

Bringing employment first to scale

Integrating the evidence for a
comprehensive model for change

AUCD Annual Conference
November, 2015

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment
for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

A project of

ThinkWork!

at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston



Research & Training Center on Community Living

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

NASDDDS



EMPLOYMENT FIRST - EMPLOYMENT NOW



ONLINE CURRICULA FOR LIFE IN COMMUNITY



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities



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for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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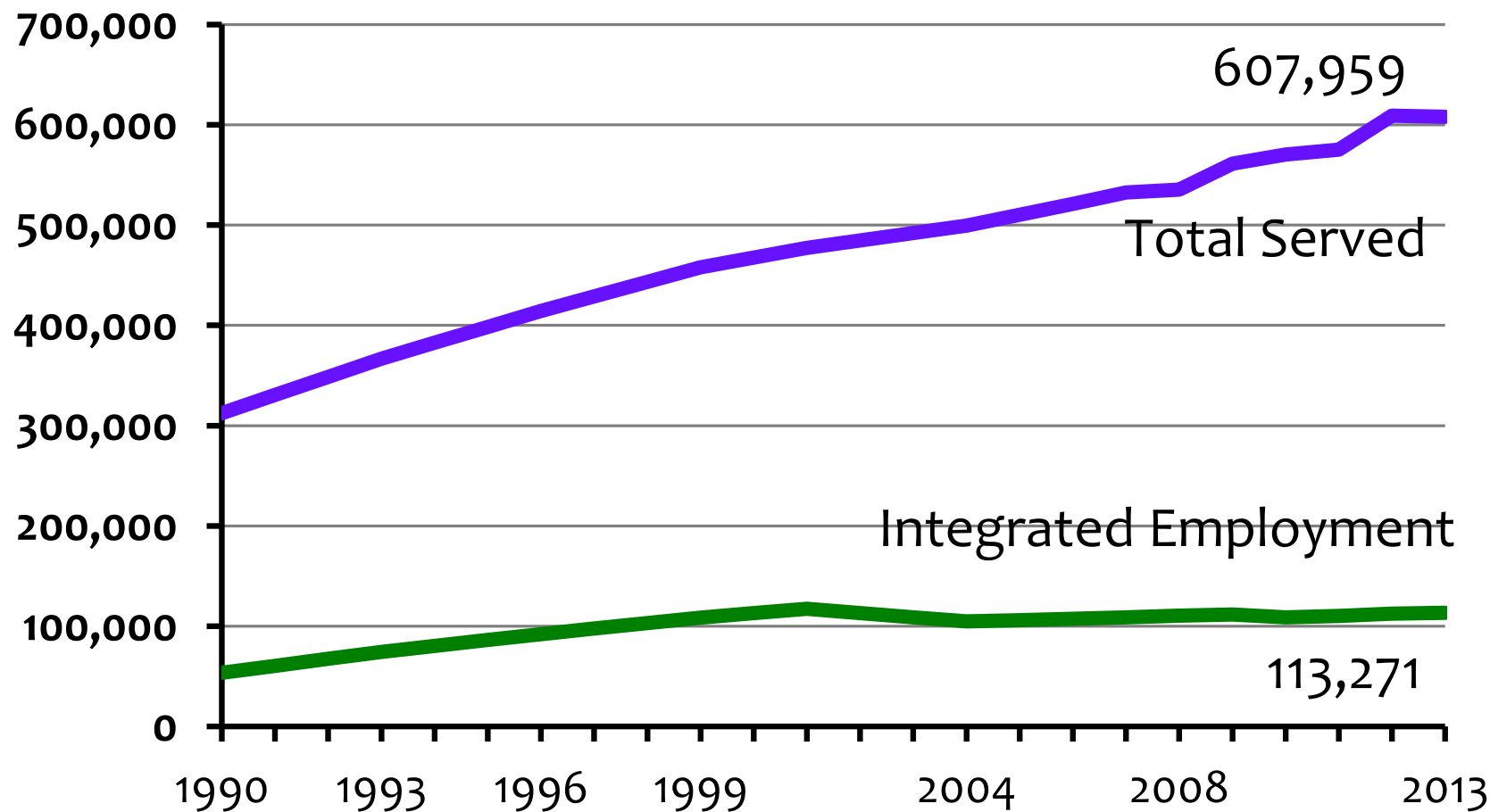
ThinkWork!

