

## 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.

## South Carolina Employment First Initiative: October 2016 – August 2018

### Overview

Able South Carolina was awarded the Partnerships in Employment (PIE) grant in September 2016 to lead the South Carolina Employment First Initiative (SCEFI). Able South Carolina, a Center for Independent Living (CIL) is leading SCEFI in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education (DOE), Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Department, Developmental Disabilities Council, Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS), University of South Carolina Center for Disability Resources, Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc., Family Connection of South Carolina, the CILs AccessAbility and Walton Options for Independent Living, South Carolina Commission for the Blind, and South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. These partners make up the

Infrastructure Committee within the South Carolina Disability Employment Coalition (SCDEC), which was established in 2014 to address employment barriers for people with disabilities in South Carolina. SCEFI will focus on increasing the number of young adults with I/DD between the ages of 16 to 30 engaged in CIE.

### Project Goals and Vision

SCEFI has several project goals, including:

- 1) Equip high school students and recent graduates with I/DD with the skills, awareness, and confidence needed to enter competitive employment
- 2) Unify and empower South Carolina education professionals, employment service providers, families, and community members towards support of Employment First principles

- 3) Develop and expand supports for South Carolina-based employers who hire persons with disabilities in competitive community-based positions

The intended outcome is a 20 percent per year increase in the number of students with I/DD engaged in a competitive employment experience before exiting high school. In Year One, SCEFI planned for peer support group implementation. SCEFI implemented peer support groups in two school districts in Year Two, and plans to implement peer support groups in four school districts in Year Three, eight school districts in Year Four, and 12 school districts in Year Five.

SCEFI created additional goals after receiving the PIE grant, including passing Employment First legislation, establishing an Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) chapter and pursuing increased supported decision-making. During the April 2017 to August 2017 reporting period, SCEFI submitted a new scope of work to add supported decision making as a PIE project goal to engage families in choosing less restrictive options over guardianship. The proposed additional activities would include trainings for parents and individual counseling sessions to educate parents about more inclusive options.

This profile highlights SCEFI 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 the PIE Semi-Annual Reports.

## **Policy Development**

### **Employment First Policy**

#### *Employment First Legislation*

Two South Carolina State Representatives introduced and read the South Carolina Employment First Initiative Act to the state House of Representatives in April 2017. This Act would establish a commission of stakeholders, including individuals with I/DD, to ensure the implementation of Employment First principles in the state. The commission would issue an annual report with recommendations and state agencies would provide the necessary data to track outcomes.

To support the bill, SCEFI met with the chairman of the Committee on Labor, Commerce, and Industry and a state representative to educate them about the purpose of Employment First. SCEFI attended the committee hearing in March 2018. A young adult with a developmental disability and Able South Carolina's Executive Director testified at the hearing.

In May 2018, the South Carolina Employment First Study Committee was signed into law. It was revised in its third reading to change from a permanent commission to a temporary study committee, which will evaluate the need for further legislation that would support policies for CIE for individuals with I/DD. The committee will issue its findings to the governor on May 1, 2019. SCEFI partners from Able South Carolina, Protection and Advocacy, VR Department, Division of State Human Resources, a professional in the disability employment field, and a member of the House of Representatives have been appointed to the committee.

#### *Employment First Policies*

Between September 2017 and February 2018, Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc., a SCEFI partner, updated the organization's vision statement to include that CIE is the first and preferred option. Additionally, all three South Carolina CILs (Able South Carolina, AccessAbility, and Walton Options) posted a collective Employment First statement on their websites. SCEFI helped the South Carolina Commission for the Blind adopt an Employment First policy in the Commission's Client Services Manual in January 2018. SCEFI also worked with the DOE, SCDHHS, and VR Department to help the agencies plan to adopt their own Employment First position statements.

