



# New Jersey Findings and Observations Report

## State Employment Leadership Network

March 2012

### State Agency

New Jersey Department of Human Services

### Process

- Review of New Jersey Department of Human Services' (DHS) state strategic assessment
- Review of state policy documents and reports
- Review of Supplemental Stakeholder survey
- Meeting with various New Jersey Department of Human Services and Department of Labor and Workforce Development leadership team members: Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDS), Division of Disability Services (DDS), Division of Mental Health and Addictive Services (DMHAS), Commission of Blind and Visual Impaired (CBVI), Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS).
- Stakeholder forums with Regional Administrators and Employment Day & Employment coordinators, family, participants of services, providers and advocacy organizations

### SELN Project Team

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### Introduction



Upon joining the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), each new member state agency is asked to complete the SELN State Strategic Employment Assessment. This comprehensive self-evaluation tool provides a description and analysis of the state's infrastructure and support for achieving integrated employment outcomes among persons with developmental disabilities receiving publicly financed support. The state then has the opportunity to utilize a survey supplement to gather even more input from a wider stakeholder group. Using the State Strategic Assessment and the survey Supplement as a guide, the SELN Project Team conducts an on-site visit with key state agency officials; regional, county, and local leaders; providers; and other stakeholders. Participants were determined by the state agency with the goal to develop a thorough understanding of the state context. Information gathered through the State Strategic Assessment and site visit is summarized in this *Findings and Observations* report prepared by SELN staff. This report is formatted to provide the results of the assessment process (Key Findings) and to offer a list of possible system opportunities for improvement (Potential Focus Areas) under each of seven key employment framework areas. DHS and other state officials may use the report as the basis for the development of a work plan detailing the outcomes, goals, and strategies to be pursued in the months and years ahead to improve employment outcomes.

Follow-up meetings will be held with state officials to identify key outcomes they desire to be pursued through SELN participation and to develop effective implementation strategies.

## I. Leadership

### A. Key Findings

- State leadership clearly expresses commitment to improving employment outcomes for all New Jersey citizens with disabilities. However concern was expressed regarding the “political will” to make substantial changes seen as necessary to improve employment outcomes from those receiving NJ disability services.
- Stakeholders expressed mixed messages with regard to leadership commitment to integrated employment as a priority.
- Leadership within the provider community appears varied about making integrated employment a priority outcome in delivering services. However, there is clearly some provider leadership in the state to move forward with improving employment outcomes through their service delivery systems.
- Responses to the SELN supplemental survey reflect strong interest in improving employment for NJ citizens with disabilities, with particular concern for individuals with IDD. There were one hundred nine completed surveys

returned. Respondents were asked to comment on the highlighted elements in this report. Findings are reflected in the tenor of this report.

- New Jersey maintains a public presence for employment through press releases, proclamations, and agency news including the Governor's Proclamation declaring October 2011 as Disability Employment Awareness Month in NJ and calling for "...development of a comprehensive system of employment services and supports for people with disabilities; and whereas, NJ now has multiple state agencies and subdivisions working in collaboration to advance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities".
- DDD has recently established a full-time position within DDD with the responsibility for leading the department's efforts to improve employment outcomes throughout NJ.
- DDD regions have an identified supported employment lead. Designated positions with responsibility to focus on employment as an outcome of services in other DHS divisions is not present.
- DVRS, while a major provider of integrated employment supports, continues to permit some DVRS funded employment services to be delivered in facility-based vendor/provider settings."
- There is a core network of stakeholders across NJ that is committed to improving employment outcomes for NJ citizens with disabilities.
- All disability agencies are located with DHS with the exception of DVRS, which is located within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. It was felt by some this created some challenges in terms of coordination and consistency.

## B. Potential Focus Areas

- Develop and distribute to regions, providers, and stakeholders a statement affirming each Division's commitment to improving integrated employment outcomes and in developing the capacity of the service system to achieve this goal.
- Establish a cross-stakeholder leadership team to direct and support New Jersey's employment strategic plan.
- Improve and realign resources to clarify and affirm DHS' and DLWD's goals, values, and expectations regarding integrated employment as a priority for NJ citizens with disabilities.