at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston



Employment and Day Supports

IDD Agencies: Nation

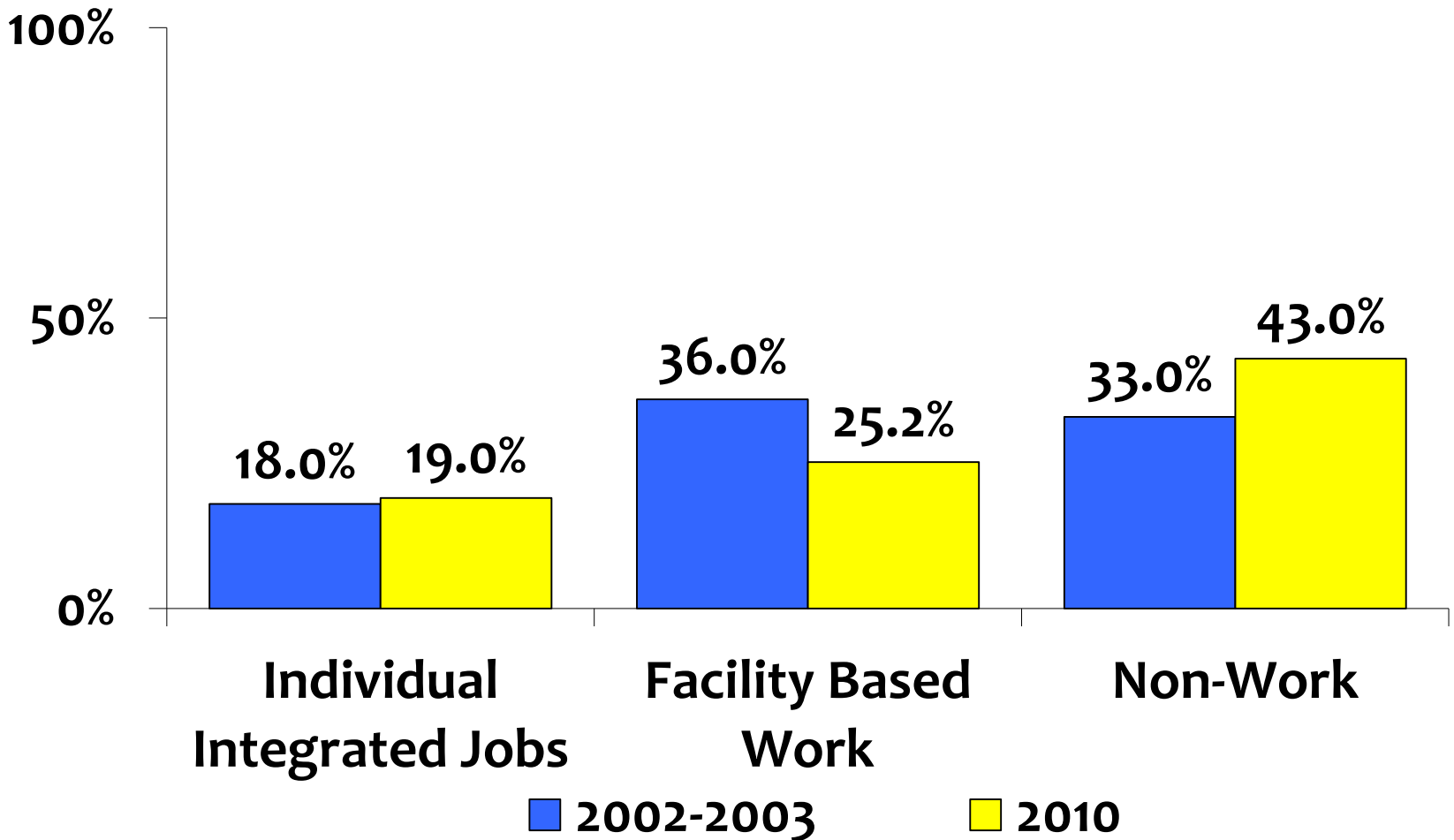


Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies



Non-work is growing

CRPs: 2002 to 2010

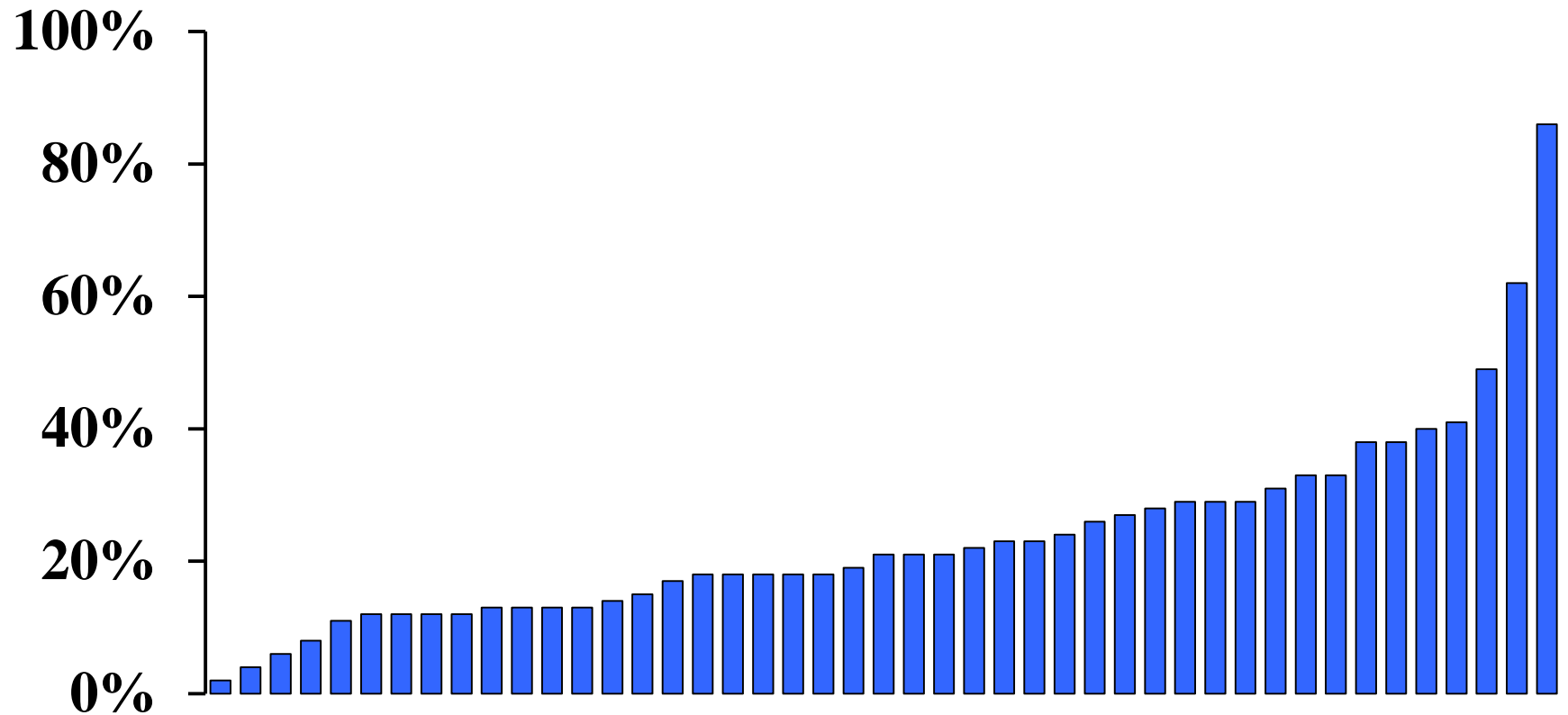


Source: 2010-2011 Survey of Community Rehabilitation Providers, ICI

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Participation in integrated employment services varies widely