SCEFI continued to develop an Employment First brochure to inform stakeholders and general community members about Employment First principles and how South Carolina currently implements Employment First practices. The Employment First brochure is being developed to support the passage of Employment First policies. SCEFI partners continued to submit their internal policies and procedures for peer review to incorporate or improve Employment First practices within each agency.

In July 2017, SCEFI incorporated Employment First into the South Carolina Youth Leadership Forum. During the forum, youth discussed subminimum wage, watched portions of the *Bottom Dollars* documentary, and discussed advocacy strategies to end subminimum wage.

#### *Employment First Trainings*

Through SCDEC, national APSE conducted an Employment First training for SCDEC members in December 2016. Thirty-seven SCDEC members representing 17 state agencies and individuals with I/DD attended this training. SCDEC conducted a training on Employment First philosophy for employment professionals at the state's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) in March 2017. This training had 85 attendees in the first session and 55 attendees in the second session.

During the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period, SCEFI held six Employment First trainings for 177 individuals. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI held three Employment First trainings. The three Employment First trainings were held at the Transition Alliance of South Carolina's Employment Bootcamp for educators and service providers and for two new pilot program sites. During Year Two of the PIE project, SCEFI trained a total of 629 people on the philosophy and principles of Employment First, which exceeded their goal of training 50 people during Year Two.

### **State Policies**

#### *Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule*

SCDHHS hosted a meeting about the HCBS Final Rule implementation between April and August 2017. The meeting featured a presentation from Disabilities and Special Needs Board staff who visited Vermont. The presentation showed Vermont's model for closing sheltered workshops in a negative way. In response, SCDEC invited service providers from Vermont to share positive results from sheltered workshop closures with SCDEC members. SCDEC also invited speakers from Tennessee to share Employment First implementation strategies and lessons learned. The SCEFI consortium chair gave two presentations about HCBS Final Rule implementation at the November 2017 consortium meeting and the December 2017 SCDEC quarterly

meeting. The presentations increased stakeholders' understanding of the HCBS Final Rule and the changes necessary to fully implement the rule.

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, the chair of SCEFI's consortium began coordinating the state's HCBS transition plan. SCEFI has also been in contact with several local Developmental Disability Agency providers to offer technical assistance in transitioning individuals from segregated work programs into community employment.

#### *State Medicaid Waivers*

Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI researched ways to change the state's waivers and presented these methods to consortium partners. SCEFI drew upon the District of Columbia's waiver models for some of these methods, including: adding language to existing waivers so high school students can access wrap-around services through the VR Department, the Developmental Disabilities Agency, and the school; and creating time limitations on employment readiness services provided through a waiver. SCEFI also used Tennessee's Employment and Community First CHOICES waiver as an example of an employment-only waiver.

SCEFI continued to pursue waiver improvements during the March to August 2018 reporting period. SCEFI met with the SCDHHS director and deputy director to discuss recommendations for improving waiver services. SCDHHS hired a consultant to conduct a Medicaid Waiver Rate Study. The SCDHHS director invited SCEFI to be a part of the consultant meeting and to provide input on employment services through waivers. The director also showed willingness to consider waiver definition changes and additional employment data collection requirements.

### *Achieving a Better Life Experience Program*

The South Carolina Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Savings Program was established in November 2017. SCEFI disseminated materials about the program to SCDEC stakeholders and partners, and published information on social media pages. Able South Carolina's Director of Community Outreach and Consumer Rights received training on the South Carolina ABLE Savings Program and worked with SCEFI's community partners on educating others on the program. Previously, the South Carolina governor signed ABLE legislation into law in April 2016.

## **Leverage Grants or Initiatives**

### *South Carolina APSE Chapter*

In July 2017, SCEFI held a meeting to develop a South Carolina APSE chapter with 25 participants in attendance. With an APSE chapter, SCEFI hopes to form better relationships with service providers, educate service providers on employment models, and help improve employment outcomes in South Carolina.

