

What is the Partnerships in Employment project?

Multi-year project: Over the course of ten years, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) awarded five-year grants to grantees in 14 states.

- ▶ **2011 to 2016:** California, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, and Wisconsin
- ▶ **2012 to 2017:** Alaska and Tennessee
- ▶ **2016 to 2021:** District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Utah

Focus on competitive integrated employment (CIE) for youth with I/DD: The project promotes cross-systems and cross-agency collaboration to improve CIE outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). *Competitive integrated employment* is when “individuals with disabilities earn wages consistent with wages paid to workers without disabilities in the community performing the same or similar work.”ⁱ

States form consortia: All Partnerships in Employment states formed a consortium or coalition of stakeholders that include—

- ▶ **Individual Level:** Individuals with I/DD, family members
- ▶ **Community Level:** Pilot sites, school administrators, businesses, employers, service providers
- ▶ **State Level:** Developmental Disabilities Agency, Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, State Education Agency, State Developmental Disabilities Council, other state agencies

AIDD contractors evaluate and review grantee progress: The Lewin Group is conducting a comprehensive evaluation for all grantees and the Institute for Community Inclusion provided technical assistance to the 2011 and 2012 grantees. The YES! Center provides technical assistance to the 2016 grantees.

PIE State Consortia

Project Period: 2011 to 2016

- ▶ California Consortium on the Employment of Youth and Young Adults with I/DD (CECY)
- ▶ Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE)
- ▶ Mississippi Partnerships for Employment (MSPE)
- ▶ Missouri Show-Me-Careers
- ▶ New York State Partnerships in Employment (NYS PIE)
- ▶ Wisconsin Let's Get to Work

Project Period: 2012 to 2017

- ▶ Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative (AIEI)
- ▶ TennesseeWorks Partnership

Project Overview

Between October 2011 and August 2017, the eight 2011 and 2012 Partnerships in Employment (PIE) states conducted systems change activities related to PIE project objectives – developing or changing policies, removing systemic barriers, building cross-system and cross-agency collaborations, and implementing strategies and promising practices to support competitive integrated employment.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the cross-state consortia and is intended to reflect the PIE State Profiles and Final Evaluation Report for the 2011 and 2012 grantees. The 2016 grantees also formed consortia, and continue to conduct grant activities.

What agencies comprise a consortium?

One goal of the PIE project is to promote collaboration across state systems and other entities to increase employment opportunities for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). To achieve desired outcomes, coordinated and collaborative partnerships are necessary. Each 2011 and 2012 grantee formed a consortium with various partners involved in education, employment, or I/DD services. Consortium members collaborated on training, technical assistance, data collection and analysis, stakeholder outreach, policy guidance, and other topics. While each state consortium included a wide range of partners with different roles and responsibilities, grantees were required to form a consortium through formal Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) with four key agencies:

- 1) Developmental Disability Councils (DD Councils)
- 2) Developmental Disability Agencies (DD Agencies)
- 3) Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (VR)
- 4) Department of Education (DOE)

DD Councils or DD Agencies led several state's consortia. If led by one of these agencies, the consortium was required to have MOAs with the remaining three agencies. Additionally, some consortia were led by University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs).

Developmental Disability Councils

DD Councils were established by federal law under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. DD Councils serve as independent state agencies to ensure that people with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, the services and supports they need. Key activities include conducting outreach, providing training and technical assistance, removing barriers, developing coalitions, encouraging citizen participation, and keeping policymakers informed about disability issues.

DD Councils comprise an average of 20 to 30 members appointed by state governors. Members include individuals with developmental disabilities or family members of individuals with disabilities and representatives of state agencies that develop and support disability policies and programs.

Of the eight PIE grantees, four selected their states' DD Councils to lead their projects. As the lead entity in Alaska, Iowa, Mississippi, and Wisconsin, the DD Council was responsible for overall fiscal and programmatic oversight and management. Its role was to coordinate and monitor all systems change activities among consortium members, stakeholders, and other partners to achieve the goals of the project.

