

## 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.”<sup>1</sup>

**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 activities related to project sustainability and is intended to reflect the PIE State Profiles and Final Evaluation Report for the 2011 and 2012 grantees.

## What is project sustainability?

Federal funding for six of the eight PIE grantees ended in September 2016, while the remaining two of the eight grantees received funding through September 2017. During, and especially towards the end of their grant funding periods, the PIE consortia were particularly interested in sustaining PIE activities and employment outcomes that emerged from their PIE grants.

In planning to sustain PIE projects, consortia identified opportunities to leverage existing or future grants to support the continuation of PIE activities (in Alaska, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wisconsin), developed websites, and relied on listservs or other newsletters to disseminate project findings, resources, and success stories (in all states). All state consortia fostered relationships that will exist beyond the grant and established permanent changes to policy and infrastructure, such as creating a non-profit organization or integrating PIE best practices into existing state programs. The sections below summarize how states planned to sustain PIE activities or outcomes following the end of grant funding.

## How did PIE states plan for project sustainability?

### Alaska

To plan for sustaining AIEI work into and beyond the grant, AIEI held a community conversation at its November 2015 AIEI Advisory Board meeting to focus on sustainability efforts. Attendees discussed marketing training materials to other states, repealing 14(c) subminimum wage certificates, and sustaining support for families.

To plan for sustainability, AIEI determined what work to continue past the grant. AIEI offered trainings throughout the project both in-person and through distance delivery. Training topics included Self-Employment, Discovery, Medicaid Buy-In, and Financial Literacy for People with Disabilities. After the 2016 National Project SEARCH™ Conference, distance delivery was recommended as a best practice to be shared nationally. Between October 2016 and August 2017, AIEI trained 234 individuals. AIEI collaborated with several partners to continue the use of distance delivery training as an innovative approach to capacity building in rural and remote regions of the state.

Additionally, the AIEI Management Team and Policy and Regulations Team planned to merge with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) Employment and Transportation Committee after the end of grant funding for sustainability purposes. There were overlaps in membership and work plans between both groups. Merging with an existing, non-PIE funded leadership group helped AIEI sustain PIE goals and activities after funding ended.

### California

To plan for sustaining CECY beyond the grant, CECY developed several guides describing state agency partnerships. CECY held a two-day planning meeting in 2015, a year before the end of the grant, to identify which members would be responsible for specific activities. The in-person meeting resulted in the development of a 2015-2016 Strategic Implementation Plan and Draft Continuity Plan for potential work to consider after the end of the grant. Each CECY Work Group also contributed to a Dissemination Planning document that summarized how each consortium

product would be sustained, updated, and disseminated after the grant ended.

CECY also contributed to the development of the California Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint (Blueprint), which is a document defining state agencies' roles and responsibilities in implementing Employment First in California. Anticipating the end of PIE grant funding and the end of CECY as a consortium, CECY embedded CECY best practices into the Blueprint, which would formalize and embed CECY activities and lessons learned into state policy. In addition to the content of the Blueprint, the development process for the Blueprint itself set a precedent for California agencies to collaborate beyond the grant by clearly defining roles and responsibilities.

### Iowa

In a unique approach to sustaining the consortium structure after the grant, Iowa's consortium leadership team, the ICIE Core Team, and project staff planned to establish ICIE as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a broader focus that includes community integration as well as employment. ICIE changed the group's name from the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment to the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment. This name change would retain the acronym ICIE for continuity while also reflecting the non-profit's broadened focus areas.

ICIE sought ways to continue the consortium's work through the non-profit organization without funding from PIE. The Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment secured five contracts to sustain employment-related work. For example, the non-profit contracted with the Iowa Association of Community Providers to provide training and technical assistance to Home and Community Based Service providers. The non-profit also contracted with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to continue coordinating with the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program grant and offer career counseling and referrals via webinar to individuals receiving subminimum wage and services from IVRS. The non-profit also contracted with the Developmental Disabilities Council, Division of Mental Health Services, and the University of Iowa's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

## Mississippi

MSPE pursued sustainability by continuing to operate the MSPE-funded pilot sites. At the end of pilot funding in September 2015, three pilot sites had trained 70 students through their employment skills training programs and had assisted 55 students to find employment at 25 employer locations. After funding ended, MSPE continued to work with two school districts to develop an implementation guide for statewide distribution that provides guidance on how to replicate pilot results. The pilot activities related to sustainability are listed below:

- **BOLTS (Building Opportunities for Learning and Transition Success):** BOLTS, a school-based training with greenhouse and pottery activities and a community-based training with internships, allowed students to move into full-time employment. BOLTS assisted 41 students to find employment in the community. To promote sustainability, MSPE provided support to the site to develop a manual or guide to help other sites implement similar projects.
- **Gathering Grounds:** Gathering Grounds Coffee and Arts Shop is a community-based business where students with disabilities learn work and social skills. A total of 14 students transitioned to jobs in the community after working at Gathering Grounds. The site received support from the school district to continue work after MSPE funding ended, which signifies sustainable local support for PIE initiatives.

