

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.

Utah School to Work Interagency Transition Initiative: October 2016 – August 2018

Overview

The Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) was awarded the Partnerships in Employment (PIE) grant in September 2016. The DSPD is leading the Utah School to Work Interagency Transition Initiative (USWITI) in collaboration with the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), the Special Education Services of the Utah Board of Education, DSPD, Office of Rehabilitation, Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University, Parent Center, and the Governors Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities. This group formed the USWITI Council. The USWITI Council will develop two School to Work pilot project sites per year, for a total of ten project sites, to demonstrate the effectiveness of career planning and assessment and how career planning leads to job placement.

Project Goals and Vision

The overall goal of the USWITI is to enact policy and funding changes for state agencies and to increase the number of youth and young adults with I/DD engaged in CIE across Utah.

Project goals include:

- 1) Confirm and engage the USWITI Council
- 2) Develop an outcome measurement system that is shared across state agencies and stakeholders to measure employment success
- 3) Increase ongoing delivery of career planning, development, and employment and support services that begin in early high school and lead to individualized long-term employment
- 4) Build capacity of service providers to align their mission, services, and resources to promote and provide CIE for youth with I/DD

- 5) Increase expectations and demand fully CIE opportunities for youth with I/DD
- 6) Align policies, practices, and funding with employment expectations

This profile highlights USWITI 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

Supporting Employment First Implementation

Utah passed Employment First legislation in 2011. To support implementation, USWITI presented information on Employment First, including work done through the PIE project at the Utah Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Rule Compliance Conference on September 14, 2017. Presenters discussed the value of new ways to transition students with I/DD through a customized approach before they exit school.

Between September 2017 and February 2018, the Utah legislature introduced language to ensure that the Department of Human Services, DWS, and the Board of Education develop comprehensive plans to transition students with I/DD from school to CIE by October 2018. The legislature designated DSPD as the lead agency for this plan, with USWITI leadership assisting with data collection. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, USWITI assisted with the data collection and the development of the comprehensive transition plans.

State Policies

HCBS Final Rule Compliance

USWITI educated school personnel and other professionals that work with people with I/DD about the importance of integrated employment and compliance with the HCBS Rule. Between April and August 2017, USWITI worked with one school's personnel to help bring them into compliance with the HCBS Rule.

Leveraging or Supporting Other Grants and Initiatives

Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

USWITI supported the development of an APSE chapter in Utah by recruiting new members and posting about Utah APSE on social media. USWITI also assisted in the planning of the 2018 Utah APSE conference.

Employment First Customized Capacity Building Pilot Project

As of August 2018, USWITI continued to provide technical assistance to provider companies through the Employment First Customized Employment Capacity Building Pilot Project. This project aims to strengthen efforts and build the capacity of the USWITI provider system to be able to provide Customized Employment to individuals eligible for DSPD services. Through the Pilot Project, DSPD partnered with Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and Utah State University to provide training and technical assistance resources to four provider agencies with a minimum of two employment specialists each. The Pilot Project ends in 2019, however USWITI anticipates that the work will continue through Utah State University.

Program Development and PIE Model Demonstration Projects

Model Demonstration Project

School to Work Interagency Transition Initiative Model Demonstration Project Overview

As part of its PIE project plans, USWITI planned to align the state's existing School to Work project framework and sites with PIE. Utah's pilot School to Work transition sites aim to help students progress towards employment through the Discovery and Customized Employment process. Before PIE, there were three existing School to Work pilot sites. The sites were funded through a partnership and agreement with Utah State Office of Rehabilitation.

- *Existing School to Work Sites:* The three existing pilot schools started implementing the School to Work model between October 2016 and March 2017. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the pilot sites received training on Customized

Employment and technical assistance from subject matter experts with funding from an Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) grant. After funding from ODEP ended, these existing pilot sites transitioned into the PIE project. Each site has between four to twelve students and ten to thirteen team members.

- *PIE School to Work Sites*: Additionally, USWITI planned to develop two new project sites per year as part of PIE. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created between October 2016 and March 2017 to outline roles and responsibilities to provide additional resources for technical assistance and to strengthen the partnership and collaborative work between the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and DWS. Between September 2017 and February 2018, USWITI improved its practices for inviting Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to apply to participate in the School to Work project by creating an information packet for LEAs with post-high school programs describing the School to Work project, roles, and responsibilities. USWITI also created an online application for potential interested sites.

As of February 2018, there were 44 students enrolled at six active sites, and 106 professionals working with the site teams. Since the beginning of the project, seven students have gained CIE. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, three students were offered employment. The students were initially engaged in the Summer Work Experience program as a “summer only” internship but were offered permanent employment upon completion of the internship.

School to Work Meetings

Between April and August 2017, USWITI leadership worked with a subject matter expert to develop a framework for running team meetings and using time effectively. USWITI emailed the guide to each of the site team leads and introduced the guide on the monthly Team Lead call.