Mississippi —Mississippi Council on Developmental

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities (MS CDD) was the lead agency for Mississippi's consortium, Mississippi Partnerships in Employment (MSPE). As the lead agency for MSPE, MS CDD coordinated all consortium meetings and engaged consortium partners to strategize for MSPE's activities. MS CDD's individual activities were also influenced by MSPE's activities and focus on employment. For example, MS CDD funded approximately ten initiatives related to employment, such as Project SEARCH™ at the

University of Southern Mississippi. Even after the PIE grant, MS CDD both committed to preserving MSPE's outputs and outcomes and also began employment-focused activities outside of the grant. For example, MS CDD committed to preserving and maintaining MSPE's videos, newsletters, and other resources on the MS CDD website and on the MSPE website; and continuing activities that began during MSPE such as Project SEARCH™. Additionally, four MSPE consortium members continued to serve on MS CDD after the grant. Also after the grant, MS CDD sponsored the October 2016 Disability Awareness Conference, conducted training for vocational rehabilitation counselors, and participated on the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE Act) committee.

Developmental Disability Agencies

DD Agencies are state agencies responsible for providing long-term services and supports to individuals with I/DD either through direct service, such as care management, or through contracts with community providers. DD Agencies plan, coordinate, and monitor settings that provide care or offer services to individuals living in the community. DD Agencies also manage Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers and are the main administrator of funding for I/DD services and supports. DD Agencies are funded by Medicaid Waiver dollars, state appropriations and funding matching, and local dollars. As a result, state DD Agencies have flexibility in developing policies and definitions surrounding employment. This latitude for DD Agencies partially accounts for the variation in employment rates for people with I/DD across different states.ⁱⁱ Most states have a central DD Agency with regional offices located throughout each state.

As members of the consortia, DD Agency responsibilities included: sharing resources; providing training; engaging providers, employers, and educators; collecting and monitoring data; improving programs; and monitoring and implementing federal- or state-level policy changes.

New York – Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

New York's Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) served on the Steering Committee of New York's consortium, New York State Partnerships in Employment (NYS PIE). As a key Steering Committee member, OPWDD was involved in several of NYS PIE's activities, including activities related to state implementation of federal policies, or state funding of legislation or policies. For example, with NYS PIE's support, OPWDD adopted an Employment First policy in 2013 which led to the state's governor signing an Executive Order establishing an Employment First Commission in 2014. NYS PIE also supported OPWDD's transformation of the state's I/DD service delivery system. This transformation included drafting a work plan that complied with the HCBS Final Rule, increasing the reimbursement rate for supported employment, and incentivizing employment outcomes for individuals with I/DD. OPWDD also collaborated with NYS PIE to develop a job readiness curriculum, Vocational Connections, which provided post-school training and helped teachers teach job readiness. OPWDD also supported NYS PIE's activities to expand the Employment Training Program (ETP) for high school students.

Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

VR programs are State or Federal programs that assist individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain, or promote employment by working with individuals, their families, providers, and employers. VR counselors provide services such as vocational assessments to identify an individual's job-related interests and strengths, training, job development, and job placement. VR Agencies also support high school-based programs that help students with disabilities transition to work or further education.

VR Agencies are funded by the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration and the state. VR Agency services are designed to be short-term—individuals served will either obtain employment and no longer need VR services, or be referred to other agencies for long-term employment services.

As members of the PIE consortia, VR Agency responsibilities included: providing documentation and training materials; connecting community service providers, employers, and educators; collecting and monitoring data; and addressing policy changes, funding, and training needs to overcome systemic barriers to equal opportunity employment.

Iowa – Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) was engaged in Iowa's consortium, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE), throughout the grant period. IVRS hosted ICIE meetings at the IVRS building, and was interested in ICIE's collaboration with Iowa's Employment First Leadership State Mentoring Program (EFSLMP). This consistent interaction supported ICIE's sustainability when the IVRS Administrator attended an ICIE meeting towards the end of the grant. At the ICIE meeting, and through continued discussions about the project with an ICIE member, the Administrator took note of the diversity of participants and the level of engagement in ICIE. As a result, IVRS made an investment to help sustain ICIE work.

Toward the end of Iowa's grant funding in 2016, ICIE started discussions to transform its consortium into a 501 c (3) non-profit organization. This organization, called the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment, would continue ICIE work and expand upon ICIE's focus to include community integration as well as employment. To contribute to this effort, IVRS signed a contract with the new non-profit to commit funds for the continuation of quarterly consortium meetings and collaborative calls with the EFSLMP grant.