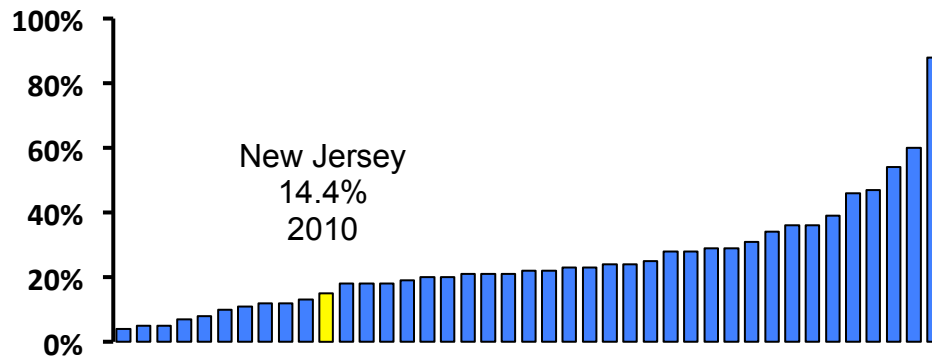
- Ensure that all DHS and DLWD agencies policies, resources, and practices are focused on integrated employment in alignment with current best practices including a presumption of employability, and use of integrated settings within the community for all service delivery.
- Review roles of DDD regional employment and day service coordinators to build greater focus on employment as a priority outcome of services for all NJ citizens with disabilities.
- At a minimum, identify that the lead staff within DDD has the authority to manage system-wide improvement in employment services for NJ citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) regardless of their avenue of entry into NJ's service systems, such as through DVRS or DDD provider.
- Develop strategies for increasing awareness of integrated employment as a viable and preferred service outcome among DHS and DLWD staff, regional managers, the case management delivery structures, service providers, individuals, and families. The intent is to create:
  1. Awareness and use of evidence-based best practices and to make integrated employment a consistent part of discussions of service options and service plans.
  2. A consistent message regarding the importance of integrated employment as an avenue for individual asset development, economic empowerment, and community inclusion.
- Strengthen engagement of self-advocates and family groups in planning efforts to create external pressures and demands for increasing integrated employment opportunities in the general workforce and alternatives to traditional community day service options. Key to such an effort is providing information and tools to assist families and self-advocates in understanding and advocating for quality employment services and working with them on how best to play strategic roles in quality service delivery.
- For employment services, ensure that mechanisms are in place which are reflective of the Olmstead guidance from the US Department of Justice regarding informed choice ([www.ada.gov/olmstead/q&a\\_olmstead.htm](http://www.ada.gov/olmstead/q&a_olmstead.htm)). Per DOJ, "such steps include providing information about the benefits of integrated settings; facilitating visits or other experiences in such settings; and offering opportunities to meet with other individuals with disabilities who are living, working and receiving services in integrated settings, with their families, and with community providers. Public entities also must make reasonable efforts to identify and addresses any concerns or objections raised by the individual or another relevant decision-maker."

## II. Strategic Goals and Operating Policies

### A. Key Findings

- DDD supported employment standards appear comprehensive and current with best practice information. However, these guidelines do not reflect actual practice, i.e. respondents in both the survey and during focus groups commented that “Policies are not aligned to ensure employment is expected for DDD citizens” – “Employment is not always addressed as a first priority despite the capability of the consumer”. Stakeholder feedback from both providers and families suggests there is considerable confusion about the policies and resources that govern employment services.
- Integrated employment is not listed as a priority goal or desired outcome in NJ Human Services or Divisions and DVRS current mission or philosophy statements. Integrated employment is recognized as an option but not a priority. In terms of DDD, in FY2010 New Jersey reported that 14.4% of individuals supported in day and employment services participated in integrated employment services, compared to a national mean of 20%. Data from the National Core Indicators Project indicate that 17% of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities work in integrated jobs, and that 38% of those individuals are in group supported employment. [For additional data sources and cites refer to the SELN Data Summary attached to this report.]

State IDD Agencies - Percent in Integrated Employment Services



- Minimal requirements are placed on service providers for achieving employment outcomes for individuals with IDD and other disabilities.
- NJ has a strong reliance on facility-based service models.

