

OUR TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

At the start of the project, the Training and Technical Assistance Center facilitated a comprehensive assessment of policy and practice in each participating state to support work plan development and to identify existing expertise and common needs for state-to-state collaboration.

The center uses the High Performing Transition Model to ground training and technical assistance activities. The model is based on the High Performing States Model (Hall, Butterworth, Winsor, Gilmore, & Metzel, 2007). It also incorporates elements from the Transition Service Integration Model (Certo et al., 2003), highlighting collaboration and age-appropriate natural environments, as well as the standards for successful transition planning from the National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition, Transition Toolkit for Systems Improvement (2005).

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATING POLICIES

Statewide mandated transition partners' mission, goals, and operating policies emphasize employment and postsecondary education as the preferred outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

TENNESSEE: TennesseeWorks has developed a large stakeholder consortium that includes both state and local level associations and government agencies to influence policy change and practice. The project has provided an opportunity for consortium members to solidify common values, share knowledge, and develop a shared understanding of needed policy and practice changes.

The stakeholder consortium has worked to expand postsecondary scholarship opportunities for youth with IDD through the STEPUP legislation and provided feedback on Governor Bill Haslam's executive order establishing a Tennessee Employment First Initiative to expand community opportunities for people with disabilities. Lead TennesseeWorks project staff were appointed to the Employment First Task Force, and the Tennessee Departments of Education, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Children's Services have agreed to share longitudinal data with the task force to ensure that state systems change efforts are data-driven.

LEADERSHIP

Local and state-level administrators within state agencies and stakeholder organizations are champions for employment.

MISSISSIPPI

A priority of the Mississippi Partnerships in Employment project (MSPE) is to work toward the establishment of an Employment First policy. During the first project year, Mississippi APSE, in collaboration with MSPE, worked with legislators to introduce an Employment First bill. While it did not pass during the 2013 legislative session, MSPE consortium members and other advocates analyzed steps to lead to a more successful outcome the following year. They researched Employment First policies across the country and began developing language pertinent to the culture and politics of the state that would advance employment for individuals with disabilities.

The project staff reviewed their process and, from this analysis, developed a new work plan to build community awareness and support. Project staff met individually with state agency leadership to inform them about how the proposed legislation would impact each of their departmental operations. Afterwards, legislative sponsors were recruited and the Mississippi APSE chapter took the lead again in advocating for the bill's introduction.

Additionally, MSPE and Mississippi APSE worked together in sponsoring a Mississippi Employment First Day at the state capitol in early 2014. The event included a press conference and informational displays about transition from school to work and community employment for individuals with disabilities. All of these actions led to an Employment First executive order signed by Governor Bryant on January 14, 2014, which re-establishes a Disability Resource Commission to oversee future results and guide efforts to sustain the work of MSPE.

Indicators of High-Performing States and Examples of Partnerships in Employment State Systems

This poster provides a snapshot of systems change efforts in Partnerships in Employment states by each element of the High Performing Transition Model. Each model element is defined and a description of a grantee policy or practice is highlighted.

BACKGROUND ON PARTNERSHIPS IN EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS CHANGE PROJECTS

The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) is providing funding for eight Partnerships in Employment systems change projects under the Projects of National Significance program: six projects beginning fiscal year 2012 (California, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, and Wisconsin), and two additional projects beginning fiscal year 2013 (Alaska and Tennessee).

Each grantee developed a consortium consisting of various state agencies tasked with developing and implementing initiatives to improve transition, postsecondary, and integrated, competitive employment outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Additionally, AIDD awarded the grant for a Training and Technical Assistance Center to the Institute for Community Inclusion in partnership with the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. AIDD also contracted with the Lewin Group to conduct a cross-project evaluation of the eight project grantees.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

Funding mechanisms and contracts with providers emphasize employment for transition-age youth and young adults as the preferred outcome.

IOWA

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), a partner in Iowa's Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE), is engaged in a stakeholder process to redesign the state's funding mechanisms to support individual integrated employment outcomes. The goal is to ensure that rates result in sufficient numbers of qualified providers to support the movement of individuals with IDD into integrated employment.