ICIE activities also influenced IVRS and Iowa Medicaid Services. Specifically, ICIE supported the restructuring of the state's Medicaid rate reimbursement structures to better support employment outcomes. To advocate for and recommend ideas for a revised reimbursement structure supporting employment, ICIE gathered and shared member feedback and recommendations from various stakeholder groups, including the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise, IVRS, and State Employment Leadership Network. ICIE also provided input during the public comment period, served on the Employment Services Redesign Group, and developed advocacy techniques until the new Medicaid HCBS Employment

Service Administrative Rules were adopted in May 2016. These new Administrative Rules revised service definitions, changed reimbursement rules, redistributed Medicaid resources, and aligned DHS and IVRS policies and funding.

Department of Education

The purpose of a DOE is to supervise, oversee, and support the state education system to ensure quality standards-based academic achievement for students. In this role, the DOE works to develop and improve special education services for children with disabilities. DOEs work to improve transition planning, individualized education plans, transition-related instructional services, and professional development services for youth and young adults with disabilities. As a key member of the consortium, the DOE serves as a facilitator among educators, schools, parents, students, and community partners.

Tennessee – Tennessee Department of Education

Tennessee's consortium, TennesseeWorks, and the Tennessee DOE partnered on several TennesseeWorks' activities throughout the PIE grant, and the DOE became important in sustaining some of TennesseeWorks' activities after the PIE grant. For example, TennesseeWorks secured a one-year contract with the DOE in October 2015 and created the Tennessee Transition Task Force to develop a transition manual and five-part webinar training series titled "Launching Students with Disabilities toward Adulthood" for educators, family members, and other stakeholders. Immediately after the end of this year-long contract in October 2016, TennesseeWorks signed another year-long contract with the DOE to add the "Transition in Tennessee: Blueprint for Student Success" training series to the previously-created webinar training. This training series launched at the Partners in Transition Pre-conference in January 2017 to over 400 participants, and had 1,550 users registered as of August 2017. To continue TennesseeWorks' work further, TennesseeWorks signed another five-year contract with the DOE to provide professional development, technical assistance, and support to Tennessee school districts focused on high-quality transition services. This contract would sustain

TennesseeWorks' efforts with the transition manual and supplementary materials beyond the PIE grant.

TennesseeWorks' relationship with the state's DOE also influenced TennesseeWorks' work plan and strategies from the start of the PIE grant. In 2012, TennesseeWorks identified that the alternative graduation certificate available to students with disabilities in Tennessee did not sufficiently indicate students' skills upon graduation. Beginning in 2013, TennesseeWorks members participated in the Occupational Diploma Task Force to develop an Occupational Diploma for the Tennessee DOE to pilot. As part of the Task Force, TennesseeWorks developed a tool for pilot schools and provided input on the Occupational Diploma and the Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) required of students to receive the Occupational Diploma. TennesseeWorks also served as an employer liaison during the development and implementation of the Occupational Diploma. TennesseeWorks met with employers to understand what skills employers wanted the Occupational Diploma to reflect, and provided professional development training on the Occupational Diploma and SKEMA for the Tennessee Society of Human Resource Managers to help employers prepare for the launch of the Occupational Diploma. The DOE piloted the Occupational Diploma with four pilot school districts in the 2014-2015 academic year, and made the Occupational Diploma available to all Tennessee students with an Individualized Education Plan in January 2015.

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

UCEDDs are partially funded through the Administration on Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) to provide leadership, advise federal, state and community policymakers, and promote opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and their families. There are 68 UCEDDs in the U.S. that serve the following four core functions:

1. Interdisciplinary pre-service preparation and continuing education for students and fellows

2. Community services (training, technical assistance, model activities) for individuals with I/DD, their families, professionals, paraprofessionals, policymakers, students, and other members of the community
3. Basic or applied research, evaluation and the analysis of public policy related to I/DD
4. Dissemination of information on the broad range of issues that impact the lives of individuals with I/DD ⁱⁱⁱ

As the lead entity in California, Missouri, New York, and Tennessee, the UCEDD was responsible for coordinating and monitoring activities, fiscal and programmatic oversight, and overall project management.

California – Tarjan Center at the University of California, Los Angeles

The Tarjan Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) was the grant recipient for California’s PIE project and served as the lead entity for the California Employment Consortium for Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CECY). The Tarjan Center structured the consortium to have a shared leadership model despite the Tarjan Center’s role as the consortium’s lead entity. The Tarjan Center engaged all partners and ensured that all consortium partners would actively participate in, and lead, certain CECY activities. As an independent organization, the Tarjan Center did not have competing obligations or interests, and was able to dedicate time to moving CECY activities forward. Similarly, the Tarjan Center was able to lead CECY sustainability efforts. Specifically, the Tarjan Center agreed to host CECY resources on the Tarjan Center webpage; and continued to facilitate CECY meetings during the project’s one-year no-cost extension.