After project funding ended, MSPE also continued to participate in disAbility MegaConferences. MSPE managing partners attended the first Mississippi disability MegaConference in 2012 and served on the planning committee for four disability MegaConferences to ensure the conferences included sessions on employment.

In addition, the Arc of Mississippi received a grant from the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities and is collaborating with other MSPE consortium members to develop a state-specific curriculum for job coaches, which will be used by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

## Missouri

Members of the Show-Me-Careers leadership consortium sustained PIE work through an Employment Group. Initially, Show-Me-Careers planned to sustain

activities through the Missouri State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) Leadership Team, and each agency serving on the Missouri Show-Me-Careers consortium would identify a representative to serve on the Missouri SELN Leadership Team starting in November 2016. While the creation of the SELN Leadership Team is still planned for the future, as of August 2017, the more informal Employment Group is focusing on both promoting integrated employment for individuals with disabilities and addressing the needs of adults as well as youth with I/DD. The Employment Group is designed to continue the partnerships formed through the PIE project, develop an Employment First initiative, and design a benefits education tool.

Additionally, two Show-Me Careers Pilot Communities developed employment consortia to support employer engagement and sustain best practices after the end of grant funding. The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities is also in the process of developing an employment provider capacity building initiative focused on working with communities and providers to build their capacity to implement best practice employment services.

## New York

After NYS PIE's grant funding ended, NYS PIE continued to develop and disseminate MyPathNY.org resources. MyPathNY.org is an online tool to help individuals and their families navigate the transition-to-work process. The site offers families and individuals with

I/DD tools to engage in discussions about the transition to employment process. NYS PIE also continued to distribute folders with information on MyPathNY.org. Between 2014 and August 2017, NYS PIE distributed 13,000 folders in total.

Additionally, NYS PIE piloted the self-advocacy curriculum with the five NYS PIE Project SEARCH™ sites. The self-advocacy curriculum includes eight units on subjects including disclosure, employee rights, supports, and accommodations. NYS PIE expanded Project SEARCH™'s presence in New York and estimated that there would be 20 sites total in New York in 2018. NYS PIE developed a tracking tab for Project SEARCH™ in the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) to track outcomes and encourage agencies that participate in Project SEARCH™ to use NYESS. NYESS was launched by New York state officials as a single point of access for

all New Yorkers seeking employment and employment supports. NYESS contains outcome data specific to individual partner state agencies for the employment of individuals with I/DD.

Several of the activities supported by NYS PIE also continued in the state. For example, Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) at the University of Rochester Medical Center, NYS PIE's lead entity, contracted with a law firm to provide legal analysis on the Career and Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) credential. In March 2016, the New York State Board of Regents allowed the CDOS to become available to all students as a general exiting credential signifying employment preparedness. This change thus addresses the concern that the exclusivity of the CDOS credential to individuals with I/DD eliminates an individual's choice for self-disclosure. New York Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE) also continued to offer the CESP (Certified Employment Support Professional) Exam and reimburse the exam cost for supported employment agency personnel completing the CESP certification. The CDOS credential and CESP certification are examples of integrating PIE goals into policies that will continue to benefit individuals with I/DD after funding ends.

## Tennessee

TennesseeWorks held early discussions about plans for sustainability beyond PIE. TennesseeWorks held its Annual Think Employment! Summit in September 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017. TennesseeWorks continued discussions on developing a continuing, self-sustaining Think Employment! Summit with the TennesseeWorks partners, particularly the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. TennesseeWorks collaborated with several partners on providing funding for speakers or staff to assist with presentations. To develop a sustainable Annual Think Employment! Summit, TennesseeWorks formed a planning committee to consider using state agency funding for future summits. The TennesseeWorks Communications workgroup developed a new Hire My Strengths website (<http://hiremystrengths.org/>) to ensure Hire My Strengths, a social media campaign to promote National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), would be sustained past the 2017 NDEAM. Since TennesseeWorks formed before the PIE grant, the

consortium plans to continue project work, staffing, and the TennesseeWorks website after PIE funding ends.

## Wisconsin

To support continued work to improve employment outcomes following the end of LGTW's PIE grant funding, LGTW continued to mentor five LGTW pilot sites that were sustaining work. LGTW pilot schools received training from LGTW coaches to help them plan their intervention, collect baseline data, and identify their current strengths and areas for improvement. In 2016, LGTW coaches expanded their reach to include providing practical mentoring to high schools not included in the pilots. Nine new schools were matched with and received mentoring from LGTW pilots. Mentee schools met with pilot school coaches to learn about LGTW school strategies. Through the Pay for Performance Bill, LGTW worked with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to begin offering LGTW schools up to \$1,000 per student for submitting Indicator 14 data, or post-school outcome data for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), with an 80 percent response rate. This was an incentive to provide this necessary data for continued analysis of employment outcomes.