SCEFI also spoke with several organizations and SCDEC members to engage them in the APSE chapter development. SCEFI officially became a "Chapter in Development" in March 2018. An executive board of eight members was formed and has been meeting monthly to discuss the chapter's progress. There are 32 South Carolina APSE members, which is an increase of nine members since the September 2017 to February 2018 reporting period. A membership meeting open to all current members and interested individuals will be held in September 2018. The APSE chapter is conducting outreach, including co-sponsoring and having a vendor table at the South Carolina Human Service Providers Association in March 2019, and giving a presentation on Employment at South Carolina's American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities conference in October 2018. The South Carolina APSE chapter focus areas include recruitment, public policy, transition services, adult services, and professional development. South Carolina APSE named recruitment and public policy chairs and are actively seeking members to lead the remaining committees.

### *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Grant*

SCEFI and two local workforce boards applied for and were awarded a WIOA grant through the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. The grant will allow SCEFI to connect with the disability community and spread awareness that American Job Centers have available services. SCEFI will also provide disability training to staff at American Job Centers on accessibility and inclusivity, and will offer quarterly trainings to employers to promote an inclusive work environment.

## **Policy Collaboration**

### *Partnerships*

Between September 2017 and February 2018, Able South Carolina developed a Ticket to Work Partnership agreement with the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. Able South Carolina also explored an agreement with the state VR Department and the Department of Employment and Workforce.

## **Program Development and PIE Model Demonstration Projects**

### **Alternative Certificates, Diplomas, or Curriculum**

#### *Alternative Diplomas*

Between October 2016 and March 2017, SCEFI partners updated partner agencies on the progress of legislation endorsed by the South Carolina DOE that will establish alternative diploma options for students.

Additionally, the Transition to Careers Committee chair participated in a work group assembled to write the draft regulations for the legislation establishing diploma options and to assist professionals during implementation. SCEFI advocated for changes to credential policies that promote the Employment First philosophy. Between April and August 2017, the law passed, and the South Carolina High School Credential (previously called the Employability Credential) was created to increase flexibility in earning a high school diploma. The Credential provides a state-recognized certificate for eligible students who meet the requirements of a set number of work experience hours, and parallel coursework. SCEFI planned to create a comprehensive guide for aligning students' work

experiences with best practices in transition and Employment First principles. Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI worked with a marketing firm to create branding for the Credential, and placed the SCEFI logo on all brochures related to the Credential.

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI continued to conduct High School Credential trainings to Local Education Agencies. The freshmen that begin school in 2018 are the first class who can take advantage of the High School Credential.

## **Self-Employment or Self-Advocacy**

### *Advocacy Day for Access and Independence*

The annual Advocacy Day for Access and Independence was held in April 2017 and 2018 at South Carolina's state house. Each year, advocates speak with representatives and voice their concerns. Able South Carolina is the lead agency, and 25 organizations support the event. This year's Advocacy Day flyer included the Employment First philosophy. The chairperson for the Business Coalition spoke at the event to address other employers on the importance of hiring people with I/DD.

### *Self-Advocacy Curriculum and Peer Support Groups*

Between April and August 2017, three CILs from SCEFI's Peer Support Work Group worked together to develop the peer support outline and curriculum. SCEFI and the CILs worked together to form a curriculum of six sessions building on the #HireMeSC social media campaign. Once the initial peer support sites have piloted the curriculum, SCEFI plans to expand the curriculum to additional sites. CILs have existing peer support frameworks in local communities with which to implement the curriculum.

Additionally, Able South Carolina braided funding with EQUIP, a youth-led self-advocacy group, to start peer support groups focused on employment skills, which is one of their main PIE project goals. Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI implemented two youth peer support groups in Greenville and Anderson. The groups are led by youth self-advocates and use the self-advocacy curriculum, which includes six sessions on self-awareness and communication, goal setting, career development, and employment rights. The two groups had an average of 10 participants each. SCEFI collected feedback from participants every two months, and

observed an increase in youths' understanding of employment skills.