Source: ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies







Holistic Perspective

**Community
& Labor
Market**

Workplace

**Individuals &
Families**

**Employment
Supports**

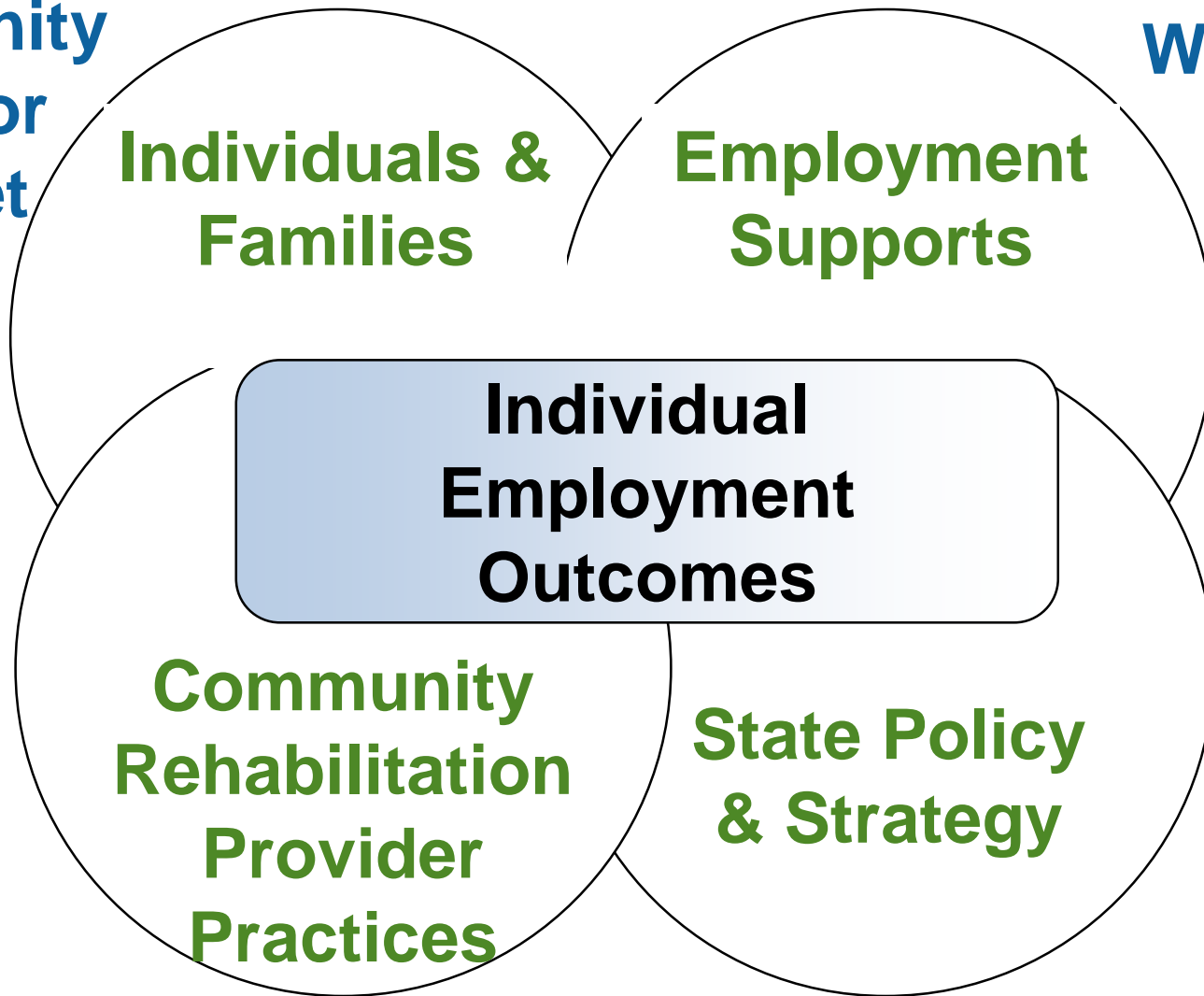
**Individual
Employment
Outcomes**

**Community
Rehabilitation
Provider
Practices**

**State Policy
& Strategy**

Federal Policy

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Strand 1:

Individual and family engagement

What we know

- ❖ Young adults with IDD expect to work
- ❖ Families shape expectations around employment
- ❖ Families provide logistical support
- ❖ Family knowledge around employment is limited
- ❖ Knowledge-based training can help
- ❖ Systems have a hard time interacting with families

Challenges

- ❖ Expectations around employment are important, but...
- ❖ Are trainings the only way to go?

What's the goal?



Employment as a lifelong conversation and information and support are available on a “just in time” basis

Types and pathways for information and support are effective and accessible

Approach

- ❖ Scoping Literature
- ❖ Online/In-person Focus Groups
- ❖ Develop and test a strategy that
 - Engages individuals and families early and often
 - Focuses on the best ways to provide just the right amount of information at just the right point in time

Preliminary findings/results

- ❖ Thinking about the intervention...
- ❖ Life course perspectives
- ❖ Systems need to engage with families differently – creating a safe space to talk through ideas
- ❖ Building relationships v. building documentation
- ❖ Gaps in research
 - Lacking mutual accountability?

Strand 2

**Improving employment
supports:**

**Achieving consistent
implementation of best
practice**

“... Regardless of the job seeker’s level of motivation, skill, experience, attitude, and support system, his or her ability to get a job will often depend on the effectiveness of employment specialists...”(Luecking et al., 2004, p. 29)

“To succeed it is all about the tire tread and shoe leather. You have to be able to go into a business a half a dozen times before things start to happen... No one is going to hire or try out somebody I bring to them until they trust me.” (Employment Consultant, 2015)