- Local influence in delivery of service is apparent and seems to often reinforce reliance on facility-based service models.
- There is no requirement for employment to be addressed at annual DDD IHP/ELP planning meetings.
- As in most states NJ has pockets of excellence in delivering employment services that achieve individual integrated employment objectives. It will be important for the state to review how these “pockets of excellence” have sustained and determine how to build similar practices across the state. This will be critical to sustainability of employment outcomes as the state goes down the path of exploring ways to manage long term care under the Affordable Care Act.
- Stakeholders indicated that DDD engagement with transition age youth does not occur until July following school exit. Some respondents understand this to be policy, resulting in a significant lack of continuity and opportunity for individuals.
- DDD still spends significant resources on institutional settings (7 developmental centers with 2,500 individuals), but has been undertaking efforts to close these institutions and shift these individuals into community settings.
- There is a lack of understanding of a clear service flow for integrated community employment.
- There is limited and inconsistent awareness of Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Programs, and other benefits counseling programs.

## B. Potential Focus Areas

- Review the DDD individual service plan requirements to determine how to focus an expectation of integrated employment for working-age adults receiving services. Consider a policy statement that employment is discussed at every planning meeting. Require on a regular basis a community-based employment assessment for adults not engaged in active employment. (Examine Tennessee policy requiring employment community based assessment every three years [http://www.tn.gov/didd/provider\\_agencies/policies.html](http://www.tn.gov/didd/provider_agencies/policies.html)).
- Revise the format of the DDD individual service plan to include employment as a priority section, and require consideration of integrated employment as

- part of planning of process; simplify the information gathered in the person centered plan and move the activities of career planning to a provider level.
- Review service plans for mental health and addictive services to assure employment is a priority in service plans, and create a higher profile regarding employment within DMHAS services (e.g., highlighted on website with clear instructions regarding how to access).
  - When a determination is made that employment is not a viable option for a working age adult with disabilities served by a DHS or DLWD agency, consider a requirement for documentation of why employment is not considered a viable option at this time (see example from Ohio - <http://dodd.ohio.gov/medicaid/Documents/DODD%20Employment%20First%20Form1.pdf>) .
  - Review, with SELN assistance, other states' experiences with "Employment First" policies and practices that establish goals and programmatic preferences that are designed to ensure that working age students and adults receiving services have increased choices and options for accessing and maintaining employment in the general workforce.
  - Consider development of an Employment First policy that makes it clear that integrated community employment is the preferred outcome for DHS and DLWD services, and not just one of a multitude of options that should be considered.
  - Analyze current policies and procedures (*practice*) regarding transition, and determine, with engagement of the Department of Education, how these can be strengthened to support integrated employment as a preferred outcome for students moving into the adult service system. This should include a full range of career path options including post-secondary and national service such as AmeriCorps to further prepare students for adult life.
  - Consider a policy that makes clear that the goal of transition services is integrated community employment, that placement in facility-based services as an outcome of transition is discouraged/not permitted, and that the use of facility-based services during the transition process is not a viable option.
  - Review requirements for staff qualification and training across DHS and DLWD disability-focused agencies to ensure staff providing employment services have the necessary competencies to deliver quality services. Within this, also consider development of statewide staff competency requirements for vendors/providers of employment services.

- Clarify definitions of employment-related services to ensure these services can be consistently provided and understood regardless of the provider or from which division of disability services. This will help to empower consumers, providers, and employers. Review state service delivery policies, for consistency in expectations for employment services and the outcomes. Revise as appropriate to assure single messaging of commitment to integrated employment for NJ citizens with disabilities.
- Review Family Education and Support program and consider adding assistance with youth work programs for those of youth working age (16-22). Include parent education on the values of employment including simple benefit awareness when their sons and daughters become employed.
- Develop a clear service flow/schematic for individuals with disabilities seeking assistance to find employment, similar to that used with the criminal justice system.
- Work with WIPA and other benefits counseling programs on mechanisms for more strategic linking of individuals, families, and service providers with benefits counseling services, and consider options for supplementing current benefits counseling options (e.g., creating a supplemental cadre of Certified Work Incentive Counselors) if current benefits counseling services do not have sufficient capacity to meet need.