AccessAbility hosted a six-session peer support group with an average of nine participants during the March to August 2018 reporting period. The peer support group received positive feedback and staff engaged new young adult leaders as a result of the sessions. Able South Carolina met with AccessAbility and Walton Options to finalize the peer support framework and plan for Year Three. Able South Carolina plans to lead two peer support groups in Year Three, with Walton Options and AccessAbility each leading one.

## **Improve or Enhance Existing Programs**

### *Work with Sheltered Workshops*

Between October 2016 and March 2017, Able South Carolina, which is an affiliate of the Southeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center, worked with local sheltered workshops that pay subminimum wage to provide trainings on disability rights in employment and employment opportunities. These trainings could lead to further collaboration between PIE and local providers in the future.

SCEFI partners also began to collect an inventory of existing programs for individuals with I/DD to determine how to improve the existing framework.

## **Increase or Build Program Capacity**

### *Disability Benefits and Employment Workshops*

SCDEC hosted Disability Benefits and Employment workshops at American Job Centers to dispel myths related to Social Security and employment, and connect individuals with I/DD to local employment service providers. During the first year of the PIE project, SCDEC held four total workshops in Aiken, Greenville, North Charleston, and Florence. Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI held three Disability Benefits and Employment workshops. Survey results from these workshops indicate that 97 percent of attendees rated the training as excellent or good and 87 percent of attendees said that the information they learned from the workshop would help them in their job or life. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI held five Disability Benefits and Employment workshops. Eight total workshops were held in Year Two of the SCEFI project and 32 parents or family members attended the workshops.

### *Resource Guide*

Between April and August 2017, SCEFI noted that youth with I/DD can use the same vocational training programs available to all students, but students were not aware of the available programs since the information was not publicly available. SCEFI began to develop a resource guide about post-secondary training opportunities for youth with I/DD who do not receive high school diplomas. SCEFI planned to collaborate with local technical colleges to complete the resource guide. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI updated the resource guide to include new post-secondary options for students with I/DD.

### *Provider Trainings*

Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI trained 57 professionals on alternatives to guardianship. A technical assistance liaison also provided Supported Employment training to local educators, staff, and providers through the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) Employment Bootcamp. SCEFI also provided five trainings on self-advocacy and disability rights to youth involved in Project SEARCH™ at Embassy Suites.

### *Jobs Oriented Blind Services (JOBS)*

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind, a SCEFI partner, added three JOBS Specialists to provide Supported Employment services. The Commission for the Blind's counselors also received Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training.

## **Model Demonstration Project**

### *Pilot Structure*

Several SCEFI members continued to implement Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in South Carolina schools, and examined these services as potential components of SCEFI's PIE pilot program.

Between April and August 2017, SCEFI worked with partners to determine services and resources each agency could contribute to PIE pilot sites, and developed a Pilot Project Model for Transition Planning that used each partner's best transition practices. SCEFI collaborated with TASC to develop the Request for Proposals and solicit applications through the TASC interagency transition teams in each school district. SCEFI also created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to use between the chosen school districts and the consortium to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI implemented two pilot programs with 25 students at the Berkeley School District and 37 students at the Richland School District. SCEFI drafted MOUs for the pilot program and reached out to pilot program schools to sign the MOU. The SCEFI partners providing services to the pilot also signed the MOU ensuring their involvement and collaboration in the program. SCEFI also informed each partner about appropriate individuals to sign the MOU.

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI revised the pilot project to focus on fundamental problems at the local level. Instead of offering a wide array of services, SCEFI is narrowing their focus to ensure teachers understand available services for their students and know how to make referrals. SCEFI is also emphasizing advocating for students who have been denied services without a formal eligibility determination.

### *Pilot Data*

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI added two model demonstration projects at the Cherokee and Spartanburg Two School District. There are four pilot programs with 62 students overall.

