Improving health equity through statewide systems change in employment and higher education

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Objectives

- Highlight economic stability and education access and quality as social determinants of health

- Describe recent legislation in Kentucky focused on expanding higher education options and improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities

- Share principles used in approaching, engaging, and communicating with policy- and other decision-makers

- Explain the role of the UCEDD in offering information to policymakers

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UK – Human Development Institute (HDI)

Our mission is to advance efforts that build inclusive communities, address inequities, and improve the lives of all people who experience disability across the lifespan. We achieve our mission through leadership and community partnerships across Kentucky and the Nation.

Our vision is the full participation and contribution of *all* people with disabilities in *all* aspects of society.

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Priority Areas

Early Childhood & Education

Leadership & Self Advocacy

Employment

Health

Universal Design & Assistive Technology

Research & Evaluation

Social Determinants of Health

Picture Credit: CDC

Economic Stability

Economic Stability

Employment

Income
Expenses
Debt
Medical bills
Support

Risk of living in **poverty**

Likelihood of being **healthy**

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Education Access and Quality

Education
Access and
Quality

Literacy
Language
Early childhood
education
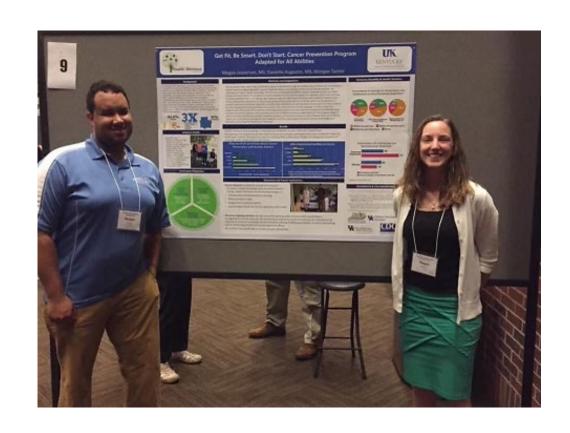Vocational
training
**Higher
education**

Risk of living in
poverty

Likelihood of
being
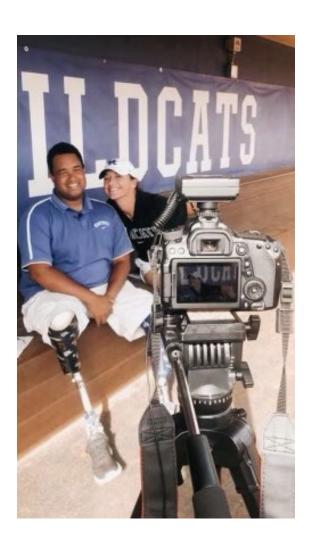**healthy**

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Real Life Experience - Employment

- **Hope:** "Real" job
  - Money
  - Self-sufficient
  - Community participation
  - To prove people wrong
- **Barrier**: Limited options
- **Success**: UK – HDI employee

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Real Life Experience - Education

- **Hope**: College
  - Like my high school friends
  - Academic
  - Community participation
  - Social opportunities
- **Barrier**: Colleges could not provide appropriate supports
- **Success**: Kentucky LEND trainee

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Kentucky General Assembly (2022)

HDI, Kentucky's University Center on Disability, was pleased to provide information to the Kentucky General Assembly during its 2022 regular session on measures aimed at **expanding higher education options** and **improving employment outcomes** for Kentuckians with disabilities.

Kentucky Senate Bill 104 (2022)

Senate Bill 104

Signed into law on March 24, 2022

- Created a policy statement related to competitive integrated employment;

- Defined competitive integrated employment; and

- Established the Employment First* Council.

*Kentucky's Employment First policy previously memorialized through Executive Order (2018, 2020)

Senate Bill 104

"The General Assembly finds and declares that it is the policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive integrated employment shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who desire to become employed."

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Kentucky Senate Bill 94 (2022)

Senate Bill 94

Signed into law on March 29, 2022

- Expanded eligibility for the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship Program to include students with intellectual disabilities enrolled in Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs.

Senate Bill 94

"The General Assembly hereby establishes the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship Program to ensure that all Kentuckians who have not yet earned a postsecondary degree have affordable access to an industry-recognized certificate, diploma, or associate of applied science degree _**and, for students with intellectual disabilities enrolled in comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs, affordable access to meaningful credentials to prepare for competitive integrated employment**_."

