Increasing Community Engagement for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

Jennifer Bose
University of Massachusetts Boston, jennifer.bose@umb.edu

Jennifer Sulewski
University of Massachusetts Boston, jennifer.sulewski@umb.edu

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These three projects highlight various aspects of the Institute for Community Inclusion's efforts to increase community engagement of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, both locally and nationally.

The Transitions to Work project, for which ICI provides evaluation assistance, partners with Boston-area employers to increase engagement of adults with disabilities in the regional workforce.

The Community Life Engagement initiative complements the employment focus by looking at other aspects of community life, such as volunteerism and participation in community events and resources.

On the national level, Real People Real Jobs is a website and publication series highlighting the employment successes of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Community Life Engagement for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
Institute for Community Inclusion

At A Glance

Using previous and new research, Community Life Engagement uses findings and ideas to create guideposts and toolkits for states and communities.

Community Life Engagement is a project of ThinkWork! at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston. ThinkWork! is a resource portal offering data, personal stories, and tools related to improving employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Origins

Also referred to as community-based non-work, wraparound supports, holistic supports, or community integration services, Community Life Engagement activities may include volunteer work; postsecondary, adult, or continuing education; accessing community facilities such as a local library, gym, or recreation center; participation in retirement or senior activities; and anything else people with and without disabilities do in their off-work time.

Such activities may support career exploration for those not yet working or between jobs, supplement employment hours for those who are working part-time, or serve as a retirement option for older adults.

Community Life Engagement refers to supporting people with IDD to access and participate in their communities outside of employment as part of a meaningful day.
We are currently collaborating on this project with:

- The State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) at ICI/UMass Boston
- National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) located in Washington, DC

In future phases of the project we will be partnering with other entities, including disability service providers and state IDD agencies, to conduct case studies, identify promising practices, and pilot and refine toolkits.
Much of the growth is in facility-based and/or non-work.
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**Data**

**Service Providers**

- Facility-Based Nonwork
- Community-Based Nonwork
- Facility Based Work
- Individual Integrated Jobs

Percent of People with IDD receiving service

- 2010
- 2002-2003
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Project Activities

- Demonstrate the use of Community Life Engagement in an employment-focused environment.
- Add to existing research on successful Community Life Engagement policies and practices.

Case Studies

Guideposts & Toolkits

- Based on a combination of prior and current Community Life Engagement research.
- Provide guidance for states and Service Providers on how to provide high quality Community Life Engagement supports.
- Promote integration, inclusion, choice, and independence.

Pilot Tests for Toolkits

- 6 Service Providers in 3 states will test and refine the toolkits’ utility.
- Service Provider staff, state agency staff and individuals with disabilities will enrich and refine the toolkits.

Evaluation

- Edit and improve toolkits before broadly disseminating the materials.
# Community Life Engagement for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

## Institute for Community Inclusion

### Short Term
- States & Service Providers find guideposts and toolkits useful.
- States use guideposts and toolkits to guide their thinking on policies, including Service Provider oversight, funding structures, and measurement mechanisms.
- Service Providers use toolkits to redesign their Community Life Engagement supports to be person-focused, individualized, and integrated both physically and socially.
- Both states and providers use guideposts and toolkits to guide strategic planning activities.

### Intermediate
- States adopt more effective policies, including Service Provider oversight, funding structures, and measurement mechanisms.
- Service Providers’ Community Life Engagement supports become more person-focused, individualized, and integrated both physically and socially.
According to this survey, from FY1996 to FY2012, the number of states providing Community Based Non-Work (CBNW) has increased from 18 to 30; those states that provide CBNW report that participation has grown from 18.7% to 42.3%.
Transitions to Work (TTW) provides job training, internships, and job placement assistance to young adults with disabilities. Central to the model are partnerships between Jewish Vocational Services and employers, who host the program, provide internship opportunities, and interview program graduates for jobs. The program is aimed at both improving employment outcomes for young adults who participate and promoting culture change at participating employer sites.
The Transitions to Work (TTW) program began in 2011 by Jewish Vocational Services in partnership with Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) and the Ruderman Family Foundation. Staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion have conducted program evaluations of TTW in 2012 and 2013 and are currently working on a third year of evaluation.
ICI’s evaluation has used both qualitative and quantitative data to examine outcomes for both participants and employers and has provided recommendations for JVS, CJP, and the Ruderman Foundation to consider as they continue the program and look toward new ways to promote its sustainability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Cycles Completed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Enrolled</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed Training &amp; Internship</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Placed in Jobs</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Job Characteristics for Those Placed:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Hourly Wages</td>
<td>$9.23</td>
<td>$9.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Hours Per Week</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes

Employer partners have embraced the TTW participants and have reported changes in disability awareness overall.