The redesign recognizes that payment rates for job development and employment supports, particularly early on in employment, must be high enough to adequately compensate employment specialists with advanced community employment competence. To build support for changes in the funding system across stakeholders, DHS is partnering with multiple state agencies, service providers, families, and advocacy groups to understand the ways in which the current funding system impedes integrated employment for individuals with IDD, including transition-age youth.

Representatives of these groups also serve as members of a formal workgroup, and provide feedback on proposed changes to funding structures and payment rates. ICIE serves an important role in this process, as a member of the DHS funding workgroup. A multi-organizational collaborative body, ICIE helps to make sure that what is happening with rates is coordinated with other efforts to achieve systems change.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

There is a sustained and significant investment in training and technical assistance to support statewide goals regarding the transition from school to employment.

ALASKA

Alaska's Integrated Employment Initiative (AIEI) has created a sustainable process to provide training on customized employment and self-employment for Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) that are vendors of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The AIEI training coordinator developed a curriculum and replicable training model that is accepted by DVR as a part of the agency's CRP certification process. The training covers the individualized planning and job development process, and provides instruction on matching individuals' strengths to employers' needs.

The training consists of six classes, and requires practical demonstration of knowledge. To become certified as rehabilitation providers, trainees are required to submit three discovery plans, components of the customized employment/self-employment process, as a condition of DVR approval.

As a result of this initiative, DVR developed standards for evaluating customized employment and self-employment services and an established process for the review and approval of individualized discovery plans.

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

There is a shared statewide interagency responsibility and authority for coordinating transition services.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin's Let's Get to Work Project has facilitated formal partnerships among the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Health Services, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Public Instruction. Since the inception of the project, these entities have modeled interagency collaboration at the state level and facilitated interagency collaboration at the local level, leading to significant policy changes within the agencies.

The Let's Get to Work Project staff was instrumental in the state's efforts to obtain a national Promise Initiative. Let's Get to Work is part of a statewide coalition that requested and received a guideline from the federal Office of Special Education Programs that clarifies high school vocational assessments in "Least Restrictive Environments."

Interagency collaboration to support transition-age youth and young adults has already improved access to employment services. In some areas of the state, DVR counselors are now physically located at local high schools. Consequently, youth are connected to DVR services at a younger age and at a greater rate.

SERVICES AND SERVICE INNOVATIONS

State agencies work to create opportunities for providers, youth and young adults, and families to make optimal use of the resources available for transition to employment.

MISSOURI

Missouri's Show Me Careers collaborative brought family support and engagement into its PIE project as a key part of its strategy for systems change. The Show Me Careers leadership consortium chose family involvement as one of six core research-to-practice principles to guide its work in developing pilot transition systems within eight communities and identifying statewide systems barriers.

The RFP for selecting pilot transition communities gave applicants a framework for examining provision of services to families in their communities. It required applicants to put in place or expand practices shown to be effective in encouraging families to have high expectations for integrated employment and supporting their participation in all aspects of transition planning.

The leadership consortium then engaged each of the selected pilot communities in further analyses of services to families. The information gathered through this process, supplemented by state-level surveys, led the consortium to conclude that insufficient support of family engagement was a statewide systems-level barrier to the integrated employment of youth and young adults with IDD.

Analysis revealed a need for services to encourage families to see integrated community employment as a desired and feasible outcome, to share knowledge of available services and opportunities and how to access them, and to address questions about the impact of employment on young people's benefits and financial viability.

NEW YORK

The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is a consortium partner of New York State's Partnerships in Employment systems change project. OPWDD developed the Pathway to Employment service as part of an overarching departmental transformation. This transformation included work with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services on restructuring its Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver to shift individuals with IDD away from segregated day habilitation programs and sheltered workshops and into competitive, integrated employment and community life.