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Kentucky State Budget (2022)

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House Bill 1

Kentucky's Biennium Budget (2022-2024) continues funding to HDI aimed at advancing the academic success and social inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in higher education.

- "$500,000 in each fiscal year for the Human Development Institute for the Supported Higher Education Project"

- These funds support HDI's technical assistance efforts to **enhance current programs** and to work with interested colleges and universities to **establish new programs**.

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Kentucky Supported Higher Education Partnership (KSHEP)

The Kentucky Supported Higher Education Partnership (KSHEP) is a network of colleges/ universities committed to increasing higher education options, access, and success for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the Commonwealth.

KSHEP envisions a higher education system that is welcoming of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, increasing opportunities for success in **academics**, **employment**, *and* **community engagement**.

Kentucky Supported Higher Education Partnership

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KY Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Programs

- **Murray State University**
  - College to Career Experience Program
- **Northern Kentucky University**
  - Supported Higher Education Project
- **Bluegrass Community & Technical College**
  - Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program
- **University of Kentucky**
  - College and Career Studies Program

CTPs – Federal & State Financial Assistance

Students with ID enrolled in an approved Kentucky CTP *may* be eligible for:

- Federal financial aid

- Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship

- Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship

- College Access Program

It really does not matter how good the idea is if you cannot move it forward.

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Realities

- Within **any system**, there are challenges to moving the work forward (*Competing priorities*, *time*, *resources*, *staffing)*

  - Systems, by their nature, are often **built to resist change**

  - Those within systems (including us, sometimes!) can become
    - **Content with** the *status quo*; (**or even worse**)
    - **Intent on** preserving it!

- Advancing ideas for improvement or innovation within a system is hard, **no matter who you are**.

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Principle 1: Focus on Advancing the Work

Often, if something we propose does not achieve our desired outcome, it can feel like all is lost.

Does not have to be true!

• The goal should be to create and cultivate an environment where the *potential* to advance important work within the system is *increased*.

Advancement is the goal. **Attainment** is a bonus!

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Focus on Advancing the Work – Employment

History of Employment Training & Collaboration

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Division Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
- Division of Behavioral Health
- Department of Education
- Provider Agencies
- Schools
- Advocacy Organization

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Focus on Advancing the Work – Employment

Statewide Initiatives
- 2017 – Work Matters Task Force
- 2018 & 2020 – Employment First Executive Orders
  - Named administrator of the Council
- KentuckyWorks Collaborative
  - 2019 HDI represented in workforce development initiative
- RETAIN Kentucky
  - Phase 1 2019
  - Phase 2 2021

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Kentucky Formal Partnership Networks for Increased Employment with Disability Focus

DRAFT 08/05/19

*Grant or Contract Funded

Network	Governors Office	Council on Post-Secondary Education	KY Community and Technical College System (KCTS)	Conference of Presidents	Human Development Institute (UK)	Autism Training Center (UL)	Executive Cabinet	Justice and Public Safety Cabinet	Protection and Advocacy	Labor Cabinet	Cabinet for Economic Development	Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities	Transportation Cabinet	Personnel Cabinet	Cabinet for Health and Family Services	Department for Aging and Independent Living	Division of Income Support	Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities	Division of Behavioral Health	Office of Autism	Disability Determination Services	Education and Workforce Development	Department of Education	Department of Workforce Investment	Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB)	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	State Senate	State Representatives	KY Supreme Court	Citizens-at-Large	Person with Disability	Family Representative	Employers	KY Chamber of Commerce	National Federation of Independent Business	Provider Agency	KY Job Corps Center	KY Housing Corporation	KY Commission on Military Affairs	Chief Local Elected Official	Local School Districts	Local Chambers of Commerce	Local Workforce Development Boards
Work Matters	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪												
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KentuckyWorks Collaborative	●	●		●	●			●		●	●				●							●	●		●								●	●			●	●	●	●			
RETAIN*	□				□													□		□		□				□					□		□										□
KentuckyWorks - PIE Grant*		○			○	○			○			○						○				○				○				○	○					○					○		
Project E3-Educate, Empower, Employ Targeted Community*					*																					*					*										*	*	
Community Work Transition*					Δ													Δ								Δ				Δ			Δ								Δ		
Supported Employment Training Project*					X																					X					X					X							
HB144 Employment Subcommittee					^							^	^		^			^			^					^				^	^	^	^										
Individual Placement & Support Project*					+																					+					+					+							
Coalitions for Workforce Diversity					X													X								X				X	X		X	X		X						X	X
Project CASE*		@	@												@											@				@			@			@					@		@
ISAW*					▪																▪					▪					▪		▪										▪
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Employment Networks																		*								*					*												