### III. Financing and Contracting

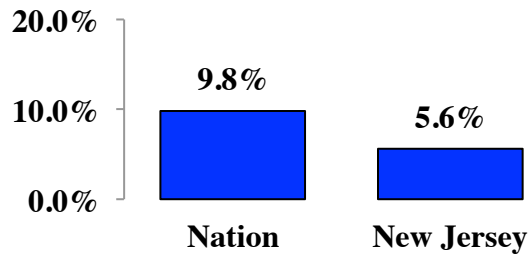
#### A. Key Findings

- Cost reimbursement contracts are a predominant model of funding across DHS. Without clear contract expectations that include employment outcomes this does not support a clear expectation for employment.
- When rate based funding is used by DDD, average rates do not clearly support individual employment outcomes. Average rates provided at the time of the site visit were based a per diem structure using state funds:
  - Individual supported employment: \$30.30/diem
  - Individualized day program: \$128.82/diem
  - Group supported employment: \$57.60/diem
  - Sheltered work: \$47.39/diem
  - Community based non-work (AT): \$123.67/diem
- NJ has a mechanism for self-directed services in DDD (currently 1,000 individuals served).



- Resources for employment services come primarily from vocational rehabilitation and allocations from state general revenues. DVRS funds individual employment support at \$51/hour. DVRS manages state funds for extended services at 2 hours/month.
- There is limited participation by individuals with intellectual disabilities in NJ DVRS services compared to the national average.

Percent of DVRS closures identified as having ID in FY 2010



- Medicaid waiver funding seems to be under-utilized in supporting services that assist individuals in developing a career path or in long term follow along supports. Despite implementing 7 waivers, New Jersey has largely relied on state funds because of the increased flexibility this approach provides. The role of DDD state and waiver funds in long term supports is not clear.
- Limited incentives are present to support providers to increase integrated employment as an outcome of services delivered. Stakeholders believe that current rate structures provide more financial incentive for providers to offer congregate services.
- The majority of stakeholders view rate and rate structures as not supporting individual supported or competitive employment or encouraging employment over other day service options.
- Fiscal stability/health of service providers is an ongoing issue.
- Changes in the availability of production work from general industry to service providers have affected some large providers and may be a catalyst for movement for development of alternatives to sheltered employment or other non-integrated employment.

## B. Potential Focus Areas

- Review qualified provider process to assure better balance in number of approved providers to deliver employment services and non-facility based life supports both for Medicaid services and non-Medicaid services.

- Review waiver services to ensure service definitions support a clear and intentional pathway to employment including person centered career planning and discovery, job development, job stabilization, and ongoing supports.
- Review other state payment methodologies and consider implementation of performance based payment systems similar to other states, i.e. Oklahoma Performance Based Payment System [http://www.nasddd.org/Meetings/2010\\_Annual\\_Conference/2010\\_AC\\_Presentations.shtml](http://www.nasddd.org/Meetings/2010_Annual_Conference/2010_AC_Presentations.shtml).
- Establish employment goals within cost reimbursement contracts, and a payment structure that provides incentives for achieving goals.
- Require providers to submit a program development plan for shifting resources in line with a focus on integrated employment (e.g., Massachusetts DDS).
- Consider instituting mechanisms that ensure that providers consistently consider the full array of employment funding, not just available vocational rehabilitation dollars, to support individuals' engagement in the workforce (i.e. opportunities such as use of Social Security Work Incentives and Ticket to Work, Medicaid waiver, workforce development, etc.).
- Review rate setting methodology for employment and facility based day habilitation to ensure community integrated employment is a "preferred" outcome of service in terms of reimbursement.
- Consider engaging SELN to provide technical assistance to New Jersey in the area of resource and reimbursement best practices and identifying strategies used by other states for supporting employment services that may be appropriate for NJ DDD and that (1) will help support achieving effective employment outcomes; (2) offer increased accountability; and (3) meet other state and individual employment goals.
- Consider a cost analysis relating to the community wide and economic return on investment of redirecting dollars currently supporting facility-based programs to individual employment in the general workforce.
- In collaboration with DHS, DLWD, and Department of Education, build the capacity to target and fund integrated employment supports for individuals' with disabilities transitioning from school to adult life.