SCEFI gathered baseline data for the pilot program on students engaged with I/DD engaged in work-based learning experiences. SCEFI surveyed teachers about the 2016-2017 students and compared the data to the 2017-2018 students. For Berkeley School District, four of 25 surveyed students were engaged in work experiences from 2016 to 2017. At the end of 2017 to 2018, there was a 108 percent increase of students (15 out of 27 students) involved in work experiences. For Richland, two of 37 surveyed students were engaged in work experiences during 2016 to 2017. At the end of 2017 to 2018, there was a 650 percent increase of surveyed students (15 out of 37 students) involved in work experiences.

## **Relationship Building**

### **Collaboration Progress, Highlights, or Achievements**

#### *Consortium and Meetings*

SCDEC, the parent organization that includes SCEFI, meets quarterly. The four committees, which include the Centralized Outreach Committee, the Employer Outreach Committee, the Transition to Careers Committee, and the Infrastructure Committee (SCEFI), meet monthly. SCDEC is researching current employment trainings in preparation for developing Employment First trainings for professionals.

As of August 2018, 41 agencies were involved in SCDEC and 12 agencies were involved in SCEFI. Additionally, SCDEC has held six meetings and SCEFI has held 17 consortium meetings. SCDEC members include local and state agency staff, educators, and self-advocates. At SCDEC meetings, stakeholders and partners shared recent successes and new initiatives to increase information sharing and encourage collaboration. Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCDEC added members to various committees from the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs to ensure their monthly representation. Between March and August 2018, SCEFI established a Disability Advisory Committee, which is led by a youth with a disability and is comprised of self-advocates.

### **Stakeholder Attitudes and Awareness**

#### *#HireMeSC Social Media Campaign*

SCEFI launched the #HireMeSC social media campaign across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in March 2017 with local news coverage and a press release to support the launch. The campaign empowers youth with I/DD to engage in meaningful discussions about their employment dreams, successes, and barriers.

Between April and August 2017, #HireMeSC traveled to three summer transition programs to promote the program with 87 youth and to share campaign materials with 120 VR staff. #HireMeSC also shared materials through several listservs, and worked with Project SEARCH™ to promote the campaign and engage interns with social media posts.

Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI attended several youth events with the state VR Department to increase awareness for the #HireMeSC campaign and increase participation. As a result of #HireMeSC's promotional work, its Facebook page had 700 likes, reached 1,115 people, and had a post engagement of 305 people as of February 2018.

Between March and August 2018, the #HireMeSC social media self-advocacy campaign exceeded its goal of featuring 100 young adults by the end of Year Two. The social media campaign has featured 229 young adults with disabilities on its Facebook page. The #HireMeSC Facebook page increased likes by 97 likes (total of 903 likes) with a maximum post reach of 878 people. In addition, the SCDEC Facebook page grew from 566 likes to 665 likes.

#### *Bottom Dollars Documentary*

Able South Carolina hosted a viewing of the documentary *Bottom Dollars* for 22 people between October 2016 and March 2017. The documentary presents subminimum wage from the perspective of individuals with I/DD. The viewing included a discussion led by youth self-advocates about subminimum wage practices. Self-advocates also shared their employment experiences.

#### *Public Relations Efforts*

Between October 2016 and March 2017, SCEFI worked with a local public relations firm to develop a SCEFI logo and marketing timeline to build awareness of PIE efforts. The tagline for the initiative is "People First. Opportunity First. Employment First." The SCDEC website and Facebook page also includes regularly updated information on PIE efforts. SCEFI created a new logo between September 2017 and February 2018. During the March to August 2018, SCEFI expanded Hire Me SC to reach more stakeholders and encompass the full scope of SCEFI and SCDEC. The SCDEC and Hire Me SC Facebook pages will remain active. As of August 2018, SCEFI is creating a new Hire Me SC website, which will include resources and job seeker success stories, and will launch in September 2018.

