

Background on Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Projects

In October 2011, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities awarded grants to lead agencies in six states: California, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, and Wisconsin. Two additional states, Alaska and Tennessee, received grants in October 2012. These states proposed activities to spur improved employment and post-secondary outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The Institute for Community Inclusion and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services are providing training and technical assistance (TA) to the eight state projects through the Partnerships in Employment (PIE) Training and TA Center.

Partnerships project work is framed by the High Performing States Transition Model which contains 8 key elements: collaboration, leadership, state goals and policy, funding and contracting, staff training, service innovation, performance management and quality assurance, and youth leadership development and family engagement. This document is one in a series of PIE Project Fact Sheets that have been developed to chronicle how PIE grantee states are making change under the elements of the High Performing States Transition model.

Statewide interagency data-collection systems are used as a strategic planning tool to further the goal of increasing employment for transition-age youth and young adults.

CALIFORNIA

The California Employment Consortium for Youth (CECY) created the California Developmental Disabilities Systems Employment Data Dashboard. The dashboard displays data derived from several state agencies on the employment of individuals with IDD.

Created with a format that is accessible to professionals, families, and self-advocates, the dashboard is housed on the website of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities: http://www.scdd.ca.gov/employment_data_dashboard.htm

The Council is identified in California's Employment First statute as the state organization responsible for proposing measurable objectives for integrated employment of individuals with IDD. The dashboard includes data from the California Department of

Developmental Services, California Department of Education, California Employment Development Department, American Community Survey, and National Core Indicators Survey. These data describe high school outcomes, employment and day program participation, employment rates, and wage levels for individuals with IDD.

Lessons learned:

- » Making employment data easily available helps to create awareness of the need for increased efforts to support the transition from education to integrated employment.
- » Connecting and displaying data from a variety of sources helps policy-makers get a big picture view of employment outcomes in their state. This is an important lesson as it suggests that states can begin measuring and tracking employment outcomes prior to the creation of a large scale cross agency data collection system.
- » Creating a common dashboard supports developing common definitions of employment and goals across stakeholders.

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Let's Get to Work project collects rich qualitative and quantitative data from its twelve competitively selected school-based transition pilots. It uses the data from its school-based pilots to evaluate the impact of local school policies and practices on employment, quality of life, and self-determination outcomes; assess the need for changes in local, state, or federal policy; and inform policy development.

Let's Get to Work widely disseminates information on successful outcomes and plays a leadership role in engaging stakeholders and partners in collaborative analysis leading to policy and practice changes that will increase the integrated employment of youth with IDD. It posts findings on its website (<http://www.letsgettoworkwi.org>) and disseminates them to legislatures; local, state, and federal agencies; the community; and advocates, as well as at conferences

and professional development presentations.

Lessons learned:

- » The quality, relevance, and effectiveness of evaluation in system change efforts are enhanced when a qualified evaluator is not external, but instead is part of the systems change team and is substantively knowledgeable.
- » Data collection and analysis can be used formatively to guide the process of systems change at program and policy levels.

We thank the Partnerships in Employment grantees for their contributions to and reviews of the emerging practices in their state.

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