Additional Key Partners

In addition to DD Councils, DD Agencies, VR, DOE, and UCEDDs, additional key partner agencies supported each state’s PIE consortium. States invited self-advocates, educators, family members, employers, service providers, and legislators to participate in consortium meetings because of their direct influence and contribution to consortium goals. Other agency leaders with direct involvement in policies and practices affecting employment for individuals with I/DD were

also invited to participate in state consortia. These included the Division of Workforce Development, Division of Medicaid, and Association of People Supporting Employment First state chapters.

Consortium Partners Promising Practices

Through a shared vision and collaboration, each PIE consortium identified several promising practices that promote sustainable partnerships. Several key promising practices for sustainable and successful state consortia include:

- Choose an independent lead entity to lead a consortium or partnership. This creates a neutral environment for all members to share their opinions and develop a strategic vision for achieving their intended outcome.
- Choose state partners strategically. It is important to engage organizations or agencies that will help the consortium achieve its short-term and long-term goals.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities. Although there was a lead entity in all consortia, partner agencies leading PIE tasks increases member commitment, engagement, and accountability during and after grant funding.
- Customize the consortium structure to fit each state’s unique needs. Carefully plan meeting frequency, meeting topics, work groups, and meeting facilitators, to maximize efficiency, engagement, and effectiveness.
- Maintain state consortia collaboration. Meeting regularly as a group contributes to lasting relationships between agencies, data sharing, and collaborative work. State consortia found success when communicating in formal consortium meetings and holding informal conversations outside of meetings.
- Sign memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to formally define roles and responsibilities and collaborate with existing initiatives.

- Ensure that all consortium members can adapt to the changing environment because members are critical to informing state policy and increasing awareness of employment opportunities.
- Encourage state consortia to collaborate to share advice or technical assistance.

ⁱ Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 3101, et seq.).

ⁱⁱ Boeltzig-Brown, H., Winsor, J., & Haines, K. (2011). Collaboration between State Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Agencies and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies: Results of a National Survey. *Research to Practice Brief*, 50. Retrieved from http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=329.

ⁱⁱⁱ Administration for Community Living. (2017). National Network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research & Service. *Administration for Community Living*. Retrieved from <https://www.acl.gov/node/466>.



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Partnerships in Employment: Consortium Partners Fact Sheet

Consortium Partners	
Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative	
<i>DD Council*</i>	Alaska Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education
DD Agency	Alaska Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS)
VR	Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
State Education	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
California Employment Consortium for Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	
DD Council	California State Council on Developmental Disabilities
DD Agency	California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
VR	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
State Education	California Department of Education (CDE)
<i>UCEDD*</i>	Tarjan Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment	
<i>DD Council*</i>	Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council
DD Agency	Iowa Division of Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS)
VR	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS)
State Education	Iowa Department of Education (DE)
Mississippi Partnerships in Employment	
<i>DD Council*</i>	Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities (MS CDD)
DD Agency	Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH) Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
VR	Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
State Education	Mississippi Department of Education (Office of Special Education)
UCEDD	The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies (IDS)
Missouri Show-Me Careers	
DD Council	Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities (MPC)
DD Agency	Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities
VR	Missouri Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services (Missouri VR)
State Education	Missouri Office of Special Education
<i>UCEDD*</i>	University of Missouri Kansas City Institute for Human Development (UMKC-IHD)
New York State Partnerships in Employment	
DD Council	NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)
DD Agency	Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
VR	Adult Career and Continuing Educational Services—Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)
State Education	NYS Department of Education’s Office of Special Education (OSE)
<i>UCEDD*</i>	Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) at the University of Rochester Medical Center
TennesseeWorks Partnership	
DD Council	Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities (TN-CDD)
DD Agency	Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD)
VR	Tennessee Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (DRS-VR)
State Education	Department of Education (DOE)
<i>UCEDD*</i>	Vanderbilt Kennedy Center University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Wisconsin Let's Get to Work	
<i>DD Council*</i>	Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD)
DD Agency	Department of Health Services (DHS)
VR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
State Education	Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
UCEDD	Waisman University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the University of Wisconsin – Madison

*Lead entity