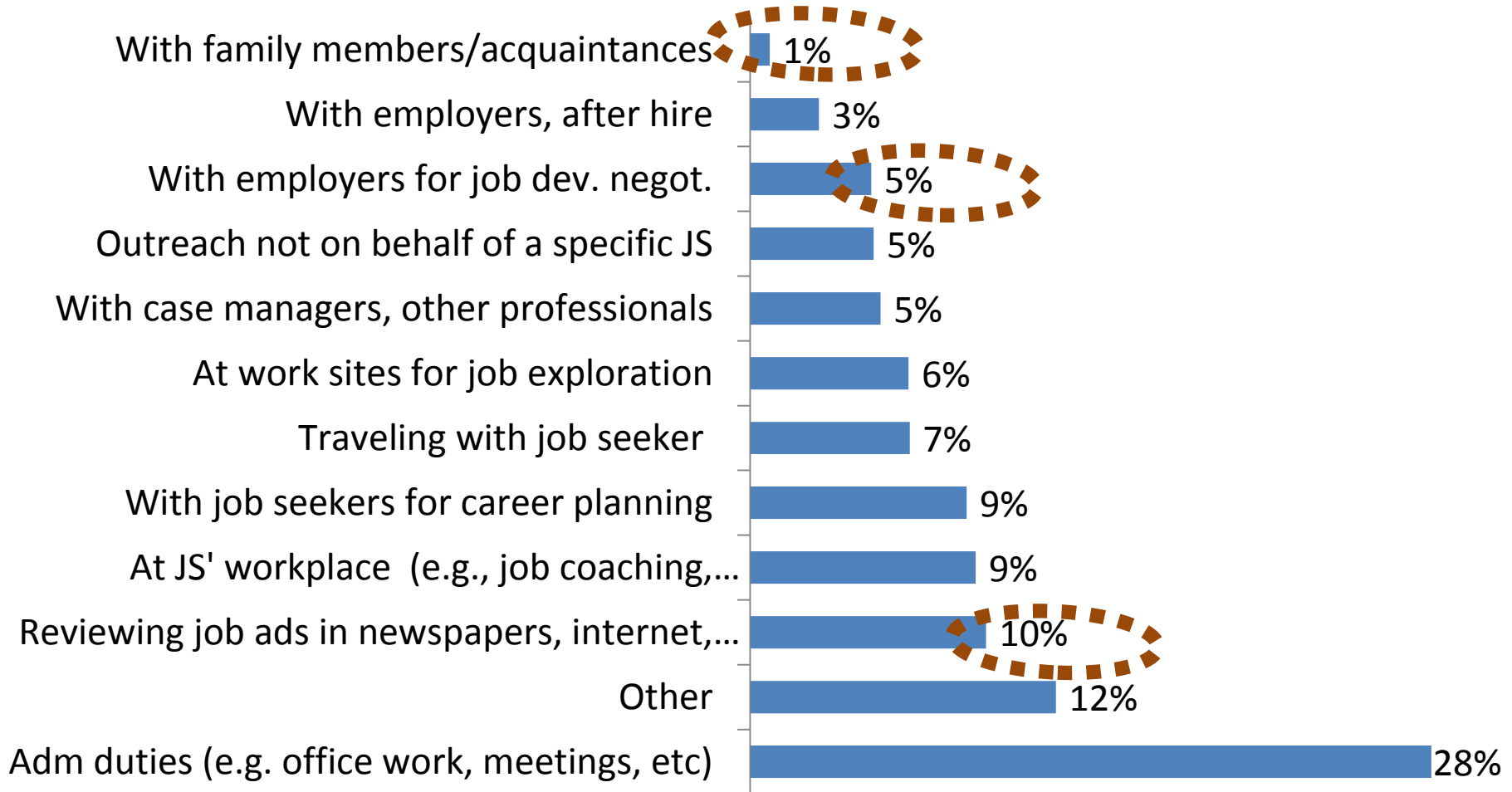


What we know

- ❖ Extensive literature on effective supports practices
- ❖ 35,000 employment consultants, nationally (estimated)
- ❖ Majority of employment consultants assisting up to **5 job seekers** with IDD getting jobs per year
- ❖ Limited implementation of best practice

...for example

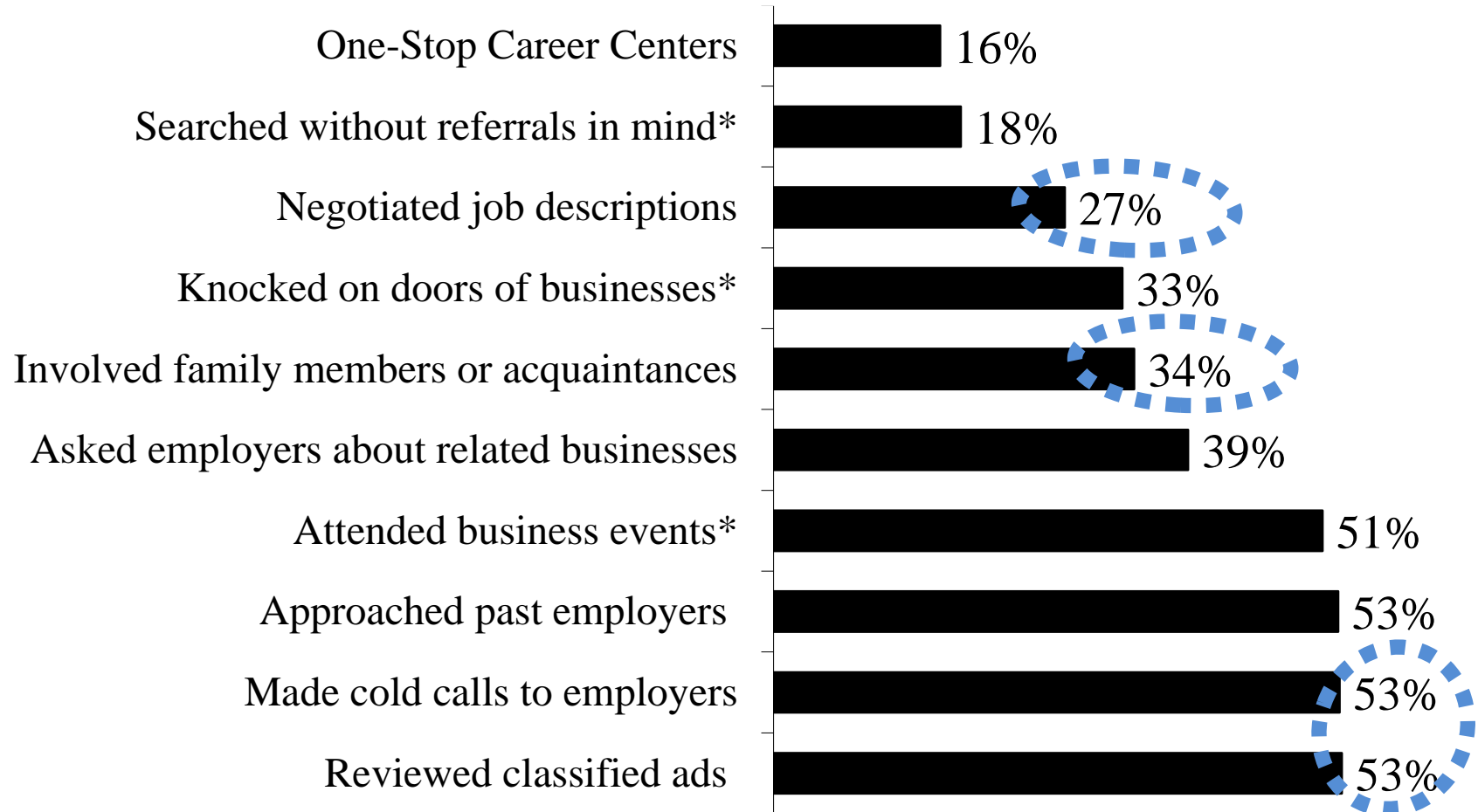
Percentage of weekly hours spent in support activities by 49 employment consultants over a period of two weeks



