provides information on NASWA's mission, organization, goals, activities, and accomplishments during the past year. For state workforce agency administrators and employees, this document is a reference tool to take full advantage of the benefits of your Association.

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