Promising practices from LGTW have been embedded into other Wisconsin projects including the Wisconsin Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) grant and the statewide Transition Improvement Grant (TIG). The PROMISE grant and TIG are non-PIE statewide initiatives that aim to improve service delivery and transitions for youth with I/DD. The success of LGTW Pilots led Wisconsin's PROMISE team to adopt the LGTW Quick Guide on Transition to Employment (Quick Guide), which provides best practices, strategies, tips, and resources to help schools increase their employment and overall transition outcomes. These strategies included parent trainings and Community Conversations, which engage youth, family members, educators, employers, and other community members on topics related to competitive integrated employment. TIG participated in the Community Based Integrated Employment Summit and reviewed the LGTW Quick Guide for Teachers. The statewide TIG now uses the LGTW Quick Guide when working with schools trying to improve transition outcomes. Ten TIG schools in Wisconsin are implementing LGTW promising practices. Wisconsin pursued sustainability by integrating best practices into

non-PIE funded initiatives that will continue after PIE funding ends. The Quick Guide can be accessed at <http://www.letsgettoworkwi.org/index.php/lgtw-resource-guide/>.

## Project Sustainability Promising Practices

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States planned for and pursued sustainability throughout PIE grant funding. Several promising practices to sustain grant activities and employment outcomes after funding ends are listed below:

- Define sustainability early in the grant period. PIE states defined sustainability as formalizing PIE best practices and lessons learned into state policy or continuing PIE activities after funding ends.
- Before funding ends, determine what work will continue after the grant and plan accordingly.

- Collaborate with existing state initiatives or merge consortia with existing state groups. Intentional collaboration or mergers can continue PIE activities and employment outcomes after funding ends.
- Define consortia member roles and responsibilities. This leads to work streams that can continue after the end of grant funding.
- Create resources that will exist beyond the grant, such as curriculum, trainings, implementation guides, or websites.
- To use non-PIE funding sources to continue consortium activities and project goals, establish the consortium as a non-profit organization with a broader focus.

Several states continued project activities following the end of project funding. The activities are summarized in the table on the following page.

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

PIE Activities Conducted after the End of Project Funding
<b>California Employment Consortium for Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CECY)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the project funding period, CECY held seven Community Conversations. CECY held an eighth Community Conversation after project funding ended.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CECY continued to work on the Data Dashboard, which monitors the state’s progress in employing youth and young adults with I/DD across the state. CECY purchased Tableau and a screen reader to make the Data Dashboard more interactive and visually accessible for people with disabilities. CECY also planned to add information from the state’s National Core Indicator surveys which track performance and outcomes for services for individuals with developmental disabilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CECY continued to work with Disability Rights California to develop the Blueprint. After funding ended, CECY conducted a webinar for the Blueprint and two webinars on person-centered planning.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CECY published articles on their collaborative leadership model in the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation and CECY’s Community Conversations to the Journal of Disability Policy Studies.</li> </ul>
<b>Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICIE transformed the coalition into the non-profit, Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment, after project funding ended. Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment also used the year following project funding to secure contracts to sustain employment-related work.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After project funding ended, the Iowa Department of Education established a design team to examine the outcomes of the ICIE Model Employment Transition Sites (METS) and create a new planning framework to continue and expand METS work. The main goal of the ICIE METS pilot sites was to connect students with I/DD with paid work experiences.</li> </ul>
<b>New York State Partnerships in Employment (NYS PIE)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS PIE created additional video clips for MyPathNY.org, including a recorded demonstration on how to navigate the website and uses examples describing the stories of people who may use the website. NYS PIE also continued to distribute MyPathNY folders. Teachers were still contacting NYS PIE members for folders for their classrooms.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS PIE added overviews of the Office of Mental Health and the Department of Labor’s Career Centers to MyPathNY.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After funding ended, NYS PIE piloted the self-advocacy curriculum with the five NYS PIE Project SEARCH™ sites. NYS PIE also developed a tracking tab for Project SEARCH™ to track employment outcomes and encourage agencies participating in Project SEARCH™ to use NYESS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS PIE supported several activities that continued after project funding ended. For example, SCDD continued to provide legal analysis on the CDOS credential and NY APSE continued to offer the CESP exam. The Employment Training Program, which focused on work-readiness centered school-based curriculum along with paid internship opportunities continued to be operated by OPWDD at four high schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Wisconsin Let's Get to Work (LGTW)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After project funding ended, LGTW continued to mentor five LGTW pilot sites that were connecting students with I/DD to employment. Mentoring included planning interventions, collecting baseline data, and identifying areas of strength and improvement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGTW piloted the Partners with Business model which uses public funds to pay co-workers and supervisors, rather than job coaches, within each business to train employees with disabilities.</li> </ul>



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