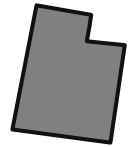


Partnerships in Employment (PIE) Systems Change Project

Developed by the Lewin Group, June 2020

Utah School to Work Interagency Transition Initiative (USWITI)



The Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University was awarded the Partnerships in Employment (PIE) grant in September 2016 to lead USWITI and promote competitive, integrated employment (CIE) for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Project Goals and Vision

Goal #1: Engage and sustain USWITI Council members and consortium roles and responsibilities

Strengthened cross-agency support of employment

USWITI created the USWITI consortium, which meets quarterly, and includes 17 members. Agencies network at each consortium meeting and at semi-annual Community of Practice events, which include all USWITI pilot site representatives and consortium members. By networking, consortium members share promising practices and have the opportunity to coordinate initiatives.

Goal #2: Develop and implement an outcome measurement system for Local Education Agencies and local coalitions to gauge employment success

Began developing an employment outcomes data measurement system

In 2017 and 2018, USWITI began working with a subject matter expert (SME) to develop an employment outcomes measurement system. The SME conducted an on-site visit to identify employment elements to track and include in the system. In 2018 and 2019, State Employment Leadership Network consultants evaluated School to Work employment data and created a report. In 2019, USWITI decided to not pursue the employment outcomes measurement system due to limited buy-in from leadership. Instead, USWITI developed a Student Enrollment Tracker, Continuous Quality Improvement Tool, and Student Outcome Tracking Form to track School to Work pilot outcomes.

Goal #3: Increase ongoing delivery of career planning, development, and employment and support services that lead to individualized long-term employment and seamless support

Highlighted Activities

- Held nine semi-annual School to Work Communities of Practice for pilot teams on work experiences, technical assistance, Discovery, and family engagement, among other topics (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Increased employment through the School to Work pilot project

USWITI had three active pilot sites prior to the PIE grant and implemented six pilot sites using PIE funding since 2016, the beginning of the PIE grant. USWITI holds Customized Employment trainings, parent meetings, on-site visits, and monthly meetings with pilot teams. As of February 2020, 21 students have gained CIE, eight students have participated in paid work experiences or internships, and 38 students are enrolled at nine active pilot sites.

Goal #4: Build capacity of service providers to align their mission, services, and resources to promote and provide CIE for youth with I/DD

Supported the Employment First Customized Employment Capacity Building Pilot Project

From 2016 to 2019, USWITI leveraged other initiatives by supporting the Employment First Customized Employment Capacity Building Pilot Project, which is separate from PIE funding. USWITI provided technical assistance to provider companies through the Employment First Customized Employment Capacity Building Pilot Project, which aims to build the capacity of Utah's provider system. Through the project, USWITI provided training and technical assistance resources to four provider agencies with a minimum of two employment specialists. When the pilot project ended in 2019, USWITI continued the work through the Technical Assistance Center at Utah State University. In 2019 and 2020, USWITI began to develop training curriculum and credentials for Utah Customized Employment Specialists.

Highlighted Activities

- Trained two Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act counselors (2017)
- Held twelve Customized Employment webinars (2017, 2018, 2019)

Partnerships in Employment (PIE) Systems Change Project

Developed by the Lewin Group, June 2020

Goal #5: Increase expectations and demand for CIE opportunities for youth with I/DD

Supported Alternative Assessments

In 2017, USWITI worked with the Office of Rehabilitation and Department of Workforce Services (DWS) to examine alternative assessments to the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to allow transition-aged youth better access to services. DWS requires students to take the TABE test to be eligible for a paid internship or community work experience. USWITI worked with DWS leadership to make accommodations for students with the most significant disabilities. In 2019, DWS changed the policy and waived the TABE requirement for students in the School to Work project and others with significant disabilities.

Goal #6: Align policies, practices, and funding with employment expectations

Promoted Employment First legislation

Prior to PIE, Utah passed Employment First legislation in 2011. In 2017 and 2018, USWITI leadership was designated as the leader of a comprehensive transition plan. USWITI's role confirmed that the Department of Human Services, DWS, and Board of Education developed comprehensive plans that include language about transitioning students with I/DD from school to CIE. USWITI presented the comprehensive transition plan to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst in 2018. After not receiving feedback, USWITI staff began exploring opportunities to revisit the report in 2020.

Sustainability

USWITI's effort to sustain PIE work includes identifying promising practices through the School to Work pilot project, including methods for securing employment and successful post-school outcomes. In 2019 and 2020, USWITI began developing a toolkit that will act as a how-to guide for Local Education Agencies to implement best practices and key principles of the School to Work project. The Office of Rehabilitation reduced the reimbursement rate for Customized Employment, which has lowered the incentive for employment providers to provide Customized Employment services. There are not enough Customized Employment providers for the number of students that need Customized Employment, which is lowering the number of students USWITI can serve through pilot sites. USWITI's ability to sustain promising practices after the PIE grant ends relies on DVR funding for Customized Employment due to the pilot sites' focus on Customized Employment. USWITI leadership was informed that updated Customized Employment policies will be in place in 2020.

USWITI Partners

- Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University (Lead Agency as of March 2019*)
- Developmental Disabilities Council
- Special Education Services of the Utah Board of Education
- Office of Rehabilitation
- Department of Workforce Services
- Utah Parent Center
- Governors Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities
- Division of Services for People with Disabilities

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.