The placement rate for those who have completed training is **70%**

Participants, family members, employers, and staff all speak highly of the program.

Participants gain both hard & soft employment skills from participation in trainings and internships.

On average, those who obtained jobs in 2013 were earning $9.62 per hour and working 16.7 hours per week, comparable outcomes to those of the vocational rehabilitation system.

TTW has expanded number individuals served and employers engaged.

Employer partners have also reported unexpected positive effects on professional development for other employees through supervision and mentorship of TTW participants.

At this time almost **all individuals** are still in the job they were placed in.
ICI has provided evaluation services to TTW since 2012. ICI’s evaluation has used both qualitative and quantitative data to examine outcomes for both participants and employers and has provided recommendations for JVS, CJP, and the Ruderman Foundation to consider as they continue the program and look toward new ways to promote its sustainability.

Each year’s evaluation has had a different focus:
2012: outcomes for participants and alumni of the program
2013: employer engagement strategies and effectiveness
2014: culture change process at select employers
Jennifer Sullivan Sulewski
Senior Research Associate
Institute for Community Inclusion
100 Morrissey Blvd
Boston, MA 02125
jennifer.sulewski@umb.edu
Real People, Real Jobs: Stories from the Front Lines is a collection of success stories about individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) finding and keeping jobs in their communities.
Website Features

Relatable and easy to share

Most stories have an accompanying photo or video

Stories are sorted by job category and region of the country

Designed for individuals with IDD, their families and employment support professionals

www.realworkstories.org
Goals

Increase awareness of the full range of employment opportunities and support options available.

Provide examples that will enable individuals and their networks to think creatively about employment.
Ryan has been interested in nature since he was a small child, and once asked only for plants for his birthday. He lives in Reno, Nevada, likes math and science, and describes himself as a positive person. With his teacher as his job coach, Ryan transitioned from high school into the perfect job.
Success Story 1

Izzy: Building Employment Skills Through an Internship

Izzy is 23 years old and lives with her family in Tampa, Florida. She loves swimming, working out, and baking. An internship at an assisted-living facility and related classes at the University of South Florida's Learning Academy helped her succeed later at her first paid job.
Success Story 2

Ian: Family Engagement During the Transition from School to Work

Ian lives on Oahu, Hawai‘i, and enjoys movies, dance, and karate. He is employed as a courtesy clerk at Safeway. With the support and high expectations of his family, he was able to train for this job while still in high school, enabling a smooth transition into the kind of work he wanted.
Solicitation of individuals with IDD who had successful experiences with creative employment options and who wished to share their stories was made through multiple channels.

Once contacts had nominated an individual and practice to be highlighted, project staff used a specific set of screening questions to document the practice and determine if it was promising.

Information for each story was then collected through semi-structured interviews of individuals with IDD and his or her employment support provider or a family member.

Edit and improve toolkits before broadly disseminating the materials.

Individuals had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the videos before they were finalized.
Staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion have partnered with Community Rehabilitation Provider employment support staff, university-based employment programs for people with IDD at the University of Washington and the University of Nevada, disability-specific community-based organizations, employers, self-advocacy groups, individuals with IDD and family members across all regions in the United States in the identification and creation of the collection of real work stories.
Resources & Contact Information

Learn More

For More Information

Contact:

Jennifer Bose
Research Coordinator
Institute for Community Inclusion
100 Morrissey Blvd
Boston, MA 02125
(617) 287-4353
Jennifer.Bose@umb.edu

Real People Real Jobs is a project of ThinkWork! at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston.

ThinkWork! is a resource portal offering data, personal stories, and tools related to improving employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.