

Partnerships in Employment (PIE) Systems Change Project

Developed by The Lewin Group, June 2020

KentuckyWorks

The Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky (HDI) was awarded the Partnerships in Employment (PIE) grant in September 2016 to lead KentuckyWorks and promote competitive, integrated employment (CIE) for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).



Project Goals and Vision

Goal # 1: Establish a state-level employment work group with consortium members, self-advocates, and family members

Created policy change through KentuckyWorks

In 2016 and 2017, the KentuckyWorks Policy Work Team drafted and submitted language that was used to create an Employment First Executive Order for the state. KentuckyWorks worked in concert with the Governor's Work Matters Task Force, a group charged with making recommendations to address barriers to employment, including for people with I/DD. In May 2018, the Governor of Kentucky signed the Employment First Executive Order, making CIE in the community the expectation for people with I/DD who want to become employed. The Executive Order made HDI the administering entity for the Employment First Council, which continues to meet regularly as a full group and five subcommittees. A new Employment First Executive order was signed by Kentucky's Governor on June 29, 2020.

Highlighted Activities

- Creation and support of Policy, Family and Advocacy, Data, Marketing, Postsecondary, and Transportation Work Teams (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)
- Supported state collaborative to implement a strategic plan for workforce development and employment (2019, 2020)

Goal #2: Utilize the Kentucky Community Work Transition Program to pilot additional enhanced transition practices for students with disabilities

Highlighted Activities

- Developed five training modules for professional development on high school transitions, family engagement, and benefits (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)
- Developed a Family Engagement curriculum for professionals (2019)
- Held 13 Community Conversations and posted individual reports on the [KentuckyWorks website](#) (2017, 2018, 2019)

Increased stakeholder engagement through local initiatives

KentuckyWorks held Community Conversations across the state with community organizations, state representatives, educators, families of youth and young adults with I/DD, self-advocates, employers, and providers. Staff created implementation teams after each Community Conversation to implement suggested ideas, such as an employer recognition program and a job exploration program. As of 2020, KentuckyWorks staff shifted focus to implementing a Transition Pilot. The pilot is administered through the existing Community Work Transition Program. As of February 2020, the pilot is active in two school districts. As a result of COVID-19, KentuckyWorks is focusing on remote opportunities to extend the lessons learned from the Transition Pilot to a larger population in collaboration with the Community Work Transition Program.

Goal #3: Develop and distribute resources to families and students with I/DD, employers, and service

Promoted the benefits of hiring individuals with I/DD

Over the course of the grant, KentuckyWorks staff have created an online presence for transition resources on [the KentuckyWorks website](#) that includes documents, a blog, modules, and infographics highlighting the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. The infographics include [Hiring People with Disabilities Makes Sense for Business](#); [What Employers are Saying About Hiring People with Disabilities](#); [Tax Incentives for Employers](#); and [Myths About Workers with Disabilities](#). There are also graphic documents featuring the impact of wages on benefits, post-secondary education, and other topics. Documents are also shared on social media.

Highlighted Activities

- Created and supported a KentuckyWorks website, blog and bi-monthly newsletter sent to the KentuckyWorks consortium and HDI email lists (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)
- Created [Transition Overview document](#) for families (2019)

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Goal #4: Annually track and evaluate post-school outcomes for students with disabilities

Gained awareness of Kentucky students' post-school outcomes

Through the Kentucky Post-School Outcomes Center, KentuckyWorks collects [post-school outcomes data](#) for each youth exiting high school with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) using the Youth One Year Out Survey. The 2019 Youth One Year Out Survey yielded a 55 percent response rate and showed that about 43 percent of all youth who exited high school with IEPs were competitively employed a year after exit, compared to 15 percent of youth with I/DD. This data allows the consortium to track progress of increasing employment among students exiting high school.

Sustainability

KentuckyWorks pursues sustainability through the Employment First Executive Order. HDI administers the Employment First Council and educates the members on KentuckyWorks initiatives. KentuckyWorks leadership is involved in the state's strategic plan for workforce development, which will support the integration of KentuckyWorks initiatives into existing agencies and support sustainability beyond the PIE grant. KentuckyWorks staff also secures additional funding and supports to sustain PIE activities, including a grant to establish the National Training Center on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) grant, and Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program Technical Assistance Grant.

KentuckyWorks Partners

- University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (Lead Agency)
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Education
- Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
- Office of Autism
- Autism Training Center
- Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Regional Special Education Cooperatives
- Department for Aging and Independent Living
- Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- Community Work Transition Program
- Governor's Office of Early Childhood

What is the Partnerships in Employment Project?

5-year grant awarded to 14 states: The Administration on Disabilities (AoD) 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

AoD 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.