Regular team meetings were held each month with each of the school sites. Each student participating in the School to Work project was reviewed. Subject matter experts made on-site visits every other month to consult with team sites and assisted with resolving barriers to success for each student. USWITI also held a monthly team conference call with each of the Team Leads from the nine School to Work sites. The

contracted subject matter experts and USWITI leadership join the call as well.

New School to Work Pilot Sites

In April 2017, USWITI established new School to Work teams at two schools in the Jordan school district and one school in the Salt Lake City school districts. Teams for each of the new school sites were organized after a Community of Practice event that was held in April 2017. Thirty-three individuals from the new School to Work teams completed the 40-hour Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training to become certified in Customized Employment. Trainees included teachers, para-educators, and administrators from the Jordan and Salt Lake City school districts.

Between September 2017 and February 2018, USWITI established three new School to Work sites with 10 to 12 members and four to five students anticipated for each site.

Between March and August 2018, USWITI established three new pilot sites. As of August 2018, there are nine pilot sites and 106 cumulative participants, including students, team members, agency partners, and School to Work leadership.

Community of Practice Training

The School to Work pilot teams received training through a Community of Practice training. Thirty-five people received training in November 2016 and 50 people received training in April 2017. School to Work pilot sites were trained by subject matter experts contracted to be consultants and provide technical assistance for the PIE project. School to Work pilot sites received training and instruction on summer internships, work experiences, and available agency supports.

Between April and August 2017, USWITI met with several provider companies that expressed an interest in providing Customized Employment, and invited them to participate in a Community of Practice. USWITI then linked the provider agencies to School to Work sites, and allowed the schools to select agencies.

USWITI also held a Community of Practice in November 2017 for 87 people. At the Community of Practice, USWITI introduced a student timeline for school teams to use and discussed elements leading to success. At this Community of Practice, USWITI worked with the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State

University to develop and conduct a survey of Community of Practice participants. USWITI used results to plan activities for the 2017-2018 school year.

USWITI held a Community of Practice for each School to Work site in spring 2018. The Community of Practice was led by subject matter experts and project staff. About 75 to 100 people attended the event at each site, which provided an overview of project expectations, subject matter expertise, and an opportunity for discussion among School to Work team members.

Parent Night Meetings

During each reporting period, USWITI held a parent information night and invited students and families from all sites to attend. USWITI presented an overview of the School to Work project and introduced the roles of each of the partnering agencies. Families have the opportunity to ask questions and express interest in participating in the School to Work project. Teachers and other team members later reported positive feedback from the families.

Discovery

USWITI coordinated with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to authorize all enrolled students for Discovery and link them with adult service providers who will support Discovery work. Additionally, teachers worked to create positive personal profiles for each enrolled student using templates developed by USWITI. These profiles capture interests and skills of the students and will help adult service providers understand the students they work with.

Evaluation

Between April and August 2017, USWITI finalized a contract with Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities to help track and evaluate the progress and successes of the School to Work project and USWITI's broader PIE activities. The evaluation will be a formative process evaluation through quarterly meetings as well as involvement through membership on the School to Work Interagency Council. The evaluation will provide project leadership with timely information on the status of the implementation activities to ensure that project objectives are fully met. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, the evaluation focused on identifying employment elements to track throughout the duration of the School to Work project to identify progress.

Improve or Enhance Existing Programs

Alternative Curricula or Certificates

Between April and August 2017, USWITI worked with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and DWS to examine alternative assessments to the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) that will allow transition-aged youth to better access services. DWS requires students to take the TABE test to be eligible for a paid internship or paid community work experience. USWITI worked with DWS leadership to make accommodations for students with the most significant disabilities.

Increase or Build Program Capacity

Trainings

USWITI trained two Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Counselors in Discovery and Customized Employment through the ACRE training. These workers will be part of two School to Work project teams.

USWITI planned and launched a series of webinars to provide all School to Work teams with additional training and technical assistance. The webinars cover topics specific to Customized Employment, and included: Delivering Customized Employment Services, Positive Personal Profiles, and Home Visits. Between September 2017 and August 2018, Utah held six School to Work webinars for about 200 participants total.

Presentations

USWITI presented information about the School to Work project and its initiative at several meetings to pursue support of the Employment First philosophy. USWITI presented at the Utah Special Education Administrators meeting in October 2016. In February 2017, USWITI presented at the Transition Institute, a conference for special education directors and staff, and at the Utah Disability Advisory Council.

USWITI was invited to present on its work with schools in a breakout session and participate in a panel discussion at the Utah Assistive Technology Teams Conference in March 2017. The conference theme was transition and employment for transition age youth.

USWITI presented with the Ogden School to Work team at the Self Determination Conference in July 2017. The conference focused on celebrating self-determination and independence for people with I/DD.

USWITI met with the directors of each of the six Independent Living Centers and presented on the School to Work project between April and August 2017. The directors were interested in USWITI's work, and agreed to send Youth Coordinators and other staff to attend local School to Work meetings. One member will join the USWITI Council and attend regular meetings.