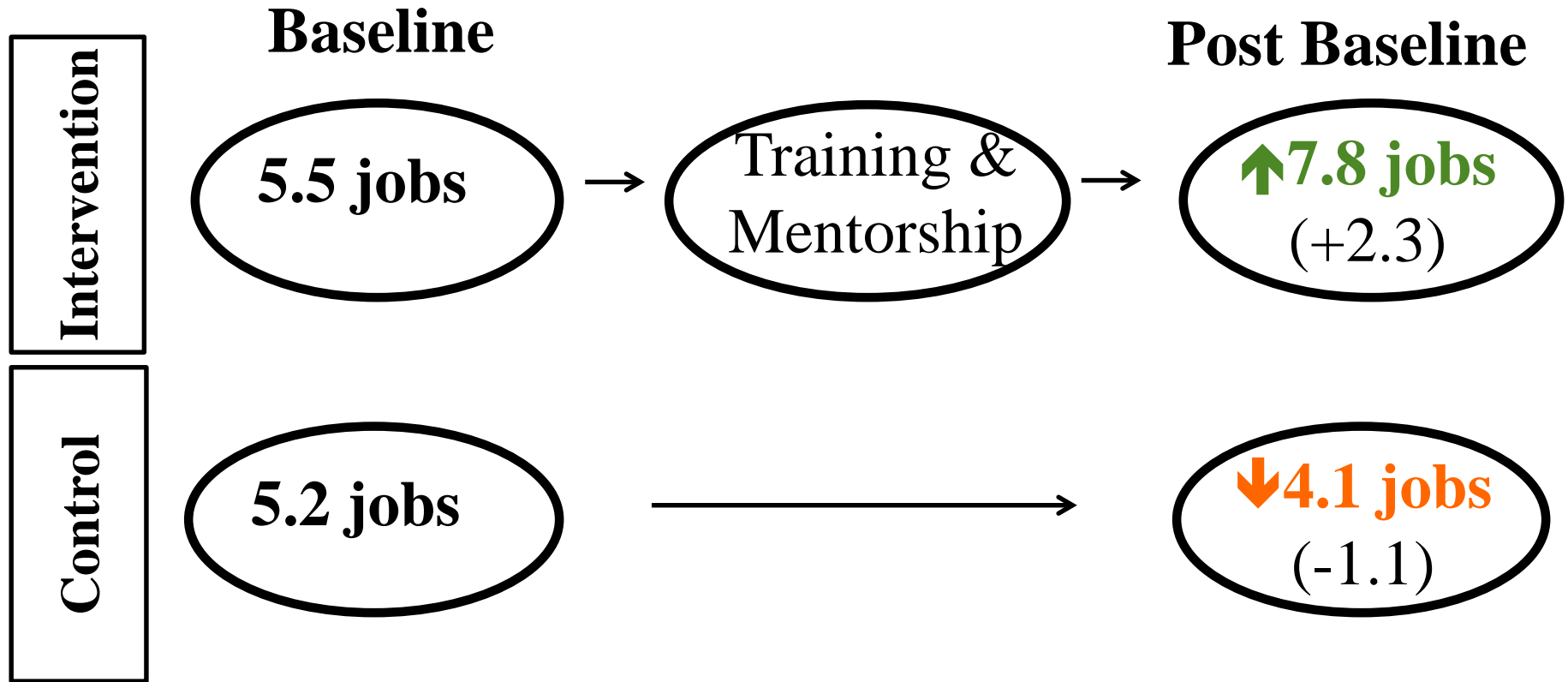


...for example

Percentage of employment consultants performing job search activities for most or all job seekers (N=163; 28 states)



Multi – element interventions improve outcomes



Higher Hourly earnings: + \$1 ($p < .10$)

Higher weekly work hours: + 6.7 ($p < .05$)

Butterworth et al, 2012



Challenges

- ❖ Anecdotal vs. evidence-based
- ❖ What are key benchmarks?
- ❖ How to measure and coach the implementation of promising practices?
- ❖ Holistic approach

Challenges

“And even worse, we have parents that ... sadly, almost tragically, underestimate what their child can do. I can't tell you how many time I hear, 'She can't do that,' and she can.”

(Employment Consultant, 2015)

What's the goal?



A flexible model that accounts for variations in individual preference and need

A scalable approach to improving employment outcomes

Approach

- ❖ Study 2.1. Learning from outstanding, employment consultants:

Interviewing 16 employment consultants, 16 job seekers, 16 family members, and 16 supervisors

“But I’ve got to establish some ground rules from the beginning: number one ground rule is, I’m not here to find you a job. You and I together as a team are going to find you a job.” (Employment Consultant, 2015)

❖ Study 2.2. Improving the implementation of effective employment support practices:

Randomized trial 100 employment consultants

- online training
- data-based performance feedback
- peer supports

Activity Log for Smart Phone

Tell us about your "What, Who, and Where" primary activities in which you were involved during the 30 minutes right before your inbox got the email with the link to this survey.

What? (What was the main purpose of your activity?)