## Employer Engagement

### *Employer Summit*

South Carolina held its first Employer Summit in October 2016 to coincide with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Commissioner of the South Carolina VR Department welcomed attendees and there was a panel of employers and employees with I/DD. South Carolina also conducted surveys of participants. Of the 45 participants surveyed at the event, 93 percent reported they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the content of the event.

The October 2017 Employer Summit was titled "Inclusion Drives Innovation" to reflect the theme of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Sixty-two individuals, including employers, service providers, speakers, and sponsors participated, and Business Coalition members led the event. Survey results from the Employer Summit indicated that 96 percent of attendees were satisfied with the event, and 83 percent of employers intended to modify their policies to increase employment for people with I/DD.

The third annual Employer Summit, titled South Carolina's Workforce: Empowering All, is scheduled for October 9, 2018. The Summit includes a keynote speaker and an employer and employee panel. Service providers will serve as vendors again to connect with employers. As of August 2018, there are 12 vendors registered and 11 sponsors confirmed. The state Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) chapter partnered with them to sponsor and promote the Summit within their local 14 chapters across the state. The 2017 Summit had double the sponsorships of the 2016 Summit. As of August 2018, the 2018 Summit had double the sponsorships of the 2017 Summit.

### *Business Coalition*

As a result of the Employer Summit, Verizon became an employer liaison. South Carolina worked with Verizon to build a Business Coalition for Employment of People with Disabilities (Business Coalition). The Business Coalition grew out of established positive relationships with employers and then used those employers to reach out to their peers. The first meeting occurred in December 2016, and the Business Coalition continues to meet quarterly. As of August 2018, there are 15 employers actively involved in the Business Coalition. For the Employer Summit event in October 2017, the Business Coalition developed the Employer Summit content, enlisted corporate sponsorships, and engaged additional business leaders to participate in the event. The Summit also engaged service providers to connect employers with resources. The Business Coalition is currently planning for the October 2018 Employer Summit and obtaining sponsorships. As of August 2018, 11 sponsors were confirmed.

### *Employer Trainings*

In April 2017, SCEFI trained 68 employers on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), essential job functions, and reasonable accommodations. The post-training survey showed that 96 percent of employers felt that the information increased their knowledge on the ADA by "an average to a large amount." SCEFI held another training in May 2017 for 65 employers, 91 percent of which felt that they were able to take away a best practice.

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI held eight employer trainings with 78 employees trained, for a total of 13 employer trainings held during Year Two of the PIE project. SCEFI trained three manufacturers, a Chamber group, human resources staff at a local hospital, one restaurant, one workforce development board, and one university. Outreach will continue through social media, employer training flyers, and the Business Coalition.

SCEFI continued to develop relationships with the local SHRM and American Job Centers. As a result, SHRM and American Job Centers requested SCEFI provide trainings at events. These trainings allowed SCEFI to expand connections with stakeholders and gain more credibility for future employer trainings.

## *Employer Collaboration*

Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI worked with an AbilityOne contractor to implement changes in company culture to increase expectations for employees with I/DD. SCEFI also collaborated with Greenville Health System (GHS) to change onboarding practices to accommodate individuals with significant I/DD. New employees with I/DD are now being trained on-site at GHS like other employees, with accommodations and additional job coach support as needed.

SCEFI worked with the state DOE to create an employer survey to request employers' input on the required skills, knowledge, and experience needed for students to earn the South Carolina High School Credential. SCEFI disseminated the survey to the Business Coalition.

## **Family Engagement**

### *Alternatives to Guardianship Calls*

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI held 23 one-on-one calls with families on alternatives to guardianships through the Supported Decision Making program. In a survey of the five families SCEFI counseled last quarter, all five stated that they were no longer considering guardianship until they had tried less restrictive means. There are many resources on the Supported Decision Making Website, including a video from a family member of a youth with I/DD who chose the Supported Decision Model over guardianship. Between January and August 2018, 954 individuals accessed the website.

