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Supporting Employment First: Assisting states in achieving improved employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities

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State Employment Leadership Network

A membership network of 29 states, the State Employment Leadership Network is a community of practice where members meet to connect, collaborate, and share information and lessons learned across state lines and system boundaries. Participating state agency officials build cross-community support for pressing employment-related issues and policies at state and federal levels. States commit to work together and engage in a series of activities to analyze key elements in their systems to improve the integrated employment outcomes for their citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



SELN Member States
Member as of 1/1/2012



The following list illustrates the range of topics from recent discussions:

- ▶ Workforce development competencies/ training efforts underway in states
- ▶ Wage data comparisons across state DD agencies and state unemployment insurance
- ▶ Transition from school to work, including updates from special education resources
- ▶ Postsecondary options and projects
- ▶ National service experiences as an option on the path to employment

- ▶ Employer-run support services
- ▶ Understanding and using labor market information
- ▶ Collaborative work across DD agencies and the vocational rehabilitation system
- ▶ Accessible transportation options

States are focused on a variety of systems-change activities including:

- ▶ Waiver service definitions
- ▶ Employment first policies and strategies
- ▶ Funding and rate methodology changes
- ▶ Sharing data across state agencies
- ▶ Collecting and reporting on employment-outcomes data
- ▶ Implementing core competency training for employment-related staff

The Employment Framework

The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, is used to guide SELN strategic implementation for system improvements. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems



Reaching the Summit of Success: Transitions to Work and Employment First in North Carolina



Funded by the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities, this project is focused on developing a strategic and prescriptive work plan to improve employment and post secondary outcomes leading to employment for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The project has engaged a cross stakeholder steering committee to identify both opportunities and challenges that exist in North Carolina and is developing an inventory of promising practices in transition.

Improving Employment Systems and Services for Individuals with IDD



The Employment Learning Community (ELC) is assisting states in improving systems and services to increase inclusive, competitive employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The ELC has three key components:

1. A Delphi panel will identify issues and emerging and promising practices that will inform the work of the ELC.
2. Three to five communities of practice will be convened annually. Members will engage in time-limited but intensive work on issues that will support their state-level systems-change efforts, and lead to the development of products that can be used by other states.
3. Five to ten states will be selected for more intensive engagement in the project. Each of these states will receive technical assistance to develop a state-level consortium that will assist in local employment systems change.

Led by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, with funding from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the project partners include TransCen and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.