-- Please Select --

A - Getting to know job seeker
B - Finding job openings
C - Coaching/ongoing support
D - Other supports IE-related
E - Other supports NOT IE-related
F - Administration
G - Other (i.e., lunch, meetings)

Where? (Where were you?)

-- Please Select --

Number of employers met yesterday (In person or on the phone) *

What? (What was the main purpose of your activity?)

-- Please Select --

Who? (Who was your main interaction with?)

-- Please Select --

1 - Job Seeker
2 - Job Seeker's Family Member
3 - Job Seeker's Acquaintance
4 - Job Seeker's Residential Staff
5 - Job Seeker's Co-Worker
6 - An employer/supervisor
7 - Someone else or none

Number of employers met yesterday (In person or on the phone) *

Number of job seekers' interviews with employers yesterday *

-- Please Select --

Where? (Where were you?)

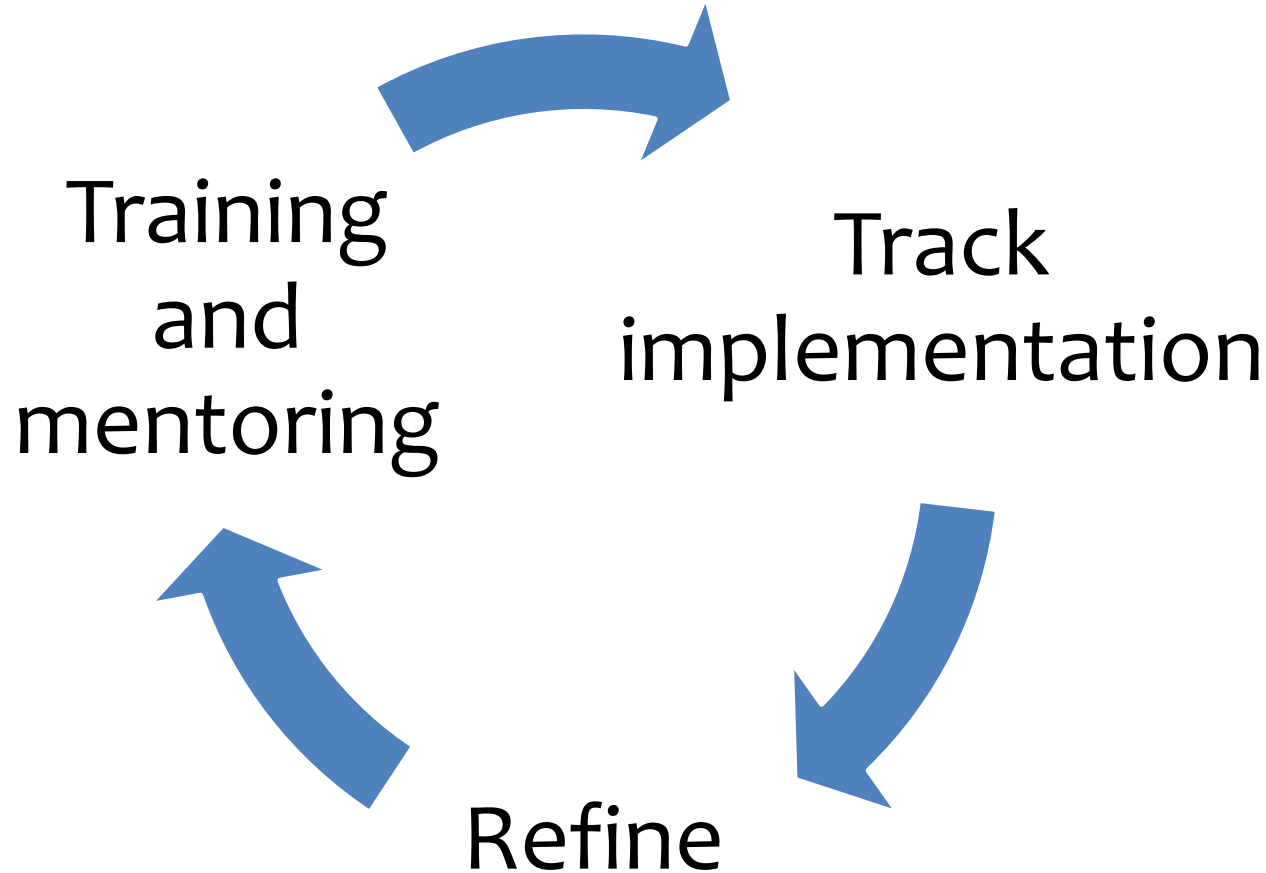
-- Please Select --

H - In your office/home/phone
I - At job seeker's residence
J - At a workplace
K - In other community settings
L - In a vehicle
M - At a facility-based program
N - Somewhere else

Number of job seekers' interviews with employers yesterday *

Number of job descriptions negotiated yesterday *

... the end result





The Truth Comes From Us: Supporting Workers with Developmental Disabilities

By Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered

Employment professionals play a powerful role in the pursuit of true inclusion. SABLE outlines key steps on how allies can move people with developmental disabilities out of poverty and into the heart of our communities.

“People should never be looked upon as empty spaces. Presuming that one is not intelligent, just because of outward appearances is a tragedy. Judging one’s understanding by their form of communication or ability to socialize is deadly.” KRIS MEDINA

MEDINA

My relationship with my job coach

- Get to know me
- Listen to me
- Always be respectful with actions and words
- Keep your support of me invisible to others
- Have high expectations, motivate and encourage me
- Keep my information private
- Include me when speaking with my boss
- I don't mind if you tell me how to correct a mistake, but do it in private



"You need to know me and how my disability works." jason billihus



Teaching me to do my job

- Be good at assessing my skills
- Know how to step up (assist me when I get stuck) and step back (letting me be independent)
- Help me build natural supports
- Pay attention to how fast the job needs to be done and match it to what I can do
- Support me to learn “soft skills,” for example help me share with my boss and co-workers how best to communicate with me
- Support me to learn to stay safe



“The most important thing ever is to be successful on my job. Make sure I am doing my job right. But whisper it or write a note. In other words, do it in



Keeping balanced so my emotions do not interfere with my work performance



- Be aware of stressful situations
- Know how to take the pressure off of me
- Support me to get along with others
- Support me to know what to do if I feel overloaded



“After a busy day at work and being around people, my brain needs a moment to release energy that builds during the day. I call it an energy release, shaking the energy out of me. I need a break from the real world, into my own world. Some might call that a “meltdown,” which is a judgmental description. I call it an ‘emotional energy release’ which I feel is a non-judgmental description.”