#### IV. Training and Technical Assistance

##### Key Findings

- New Jersey has an established employment training infrastructure, and all DDD service provider staff working in community employment is required to go to training, provided either by the Boggs Center or TACE –the Boggs Center training is no charge to providers. The SELN staff did not have the opportunity to review the curricula.
- The Boggs Center is devoting significant resources to training school personnel on employment and behavioral supports.
- Available training and technical assistance within the DHS system appears primarily focused on health and safety, process management, and monitoring. However, it is recognized that resources have been available to fund the required employment training.
- There is not an established staff development infrastructure for case managers or internal state developmental disabilities staff, or for individuals and families to address competencies and knowledge of best practices in employment service delivery. However, DVRS, beginning in 1999, has required the Counseling staff to upgrade their skills and competency and currently 90 % of their VR Counseling staff holds a Masters Degree.
- The *Life After 21* curriculum provides an outreach infrastructure for transition age young adults and their families.
- Service providers report major challenges in having staff attend training/staff development activities in a fee for service environment.

## B. Potential Focus Areas

- *Provider capacity*: Develop a technical assistance infrastructure to support implementation of skills attained in the Boggs and UMDNJ training, and to support organizational change to improve employment outcomes. Tie organizational technical assistance to provider program development plans and goals (see above).
- *Case Managers*: Include modules in DHS case manager training on the values of employment and how case manager roles and responsibilities in messaging and improving employment outcomes for individuals on their case loads. Review Oregon “pathways” approach to training case managers.
- Develop guidelines/requirements as well as training for DHS and all Division staff regarding the value of employment and necessary knowledge regarding integrated employment appropriate to their roles (e.g. program oversight, case management).

- Review the Boggs Center employment curriculum and compare to competency needed for achievement of National Employment Support Professional Certification offered by APSE (<http://www.apse.org/certification/>).
- Consider development of core competency requirements for all service providers (DVRS, DDD, DMH, CBVI), and integration of these requirements within program certification, monitoring and/or quality assurance requirements.
- Enhance efforts to work strategically with self-advocates and families to enhance their knowledge and optimize the value of family networks. Use this opportunity as catalyst for increasing employment expectations. Develop training and materials regarding employment to provide learning opportunities for families to become familiar with the opportunities employment creates for individual growth and self-sufficiency.
  - Consider the use of peer-to-peer mentoring and training
- Consider development of a statewide curriculum for state agency staff, service providers, families, and individuals with disabilities, focused on management of benefits in a way that maximizes integrated employment opportunities and economic self-sufficiency

## V. Interagency Collaboration

### A. Key Findings

- Memorandum of Understanding is in place with DVRS, DDD, and CBVI. This agreement addresses collaboration between three of the state's disability entities. DVRS has additional agreements of cooperation with Mental Health and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Agencies. The SELN Project Team did not have the opportunity to review the DVRS agreements with Mental Health and the Deaf and Hear of Hearing Agencies.
- Multiple Stakeholders, in response to the SELN survey, expressed frustration with the speed and responsiveness of DVRS services, and the coordination of DVRS and DDD resources. As noted on page 9, data indicates that overall DVRS has a lower caseload of individuals with ID than most states.
  - Because of the significant use of state funds for day and employment services for persons with IDD, there may have been limited need to establish a clear protocol for transition between DVRS and DDD services.
  - The process of allocating developmental disability follow-along funding for supported employment is not well understood by stakeholders and appears to be more influenced by local rule than state direction. The current waiting list for services is also a barrier in coordination with DVRS,

and may particularly limit access to DVRS for younger individuals when they exit school.

