

Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Project Semi-Annual State Profile



What is the Partnerships in Employment Project?

5-year grant awarded to 14 states: The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) awarded funding to eight states in 2011 and 2012, and six states in 2016: *District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Utah.*

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

States form consortiums: The six 2016 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, employers, providers
- ▶ **State Level:** Developmental Disabilities Agency, Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, State Education Agency, State Developmental Disabilities Council, other state agencies

AIDD contractors perform project evaluation and provide technical assistance: The Lewin Group is conducting a comprehensive, longitudinal evaluation and the Youth Employment Solutions (YES)! Center is providing training and technical assistance to states.

District of Columbia Learners and Earners: October 2016 – August 2018

Overview

The District of Columbia (DC) Department on Disability Services (DDS) was awarded the Partnerships in Employment (PIE) grant in September 2016. Through the PIE grant, DDS leads the DC Learners and Earners (DC L&E) program in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), DC Public Schools (DCPS), DC Department of Employment Services (DOES), Public Charter School Board, Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services, and the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at Georgetown University.

The goals of DC L&E include increasing employment and economic self-sufficiency among youth and young adults ages 14 to 30 with I/DD and expanding Employment First practices.

Project Goals and Vision

DC L&E has several project goals, including:

- 1) Create a DC L&E Consortium
- 2) Create a cross-agency, cross-system Employment First culture
- 3) Implement integrated, coordinated, and culturally competent parent/family engagement activities
- 4) Build cross-system expertise in best practices in job development, Customized Employment, job placement, and retention strategies
- 5) Build on the LifeCourse Framework to create a framework for identifying potential members of natural support networks

- 6) Expand access throughout DC to information and support to promote economic self-sufficiency and remove barriers to employment related to public benefits
- 7) Coordinate data collection, tracking, and analysis for all project tasks

This profile highlights DC L&E activities and accomplishments from October 2016 to August 2018 related to PIE project objectives—developing or changing policies, removing systemic barriers, building cross-system and cross-agency collaboration, and implementing strategies and promising practices to support CIE. For a full list of all activities and outcomes, please refer to PIE Semi-Annual Reports.

Policy Development

State and Federal Policies and Initiatives

State as a Model Employer

During the October 2016 to March 2017 reporting period, DC L&E engaged and received commitments from the mayor and DC Human Resources (DCHR) to pursue the DC government becoming a model employer of people with I/DD. The DC L&E team created a briefing memorandum and provided resources to the Executive Office of the Mayor to start the process of becoming a model employer. This included the creation of a staff position at DCHR to focus on the initiative and a DC government-wide internship program for people with I/DD. Beginning in May 2017, the PIE project team piloted the internship program by identifying and hiring a young person with a disability to work on the DC L&E project. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, DC L&E attended meetings with the DC Workforce Investment Council to discuss the promotion of the DC Government as a model employer.

Disability Services Reform Amendment Act of 2018

On March 12, 2018, the mayor of DC signed Bill 22-0154, the Disability Services Reform Amendment Act of 2018 (previously referred to as the Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities Civil Rights Restoration Act of 2017). DC L&E staff were involved in introducing the legislation to end civil commitment and recognize supported decision-making for people in the DDA system. DC L&E staff participated in drafting the legislation, met with the Chair of the Committee on Health and Human Services, and held conversations with stakeholders, including Project ACTION!. During

the April to August 2017 reporting period, DC L&E staff partnered with Project ACTION! to prepare self-advocates to testify at the legislative hearing.

Achieving a Better Life Experience Accounts

DC Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts went live during the April to August 2017 reporting period and DC L&E continues to increase awareness of the DC ABLE accounts and its benefits. DC L&E staff presented on ABLE accounts at the Supporting Families Community of Practice Quarterly meeting and at the Georgetown UCEDD Community Advisory Council in June 2017. The ABLE account presentations focused on the background of ABLE, eligibility requirements, plan details, qualified expenses, and the impact on benefits. DC L&E staff also shared resources with both groups, including an ABLE Act and Employment brief. DC L&E staff also shared information and resources about ABLE accounts with DDS and project partners. DC L&E presented on DC ABLE accounts at one Supporting Families Community of Practice meeting during the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period and at two Supporting Families Community of Practice meetings during the March to August 2018 reporting period.