Focus on Advancing the Work – Higher Education

Funding sources over the years:

- Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Think College
- Designated dollars in state budget

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Focus on Advancing the Work – Including Lived Experience

Share my experiences to educate and promote inclusive education and employment opportunities

- Employment First Council member

- KSHEP staff

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Principle 2: Understand the System Leader

System leaders often have:

- A **particular set of priorities** on which to deliver, and a

- A **specified period of time** in which to show results.

  - ➤ This heightens the **significance** and **potential impact** of any opportunity to propose an idea for improvement or innovation to a system leader.

*Understanding the priorities on which the system leader must focus the majority of their time and effort is **critical to successfully advancing work** within a system.*

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Understand the System Leader

Employment First as part of the larger Workforce Development conversation

- Key concern = Labor Shortage, Economy
- Sponsoring Senator has an interest in disability issues

Overarching Framework:
- Economic Advancement and Workforce Development
- Both in employment and higher education – We are talking about ALL Kentuckians, not just some

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Principle 3: Manage Your Assumptions

Because the system leader has a particular set of priorities on which to deliver and may only have a certain period of time in which to show results -

- **MOST THINGS** (even good things!) *necessarily* fall <u>outside</u> of those parameters.

- The "do-it-because-it's-the-right-thing-to-do" approach is *presumptuous, unrealistic,* and will likely prove *unproductive.*

*A more **sensitive**, **realistic,** and **strategic** approach must be taken to successfully advance work within a system.*

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Manage Your Assumptions

- We know the benefits of higher education and employment

- We have worked hard at fulfilling the mission of the UCEDD

- But we need to bring our good intentions – backed by research, collaboration, advocacy, allyship and self-perspective – out of the ivory tower and into reality

Principle 4: Plan Your Approach

Your perception of the proposal, and that of your constituency, membership, or focus group is important.

HOWEVER -

- These **must not be the only factors** guiding how you approach, engage, and communicate with the system leader.

Your proposal must be perceived **by the leader** as something that does *at least the following things:*

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Moves their priorities forward, or solves a pervasive problem

- Be prepared to show how implementing the proposal/ idea could move **the leader's work** forward (*not just how it moves your work forward*).

- Be prepared to answer the question: "**What problem are you trying to solve?**".

- Understand the broader work of the organization enough that you can **align your proposal to it**.

*It is not the system leader's job to intuitively understand or frame **the relevance** of your proposal and **its alignment to** their priorities.*

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Is doable within the time they have to lead, and worth the capital they have to spend

System leaders are constantly choosing among competing priorities.

- The likelihood of advancing an idea for improvement or innovation will depend on the extent to which <u>the leader</u> perceives it as **relevant**, **timely**, and **worth it**.

- Be prepared to clearly and concisely address the following:

  - What are you asking the leader to do?
  - Why is it important?
  - Why does it need to be done now?
  - What are the pros and cons?
  - Who will support it? Who will oppose it?

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Plan your Approach

- The Employment First Council approved a set of legislative recommendations
- Employment First has bipartisan history
- Who is interested?
- We recognize & know the full benefit
  - Focus on presenting the issue to meet a specific need/interest

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Principle 5: Leave Them with Something They Can Use

- The question is usually not if the leader will meet to discuss your proposal.

- The question is *whether they will continue to think about your proposal <u>after</u> you meet.*

*Leave them with something they can **easily understand**, **immediately use**, and that can provide a **clear reference point** for potential follow up.*

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Leave them with Something They Can Use

- From Work Matters came the example of how other states have used Executive Orders to initiate Employment First
- The Council created written recommendations for potential legislation
- Available to offer information during drafting
- Importance of Follow Up

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In Sum. . .

- Advancing ideas for improvement or innovation within a system is **hard work**, no matter who you are.

- Can be even more challenging if you are **not in a position to compel** the kinds of change you believe (*and perhaps know*) are necessary.

- Attending to these principles **will not guarantee** your proposal is accepted or, if it is, that it will be implemented the way you envisioned.

  - But it may contribute toward **creating an environment** where the potential to *advance* an idea for improvement or innovation is increased.

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Questions?