## **Data Systems and Employment Tools**

### **Shared Data Systems**

#### *Data Collection Efforts*

Between October 2016 and March 2017, SCEFI formed a Data Collection Work Group that includes project partners who can implement a statewide data collection process for employment information for young adults. The Work Group established a common definition for data and is working to determine how to collect and share data to demonstrate measurable outcomes.

Between April and August 2017, SCEFI began looking at data collected from several agencies to fulfill WIOA

requirements as a way to collect data needed for Employment First purposes. The DOE also looked at adding questions related to work experiences for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Between September 2017 and February 2018, SCEFI sought technical assistance from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to receive support and guidance in implementing data systems statewide. WINTAC collaborated with partners on what data they currently collect and surveyed the partners to rate the importance of data points for each agency.

SCEFI also identified a need to create a portal on the SCDEC website to allow individuals seeking employment services to ask questions about receiving services. Individuals were previously using Facebook pages to send private messages about seeking these services. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI partnered with EconSys to create an individual data collection model for agencies and shared data collection models.

## **Documenting and Disseminating Resources**

### *Hire Me SC Website*

During the March to August 2018 reporting period, SCEFI expanded Hire Me SC to reach more stakeholders and encompass the full scope of SCEFI and SCDEC. This effort is scheduled to launch in September 2018 with a new website to highlight employment success stories, resources for job seekers, employers, service providers, and educators, and ways to connect through events and trainings. A general awareness outreach card was created and 29 billboards statewide will be created to challenge existing perspectives by showing people with disabilities engaged in employment. Additional marketing materials include tablecloths, pop-up banners, brochures, and posters. Each partners' logo is on the new website so that they feel valued and their participation is acknowledged. Hire Me SC also features the partners in social media posts highlighting their accomplishments.

SCEFI created a survey on the new Hire Me SC website for large disability employment agencies to provide one to two sentences describing their eligibility criteria, how people apply for services, and a checklist of which employment services they offer. This survey helped streamline resources listed on the job seeker page. There are also statistics, tools, and information on the advantages of hiring people with disabilities listed on the employer page.

#### *Cross-Agency Resources*

SCEFI worked to develop resources with cross-agency application on disability disclosure topics. These resources will include three to four short videos that correspond with a service provider companion guide to facilitate more in-depth discussion. These resources would provide a uniform approach and method for South Carolina to guide individuals through disclosure decisions. The cross-agency resources will be available on the new Hire Me SC website.

## **Sustainability Efforts**

### **Sustainability Beyond the PIE Grant**

#### *Sustainability Discussions*

SCDEC began meeting in 2014, and continues to meet without additional funding. Therefore, SCEFI is “confident that the SCDEC will continue to exist” after the grant.

For the 2017 and 2018 Employer Summits, SCEFI leveraged partnerships with service providers and employers to decrease the amount of PIE grant funding needed for the Employer Summit, which will help sustain the Summit in the future. Each sponsor receives recognition through several avenues for their support, helps market their organization, and increases their engagement in the event. There is a proposal in progress for DOE to fund the Employer Summit next year. SCEFI has been able to decrease the PIE funding needed for the Employer Summit by leveraging relationships with employers and service providers.

Additionally, following a free employer training by Able South Carolina through SCEFI, the employer paid for additional training on disability sensitivity and etiquette. The Able Access Program, which is Able South Carolina’s fee-for-service program that provides accessibility assessments and disability etiquette and sensitivity training, will continue to provide employer technical assistance on a fee-for-service basis after the grant ends, allowing SCEFI to sustain employer engagement activities.

SCEFI also explored several post-PIE funding sources. There is a potential agreement with the South Carolina VR Department that will allow SCEFI to serve additional customers through employment services and provide an increase of unrestricted funding to employment initiatives. SCEFI is also considering creating curriculum guides for employers in order to generate additional revenue.

## **Considerations**

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