Statewide Transition Plan and Waiver Renewal Application

During the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period, DC's Statewide Transition Plan and Waiver Renewal were approved and implemented. DC L&E staff were involved in drafting the Statewide Transition Plan and Waiver Renewal Application. DC L&E staff engaged in conversations with DC and federal partners on revisions to the Statewide Transition Plan and drafted the changes. The updated Statewide Transition Plan was submitted to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in September 2017 and received final approval in October 2017. DC L&E staff also worked with stakeholders to draft DC's waiver renewal application as well as implement corresponding regulations. During the April to August 2017 reporting period, the draft waiver was submitted to CMS for approval and implementing regulations were sent to the Executive Office of the Mayor for review. In November 2017, the waiver renewal went into effect, along with the implementation of emergency and

proposed regulations. The waiver final regulations were published in March 2018.

DC L&E staff focused on involving stakeholders, families, and individuals with I/DD when engaging in policy-related activities. DC L&E staff worked with stakeholders through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Advisory Group to create an atmosphere in which people with I/DD, families, providers, and government partners felt comfortable sharing experiences and working together to create change. DC L&E staff also offered pre-meetings for individuals with a disability or family members who wanted to ask questions in a smaller setting, be briefed on terms in the Statewide Transition Plan, have the draft regulation explained, or discuss other accommodation requests.

Leverage Grants or Initiatives

Think College Grant

During the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period, DC L&E staff coordinated and wrote a grant proposal to receive technical assistance from Think College. The funding promotes greater knowledge of students, families, K-12 education systems, and institutions of higher education about quality higher education programs as a tool to improve outcomes for students with I/DD. DC L&E had several planning calls with Think College Technical Assistance Center staff and coordinated an all-day strategic planning meeting with their staff and partners from DDS, DDA, RSA, University of DC, OSSE, and Quality Trust.

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, DC L&E organized, attended, and co-led a Think College Summit to plan a Think College program in DC. The summit was attended by RSA, DDA, DCPS, OSSE, University of DC, Project ACTION!, family members, Disability Rights DC, the DD Council, the Georgetown UCEDD, and young adults with I/DD.

Policy Collaboration

DDA and RSA Policy Collaboration

DC L&E created a joint intake process between DDA and RSA (Vocational Rehabilitation). DDA and RSA collaborated on policies and procedures to streamline referrals to enable people in the DDA system and/or applying for services, including transitioning youth, to readily access RSA services. A process map was created during the April to August 2017 reporting period to detail the intake and eligibility process for both systems and to demonstrate how the processes can be integrated. The intake procedure between DDA's Intake and Eligibility Unit was finalized during the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period. DC L&E staff continued to support the joint intake process during the March to August 2018 reporting period.

Program Development and PIE Model Demonstration Projects

Increased Program Capacity

Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators Training

During the September 2017 to February 2018 and March to August 2018 reporting periods, DC L&E staff collaborated with DDS and coordinated three two-day trainings on Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) competencies to promote Employment First. Topics included building internal capacity in ACRE competencies, including job development, Discovery, and Customized Employment. The training was attended by 36 people representing five DC government agencies and 23 community employment agencies. Training representatives included DDA and RSA staff and providers, DCPS transition staff, Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) staff and providers, and DOES. Twenty-eight people completed all of the requirements to become ACRE trainers in DC.

World Café

DC L&E staff organized and held a “Breaking the Barriers to Employment” World Café in July 2018. Attendees included DDA and RSA providers; DDA, RSA, and DDS staff; family members of youth and young adults with I/DD; youth and young adults with I/DD; and advocates from Project ACTION!, Georgetown’s UCEDD, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services, and the DD Council. This World Café was based on a national World Café that DC L&E helped with at the 2018 APSE Conference. Recommendations will form the basis for a strategic plan for the District of Columbia.