MAX BARROWS

Making adjustments to the job site

- Take a close look at what I do and make sure I have the right tools for the job
- Support me to organize my job space to keep it simple with things easy to reach
- Be aware of how I can use technology to make my job easier to do
- Identify what types of devices and software could be used to increase my independence.
- Make sure the environment is sensory friendly



“Thanks for the assistance, but remember it’s my job not your job.” STIRLING PEEBLES



General work habits and values

- Keep it positive, focus on my strengths and interests
- Ask me how you should introduce yourself to others
- Know my goals and dreams, especially relating to getting the perfect job!
- Be organized and act with a professional attitude
(For example: be on time, avoid using your cell phone)
- Presume competence. When you meet a person with a disability, assume they are capable.



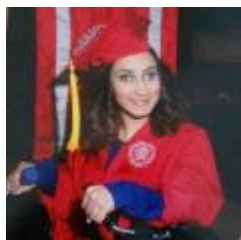
“Unfortunately many people with disabilities grow up in the shadows of ‘Low Expectation Syndrome.’ Our hopes and dreams can be stripped away by doctors, teachers, parents, and providers who have preconceived notions about what we are capable of doing.”

NICOLE LEBLANC



Recognize the importance of peer to peer connections

- Support me to connect with peers as an additional source of information on employment and life in general.
- Support me to learn about and deal with discrimination on the job.
- Be aware that problem solving with a peer can give me new ideas that fit my way of doing things



“Our peers have been out in the workforce as a person with a disability. We want the truth from them. Sometimes employment professionals 'sugar coat' the information. Peers are better at knowing how to deal with discrimination and problems of people not accepting us for who we are.”

RANDY LIZOTTE

ThinkWork!

Strand 3 :

**Community Rehabilitation
Providers**

What we know:

- CRP underachievement in employment supports to individuals with IDD
- Great variation in philosophies within the provider community
- Providers perceive inadequate funding and community resources to provide individual employment

What are the goals?



To understand CRP characteristics that promote transformation

Provide tools to CRPs to enable change

Model for supporting organizational restructuring in an efficient/scalable way

Approach

- ❖ Delphi panel
- ❖ CRP case studies
- ❖ Provider intervention study

Delphi Panel

Goal: understand CRP characteristics that promote transformation from a range of stakeholder experts in CRP conversion

Outcome: develop a framework and toolkit to enable CRPs to provide greater access to integrated employment supports

Delphi panel- emerging findings

Essential elements for CRP organizational change:

- ❖ Clear and consistent goals
- ❖ Reallocating and restructuring all dedicated resources
- ❖ Active, person-centered job placement processes
- ❖ Multiple and diverse partnerships
- ❖ Embracing a holistic approach
- ❖ Communicate expectations, both internally and externally
- ❖ Engage customers (both individuals AND businesses)
- ❖ Investment in ongoing professional development of staff
- ❖ Maintaining an agency culture built on values
- ❖ Performance measurement, quality assurance and program oversight

CRP Case Studies

- ❖ Goal: To explore how the essential characteristics identified by the Delphi Panel appear during implementation among three CRPs who have converted within the last ten years.
- ❖ Outcomes: Concrete implementation example, strategies, and resources added to Toolkit

Intervention Study

- ❖ Goal: Understand the impact of a facilitated, peer-to-peer learning community on CRP organizational culture and employment outcomes.
- ❖ Outcome: Demonstrate the intervention as an efficient, scalable strategy across CRPs nationally

Strand 4:

**Aligning policy and practice at
the state level across agencies**

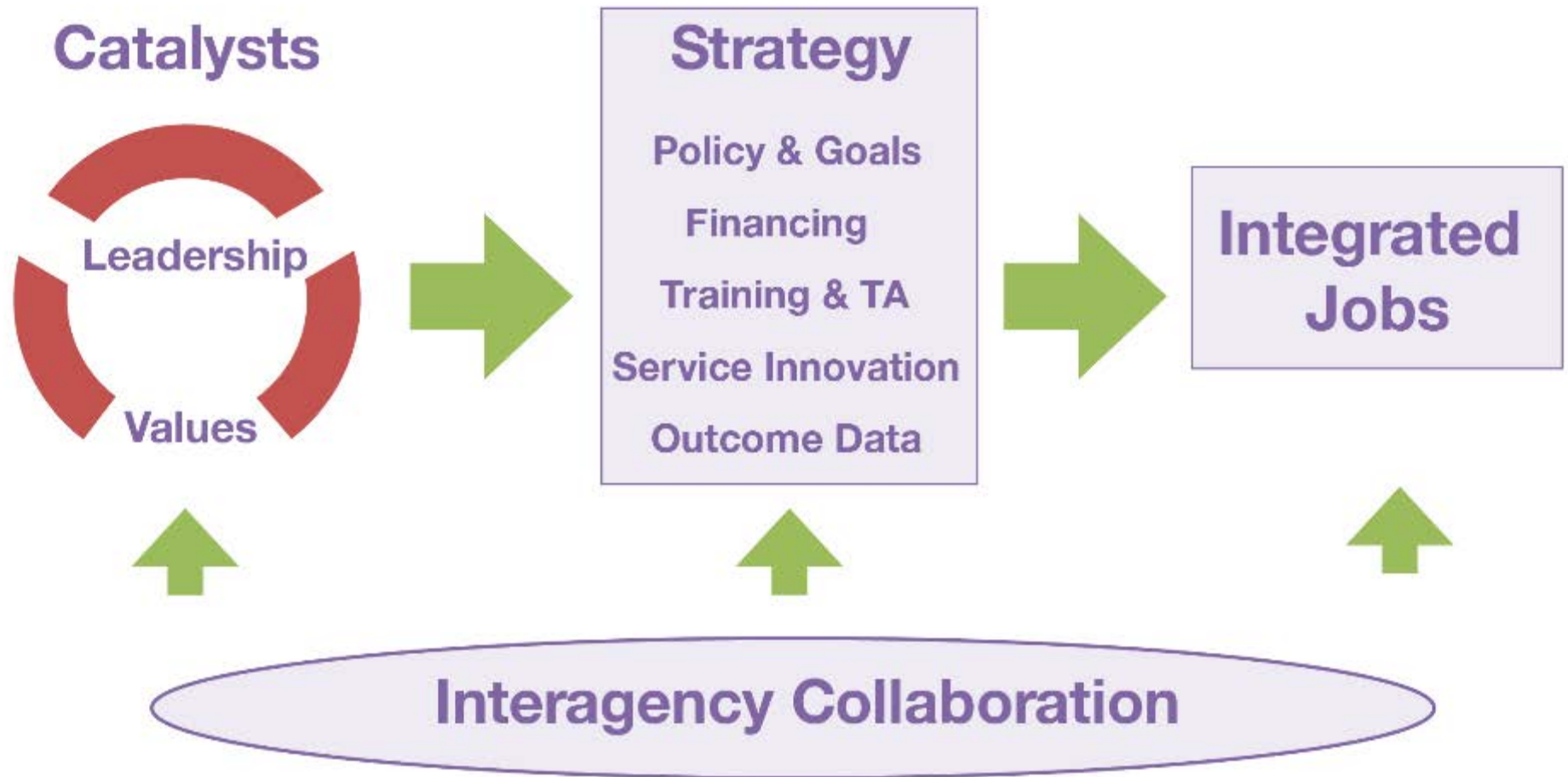
What we know

- ❖ National policy context
 - WIOA, CMS guidance, DOJ/Olmstead
- ❖ At the state level ...
 - Growth of Employment First initiatives
 - 44 states with initiatives
 - 32 states with policy or directive

What we know

- ❖ Systems coordination matters
- ❖ Policy change does not guarantee more will be employed
- ❖ For change to be sustainable...
 - it must be occur with a comprehensive approach, and
 - we know many of the elements that must be included

High-Performing Framework



What's the goal?



Understand the essential components of high performing cross-agency employment service systems

Systems intentionally align practices with a priority for employment and bring components to scale

Approach

- ❖ Secondary data analyses
- ❖ Case studies
- ❖ Policy analyses

Systems outcomes and characteristics

Employment system composite indicator

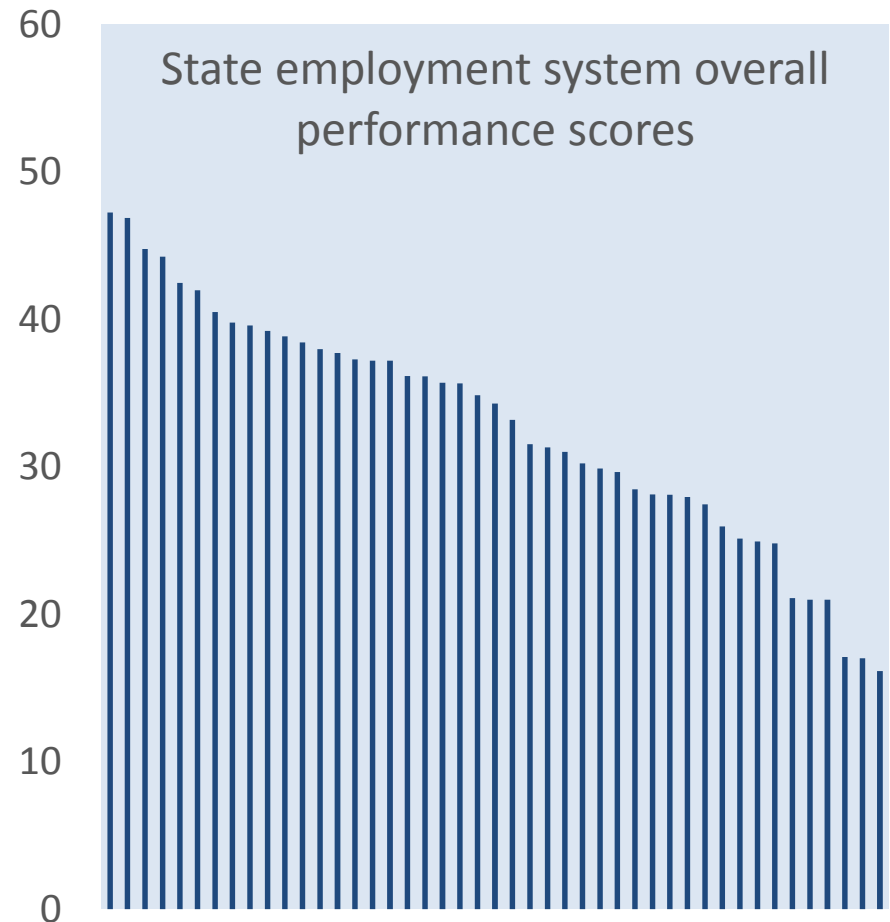
- Represents overall performance based on IDD, VR, and K-12 outcome data

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between state employment system characteristics and employment outcomes ?
- How do specific Employment First efforts intersect?

Systems outcomes and characteristics: emerging findings

- 46 states were assigned an overall performance score on a 60-point scale
- Scores ranged from 47.38/60 to 16.15/60
- Next stage of research will look at state system attributes and characteristic that are related to employment system performance



Secondary Analysis

National Core Indicators

- 13,000 people with IDD
- 36 states



Research Questions

- Relationship between individual characteristics and employment outcomes?
- Effects of setting on inclusion, choices, relationships, etc.?
- How do specific policies relate to outcomes?

Policy Analyses

- ❖ 5 priority areas – what are the biggest issues facing state IDD administrators?
 - E.g. case management guidelines, CMS expectations re: community settings
- ❖ Case examples of promising state strategies and practices
- ❖ Products administrators can use

Community Conversation

- ❖ Name 3 most critical change priorities in your state
- ❖ What coalitions exist in your state? Who owns the change process?
- ❖ What are some examples in your state where these multiple levels are working together to drive change?
- ❖ How can **YOU** move change forward?

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