Pathways to Employment services are available to students with IDD transitioning from high school who are eligible for Medicaid and enrolled in HCBS. OPWDD's participation in the Partnerships in Employment consortium has allowed the agency to collaborate and coordinate with the New York State Department of Education's Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation divisions in developing and implementing this and other strategies to prepare and transition youth with IDD to integrated employment.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND DATA MANAGEMENT

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

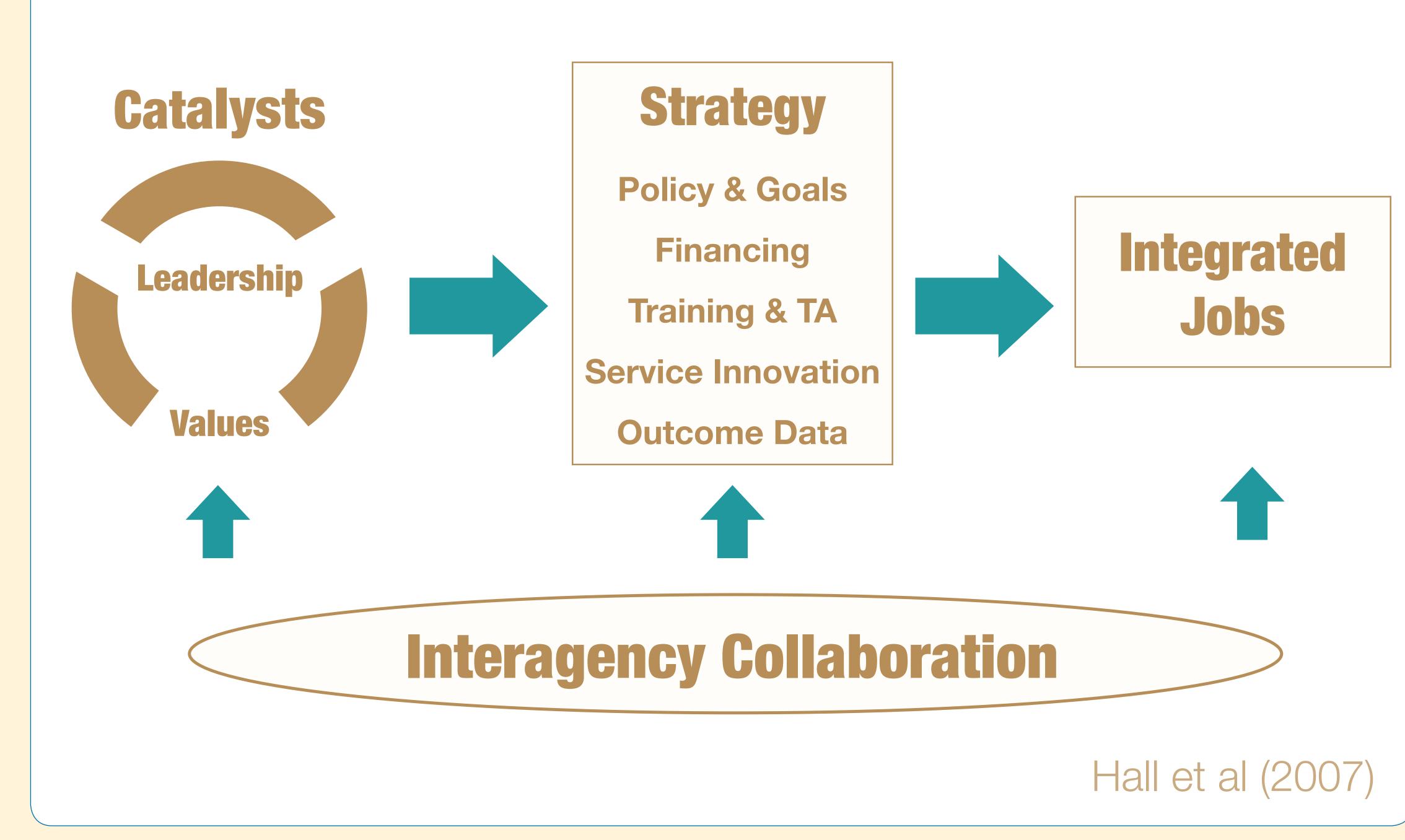
The California Employment Consortium for Youth created the California Developmental Disabilities Systems Employment Data Dashboard. The dashboard displays data derived from several state agencies on the employment of individuals with IDD. Created with a format that is accessible to professionals, families, and self-advocates, the dashboard is housed on the website of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities: 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.



THE HIGH PERFORMING TRANSITION MODEL

The High Performing Transition Model brings together research on transition planning in schools; a heightened focus on interagency collaboration, family involvement, and stakeholder engagement; and demonstrated success in state-level systems change.





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