Employment and Self-Advocacy

People Planning Together for Employment (PPTe) Training Curriculum

DC L&E partnered with the International Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices to create and pilot a PPTe training curriculum. This increased opportunities for young people with I/DD to create and share their plans and success stories with each other, families, service providers, and partners. The curriculum for the group discovery is led by people with I/DD who have had an employment experience. Almost all of the trainers are active in Project ACTION!, DC’s self-advocacy coalition. The curriculum was piloted in August 2017 at one of DC’s Employment Readiness facilities with a cohort of young people with I/DD who were interested in employment but were not working. The curriculum was piloted with ten participants with I/DD and five staff members. One of the DC L&E staff members, a DC L&E intern with a developmental disability, was trained to become a certified PPTe trainer and is now training others.

During the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period, DC L&E staff finalized the PPTe curriculum. DC L&E staff also created and updated the PPTe trainer guide and PowerPoint, and a participant workbook including an employment trajectory and one-page employment path description. These materials were distributed in paper and digital formats and disseminated to Employment Readiness sites and trainers. DC L&E used the materials in two Employment Readiness programs.

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, DC L&E supported 14 youth in DC’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), the newest pilot site, to have a paid work experience during the summer. Twelve of the 14 youth completed the PPTe trajectory and other tools. The lead trainer was the DC L&E staff member with a developmental disability. Some students completed the two-day training before they started working and others completed the PPTe tools during the SYEP. A Pre-Employment Transition Services provider worked with the students during the summer and will follow-up to track outcomes for students in both groups.

DC L&E staff attend all of the monthly Project ACTION! meetings and Secondary Transition Community of Practice meetings, both of which support self-advocacy for youth and young adults.

Relationship Building

Collaboration Progress, Highlights, and Achievements

DC Learners and Earners Consortium

DC L&E established a consortium in October 2016, which is a collaboration of DC L&E staff and existing groups, including the Employment First Leadership Council, Project ACTION!, Supporting Families Community of Practice, and Secondary Transition Community of Practice, among others. Project staff attended the meetings of more than 15 community groups and organizations to introduce the project, receive feedback or input, and provide capacity-building activities. DC L&E issued a Press Release to announce the project to partners and potential partners. To increase their audience and stakeholder engagement each period, DC L&E staff attend these meetings instead of holding their own meeting.

Parent and Family Engagement

Supporting Families Community of Practice

DC L&E staff host quarterly Supporting Families Community of Practice meetings, which are often focused on employment. The Supporting Families Community of Practice Core Team, which meets in between quarterly meetings and include DC L&E staff, created a case study, worked with families to raise expectations on employment, and brainstormed ideas to advance employment, including options for Customized Employment. The materials from these meetings were translated into a toolkit. DC L&E staff also worked with families and self-advocates to create employment trajectories to help in planning for the future. DC L&E staff helped plan a Transition Workshop for family members and self-advocates with Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities. DC L&E places a strong emphasis on engaging individuals with I/DD and their family members and involving them in PIE project activities. The regularly scheduled Supporting Families Community of Practice meetings allow DC L&E staff to have face-to-face time with family members and people with I/DD to receive their input on project activities.

Data Systems and Employment Tools

Documenting and Disseminating Resources

Discovery and Planning Toolkit

By using lessons learned from the Supporting Families Community of Practice, DC L&E staff developed a toolkit of materials for people with I/DD, families, and professionals focused on Discovery and planning for employment. The development process included background meetings with people with I/DD and families, drafting documents, working with subject matter experts, and sharing versions of the toolkit with focus groups of people with I/DD and families. The toolkit was developed in partnership with the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) UCEDD. DC L&E distributed the toolkit at the Breaking the Barriers to Employment World Café in July 2018 and at Back to School nights held by RSA and DCPS.