- DDD employment providers must also be DVRS vendors which in theory should allow smooth transition from one funding stream to another for individuals with IDD, the population most likely to need long term supports to remain gainfully employed within the general workforce.
- Several stakeholders reported that engaging with DVRS can be slow, and that these issues are more pronounced from one local area to another.
- Survey responses and onsite stakeholders expressed great concern for the limited coordination between school and adult services. Families in particular expressed concern that their sons and daughters are often directed towards facility based services regardless of functional skills acquired in school to join the general workforce. As noted above, several respondents indicated that DDD does not engage with individuals until July of their year of school exit, preventing a seamless transition in supports. This has also been affected by late legislative allocation of funds for transitioning young adults.
- Stakeholders indicated that DVRS utilizes facility based work assessments frequently as part of the assessment phase of services. Some individuals were frustrated by this requirement, and found it to be a significant barrier to both engaging with DVRS and achieving personal goals. DVRS expressed challenges in building statewide provider capacity to deliver community based work assessments; and hence their continued reliance in utilizing facility based work assessments in some parts of the state.
- New Jersey has some history the general workforce development system (One-Stop/American Job Center system, etc.) focusing on job seekers with disabilities, including a current US Department of Labor funded Disability Employment Initiative grant. The Wagner-Peyser data indicate however that the level of participation of people with disabilities using the workforce development system in NJ lags the national average.

## B. Potential Focus Areas

- Develop a clear operational protocol that defines the roles of DVRS, DDD, CBVI, and DMH in the employment process and clarifies the transition between and braiding of supports and funding, based on a clear understanding of the flexibility of and limits of the regulatory parameters within which each of these systems operates.
- Create mechanisms to strategically build interagency collaboration with VR, DDD, DMHAS, CBVI, and schools to improve employment outcomes for NJ

youth with IDD and other disabilities through shared project/activities implementing practices that support of integrated community based employment.

- Establish a standard of service for person-centered career planning and assessment. DDD in collaboration with DVRS, should explore the use of person-centered planning approaches in employment and community based situational assessments as the standard – a brief "real world" evaluation of an individual's employability skills intended to establish a baseline from which to develop service plans for determining career direction not just employability. In several states VR funds extended situational assessments as part of the career planning process and in other states this falls to the developmental disability services as a non-facility based prevocational service or part of supported employment services.
- Develop case coordination linkages and cross training among all state agencies to support the priority of employment as an outcome of adult day services.
- Review the current clubhouse model being utilized, and assure employment is a priority for individuals with mental health and substance abuse challenges.
- Review and revise current parent and individual education and outreach materials across agencies to reflect a stronger and consistent emphasis on employment as an expectation in adult life regardless of disability.
- Systematically examine how the resources of the workforce development system and New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers (including services for youth) are currently being utilized and can be better utilized in conjunction with other services for individuals with disabilities, through: a) awareness and encouragement of the use of these resources by individuals, families, and service providers; b) creation of mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration, including integration of individuals with disabilities within workforce development job seeker initiatives. Within this effort, systematically examine the current data collection by the workforce development system in serving individuals with disabilities, and develop mechanisms for consistent collection of such information, and enhancements that allow a better understanding of the individuals with disabilities that workforce development system (type of disability, etc.) is serving and the outcomes being achieved.

## VI. Services and Service Innovations

### A. Key Findings

- New Jersey has consistently had a strong APSE chapter, and with the support of the Boggs Center, holds a well-attended, consistently high quality annual conference focused exclusively on integrated employment.
- Pockets of innovation can be seen across NJ and interest in sharing and expanding those innovations was heard clearly during the site visit, particularly from families and individuals receiving services.
- Capacity of the service network to implement integrated employment services varies from region to region.
- Current service models, while allowing employment services to assist NJ citizens with disabilities to access and engage in integrated employment, are often structured to promote congregate service models.
- Effective and responsive transportation systems are not available in many parts of the state and need improvement.
- There is a great concern regarding the ever expanding waiting list for services and how and what services will be offered when they become available.