Between September 2017 and February 2018, USWITI presented on PIE at the Utah HCBS Rule Compliance Conference.

Self-Advocacy

Self-Advocacy Presentations

Between April and August 2017, USWITI began to work with the DD Council and Utah Parent Center to develop the SHIFT Self-Advocacy Training program. SHIFT is a training course for parents and youth with I/DD to learn self-advocacy skills together. During the March to August 2018 reporting period, USWITI continued to refer students, families, and schools to SHIFT.

Take Your Legislator to Work Day

USWITI staff is partnering with the DD Council on a "Take Your Legislator to Work" campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to invite a legislator to visit youth with disabilities at their place of employment in October 2018 as part of Disability Employment Awareness Month activities. Youth will also be encouraged to invite legislators to visit them at any time during the year.

Relationship Building

Collaboration Progress, Highlights, or Achievements

USWITI Consortium

As of August 2018, USWITI held eight consortium meetings, including two consortium meetings between March and August 2018. Meetings have included a review of action plans and project benchmarks, a review of short- and long-term goals, how each agency can support and contribute to the success of the project, and an update from the Research and Data

Team from DSPD. As of August 2018, there were 16 members in the consortium.

Parent and Family Engagement Efforts

Parent Survey

The DSPD research team developed a survey between October 2016 and March 2017. This survey is intended to gather data on expectations for employment that parents have for their transition age student and identify barriers to employment as perceived by parents. The research team was previously unable to collect sufficient data, and widened the population of people participating in the survey between April and August 2017 to collect sufficient data. DSPD conducted the survey during the November 2017 Community of Practice for School to Work teams.

Data Systems and Employment Tools

Shared Data Systems

DSPD Research and Data Team

USWITI met with the Research and Data Team from DSPD to discuss developing an outcome measurement system to track progress of students participating in the School to Work pilot program. Changes have been made to the data collection system and DSPD is now able to identify students that are enrolled in the School to Work program. USWITI shares project updates and progress with the DSPD staff via updates at staff meetings and through Division-wide emails. During each update, USWITI shares information about the benefits of employment for people with significant disabilities, raising expectations among families and professionals, and reasons for why CIE should be the preferred outcome for individuals with I/DD.

Between September 2017 and August 2018, USWITI also worked with a subject matter expert from Utah State University to develop an employment outcomes data measurement system. The subject matter expert conducted an on-site visit in April 2018 to assist USWITI in identifying employment elements to track and recommended strategies for collecting and reporting employment data. In addition, the subject matter expert recommended the State Employment Leadership Network as an expert in developing state employment collection tools to establish longitudinal employment data for youth and young adults with I/DD.

Documenting and Disseminating Resources

School to Work Model Demonstration Project Documents

USWITI created School to Work forms that were shared with pilot sites and at pilot events. These documents included a Student Enrollment Form, Parent School to Work Survey, a School to Work Flyer, Project Timeline graphic, Expectations and Commitment Document, and a Student Tracking Sheet. These forms were given to School to Work pilot teams at the Community of Practice and the Kick-Off Event in April 2017. The information was also shared on the Employment First page of the Utah's DSPD website and at parent night meetings.

Between April 2017 and August 2017, USWITI developed a School to Work Project Information Sheet to provide a description of the objectives of the School to Work project. USWITI distributed both electronic and paper copies to families, and through information fairs, presentations, and trainings.

Between September 2017 and February 2018, as part of an effort to get more applicants and improve the application process, USWITI updated the information sheet about the School to Work project's purpose and objectives, partnering agencies, and roles and responsibilities of partnering agencies. USWITI also created a one-pager about Customized Employment. The one-pager highlights the concept and value of the Customized Employment approach. USWITI disseminated both one-pagers to all LEAs in Utah with the invitation to apply to be a School to Work project site. Additionally, a project subject matter expert developed a Student Timeline Tool, which can be used as a guide for teams and students participating in School to Work. The timeline includes guidance for students that have one, two, or three years left before exiting school.

USWITI developed a School to Work Provider application for supported employment provider agencies who have an interest in working with School to Work teams. The application was developed to ensure quality work and a high level of commitment from providers.

USWITI developed a student enrollment tracker, which holds information on each student enrolled in the School to Work project. Team members can identify students, connections with partnering agencies, and identify the student's provider, teacher, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, WIOA Youth counselor and family contact. This document was disseminated to team members via email.

Between March and August 2018, USWITI's subject matter expert from Utah State University developed an online mentoring and review tool for each demonstration project school sites' employment agency to receive timely support and assistance in creating effective and fully developed Discovery documents. The purpose is to assist and guide the employment agency staff in more effectively identifying how to implement Discovery.

School to Work Project Website

USWITI created a [section](#) for School to Work on the DSPD website. The content includes a School to Work project description and vision, and information on Customized Employment. The recorded School to Work Project webinars are also available on the website.

Considerations

Activities and outcomes for the following section is included in the Semi-Annual Report or will be pursued in future reporting periods:

- **Sustainability Efforts**

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