Charting the LifeCourse: Daily Life and Employment Guide – DC Version

During the April to August 2017 reporting period, DC L&E staff developed a DC version of the *Charting the LifeCourse: Daily Life and Employment Guide* for self-advocates and family members to assist with the transition after high school. It includes activities and resources about employment exploration and continuing education in adult life. The DC LifeCourse guide includes urban examples, DC specific success stories, and is more accessible to people with lower literacy levels.

Advocacy Guide

Several years ago, through the National Supporting Families Community of Practice grant, DC L&E developed an Advocacy Guide to help families have a seat at the table, understand government structures, and where and how to advocate for systems changes. During the April to August 2017 reporting period, DC made extensive updates to the guide and added employment-related vignettes, information on agencies that provide employment supports, related Deputy Mayor and Council oversight information, and examples of how to use person-centered thinking tools and skills in advocacy. The Advocacy Guide also includes employment resources and LifeCourse tools created by UMKC. DC L&E staff have partnered with NASDDDS and UMKC in updating the Advocacy Guide to include employment through the LifeCourse.

Employment Resource Dissemination

During the October 2016 to March 2017 reporting period, DC L&E shared employment-related resources, including the LifeCourse Trajectory and Integrated Support Star, with people with I/DD and their families. Through collaboration with Project ACTION!, DC L&E staff helped develop a LifeCourse Trajectory that reflects youth with disabilities' experiences in pursuing and retaining employment. The LifeCourse Trajectories detail events throughout the lifespan that can help lead to employment. This tool also includes two lists, a "Vision for the Life I Want," and "What I Don't Want."

The DC L&E staff also used a case study based on a young adult with I/DD who is seeking employment. The case study included discussion questions and an Integrated Support Star. The Integrated Support Star is a place to practice sorting supports into different categories to think of ideas and goals for job searching. This tool includes current and future opportunities and action items in the areas of Technology, Personal Strengths and Assets, Relationships, Community Based Supports, and Eligibility-Specific Supports.

Front Door Tool

During the October 2016 to March 2017 reporting period, DC L&E partnered with DDA's Intake and Eligibility Unit, now the DDS Intake and Outreach Unit, to develop a Front Door Tool for employment exploration for everyone. The tool was launched during the April 2017 to August 2017 reporting period. The tool includes a guided conversation on employment and mini person-centered plan. It is used in all intake discussions for DDA. Questions focus on the individual's circle of support, summary of intermediate and long-term services and supports needs, strengths, goals, and preferences.

Service Coordination Six-Month Review Tool

DC L&E drafted, trained DDA staff, and supported a pilot of a Service Coordination Six-Month Review Tool for DDA staff. The goal is for DDA staff to use this tool during monitoring visits. The tool looks at whether the goals and activities in which a person is participating is leading them to achieve their desired life outcomes, including employment.

Sustainability Efforts

Sustainability Beyond the PIE Grant

Collaborations with Existing Initiatives and Organizations

Incorporating DC L&E into existing initiatives and working with established agencies ensures that DC L&E objectives will be sustainable after the PIE grant ends. DC L&E continued involvement with the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Community of Practice and the Supporting Families Community of Practice. DC L&E also continued collaborations with No Wrong Door, the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP), NASDDDS's/Institute for Community

Inclusion's (ICI) State Employment Leadership Network (SELN).

During the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period, DC L&E joined the RSA Transition Unit, which provides an opportunity for DC L&E staff to engage more closely with youth and families seeking vocational rehabilitation services. Through this collaboration, DC L&E staff will provide direct training and introduce promising practices to RSA staff, school professionals, and the youth they serve. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, DC L&E transferred PIE coordination from DDS to the RSA Transition Unit as a sustainability strategy. The RSA Transition Unit now coordinates the PIE project with the DDS State Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation, which will allow DC L&E staff to engage more closely with youth and families seeking vocational rehabilitation services and to support the development and alignment of policies, Memorandums of Understanding and Memorandums of Agreement.

Considerations

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