#### B. Potential Focus Areas

- Develop a marketing strategy that highlights successes in integrated employment to inform communities at large and establish a consistent message regarding the importance and positive aspects of employment, and awareness of best practices.
  - Highlight through a regular employment newsletter/bulletin the success of individuals in employment and the providers who support them.
  - Establish a web based presence for New Jersey's employment initiatives, including cataloging materials (written products, videos, etc.)
  - Use conferences and meetings to reinforce the message.
- Develop an interagency strategy for establishing state or local government employment initiatives (e.g., government as a model employer of people with disabilities), utilizing examples from other SELN member states such as California and Washington State.
- Consider engaging VR to support a pilot directed at youth in later years of high school to create opportunities for employment for youth before they exit school statewide and across disability populations.
- Examine current service definitions under the 1915(c) Medicaid waiver programs, and the catalog of services. Consider revisions to ensure that the

- employment-related services support employment outcomes for individuals to work in competitive jobs integrated within the general workforce at or above minimum or prevailing wage. Consider how these services may align in the future as long-term care services under the Affordable Care Act.
- Participate and include regional and provider community in SELN network webinar series on employment innovations and issues.
  - Develop a clear cross-agency quality standard for delivery of employment services; including such areas as person-centered planning/discovery, community based assessment, job development, etc. Integrate these standards within contracting, program monitoring, individual service planning.
  - Review report *Meeting the Employment Transportation Needs of People with Disabilities in New Jersey* (<http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/reports/>) and determine status of findings and implementation of recommendations. Link with the resources of Community Transportation Association of America and Easter Seals Project Action to utilize and disseminate best practices on transportation.
  - Examine the use of vocational/technical schools by students with disabilities and determine mechanisms for enhanced use of these educational options to better prepare students with disabilities for employment.
  - Examine the current skill development training for adults available in New Jersey available via the community college system and workforce development system. Develop pilot programs to integrate and support individuals with disabilities within these programs.
  - Examine the current status of individuals with developmental and other disabilities in post-secondary education, develop knowledge base regarding best practices (e.g., [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)), and consider how such options can be expanded in New Jersey.
  - Encourage greater use of national service (e.g., AmeriCorps) as mechanisms for gaining experience and leading to path of employment (see [www.serviceandinclusion.org](http://www.serviceandinclusion.org), [www.serviceandinclusion.org/sl/NextSTEP%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/sl/NextSTEP%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf))
  - Working with the NJ Assistive Technology Center, determine how a knowledge base of and access to innovative assistive technology can systematically occur to enhance employment opportunities, including the use of traditional assistive technology, as well use of smart phones, iPads, etc. that are now being utilized as part of supports for individuals with disabilities.



- Develop mechanisms for expanded use of Labor Market Information by all service providers, sharing of sector/industry focus initiatives, etc. to ensure consideration is being given of opportunities throughout the labor market.

## VII. Employment Performance Measurement, Quality Assurance, and Program Oversight

### A. Key Findings

- Stakeholders, especially the provider community expressed that there is a stronger emphasis on compliance that results in a significant investment in management of paperwork and overhead, while limited emphasis is given to individual outcomes. Quality assurance document, including the Day Program Monitoring Tool, establish a strong focus on reporting and documentation over outcomes.
- DDD does require monthly reports that include data hourly schedules and hourly wages by individual, start date for employment and current date, etc. There is not an infrastructure for capturing and reporting these data, and stakeholders reported that the data are not used in program oversight or strategic planning.

### B. Potential Focus Areas

- Develop a mechanism for summarizing and reporting current employment data collected by DDD area employment coordinators.
- Develop a mechanism for collecting employment data for individuals served via DDD self-directed day services.
- Consider the development of a comprehensive approach to data management and display that collects individual data rather than summary data, potentially using the current DDD data collection system as a basis. Utilize SELN to identify and access information from other SELN states on their strategies for data management. What gets measured and reported gets done.
  - SELN can support online data reporting if individual record data are available at the state level.
- Develop a system of cross-system performance benchmarks in order to gauge progress in expansion of integrated employment.
- Develop reporting and publication strategies to celebrate success achieved by all players in these efforts.
- Review how the quality and responsiveness of employment services is currently integrated into each divisions overall quality assurance and improvement system, and determine how this can be improved through adding elements related to integrated employment. Consider exploring the

approaches used by other states to access and manage the quality and responsiveness of employment service as an integral component of their overall quality management systems.

- Train staff on utilization of data as part of their provider and individual service plan monitoring, to measure not only provider performance, but to also inform and monitor individual service planning, and employment outcomes vs. goals in the individual service plans.
- Analyze Education's Indicator 14 data (post-school outcomes) to more specifically identify needs regarding improvement of transition for individuals exiting school.