

# Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Project



## What is Partnerships in Employment?

**5-year project:** In 2011 and 2012, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities awarded funding to eight states.

**Focus on integrated, competitive employment for youth with I/DD:** This project promotes cross-systems and cross-agency collaboration to improve integrated, competitive employment outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). *Integrated, competitive employment* is when “individuals with disabilities earn wages consistent with wages paid workers without disabilities in the community performing the same or similar work.”

**8 states form consortiums:** The eight Partnerships in Employment states—*Alaska, California, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Tennessee, and Wisconsin*—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, 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 evaluation and the Institute for Community Inclusion is providing training and technical assistance to states.

## California Consortium on the Employment of Youth and Young Adults with I/DD

October 2011 to March 2015

### Project Overview

In 2011, the Consortium on the Employment of Youth and Young Adults with I/DD (CECY) began work with a mission of increasing the ability of the state’s systems and communities to support young people with I/DD seeking and gaining employment. CECY aimed to increase the number of individuals with competitive, integrated (CIE) employment through strategic activities.

### Project Goals and Vision

CECY’s goals to increase opportunities for youth and young adults to achieve competitive, integrated employment included:

- Strengthen interagency collaborations and practices between and among local and state agencies.
- Enhance the understanding of youth and young adults with I/DD, family members, and professionals of effective practices.
- Affect policy change at a state and local level

CECY’s Vision was developed through a deliberative process by the consortium and included:

1. *Thirty-five-thousand youth with I/DD gain competitive, integrated employment in their communities.*
2. *Change family-member attitudes to support and expect individuals with I/DD to gain competitive, integrated employment.*
3. *Increase the number of coordinated opportunities for competitive, integrated employment.*
4. *Young people with I/DD choose to attend college.*
5. *Young people with I/DD receive the training to be prepared for competitive, integrated employment.*

This profile highlights CECY activities and accomplishments from October 2011 to March 2015 related to the 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 integrated, competitive employment.

### Selected CECY Members

*Disability Rights California  
Family Resource Centers Network  
Association of Regional Center Agencies  
Tarjan Center at UCLA, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)  
California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)  
California Department of Education*

## Developing or Changing Policies

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### Employment First

Prior to 2013, California's attempts to pass Employment First legislation were unsuccessful. Factors that led to passage of legislation in 2013 included CECY members providing testimony to the legislature and collaborating with legislative staff to address and remediate objections from earlier attempts to pass legislation. While the legislation expressed an intent for Employment First, it did not include associated state mandates, targeted funds, or required infrastructure at the local and state levels for implementation. As of March 2015, four Regional Centers (Division of Developmental Disabilities Agencies) across the state adopted their own Employment First policies that went beyond the state policy. Results from two Regional Centers that are working closely with CECY and actively implementing Employment First showed indicators of progress such as an increase in service coordinator attendance at IEP meetings and a reduction in referrals to sheltered workshops.

Another challenge was that outside of professionals focused on I/DD, few stakeholders were aware of current developments related to Employment First policies. In response, CECY developed two Employment First policy briefs, met with disability advocacy groups, and held small group discussions with higher education faculty and staff, families, and transition specialists at the California Higher Education for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Working Conference.

### Funding Legislation or Policies

Under California's entitlement program, the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, individuals with I/DD and their families have the right to services and supports they need to reach their full potential and live independently. There has been a significant reduction in funding for services since 2009 resulting in cutbacks to programs and services. CECY members have provided testimony at legislative hearings to inform policymakers of the consequence of not having long-term secure funding to help restore needed services.

California passed the Self Determination Bill in 2013 that allows individuals with I/DD and their families to control a personal annual budget of state funds. Under this program, individuals and their families can control their own budgets to purchase services and supports they need and are not limited to the system's provider network.

Several policy measures have resulted in additional funding for schools and colleges. In 2012, Proposition 30 raised income and sales taxes to help provide funding for

K-12 schools and higher education institutions with an estimated \$6 billion in new funds per year. In 2013, Assembly Bill 86, which was intended to help improve adult education across the state, provided the California Community College Chancellor's Office with \$25 million. Some funding from this bill went towards planning and implementing grants to eligible consortia that created regional plans to promote the inclusion of individuals with I/DD.

## Removing Systemic Barriers

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### Building Program Capacity

CECY conducted a series of trainings to engage stakeholders and build capacity focused on practices and policies related to college as preparation for work for students with I/DD. In 2012, CECY provided background information on CECY goals and activities to 83 educators and transition specialists at the Cal State Transition Conference. In 2012 and 2013, CECY hosted four training sessions on improving employment opportunities for youth with I/DD including discussions on College2Career programs and legislative priorities. Between 30 and 95 participants attended each session. CECY held another training session at the Transition Summit Conference with 225 stakeholders attending from school districts and Regional Centers. Between October 2014 and March 2015, CECY also hosted six capacity-building trainings, hosted by the Tarjan Center, with 208 individuals attending.

### Improving School to Work Services

CECY applied for and received the Office of Disability Employment Policy's technical assistance grant, Vision Quest, and underwent a review and planning process to identify gaps in policy and practice in California in the area of transition from school to work. The Vision Quest grant paired California with other states focused on making similar changes. CECY developed a three-part series of California Works! briefs. The briefs included an Outcomes Based Funding structure document incentivizing competitive, integrated employment, a brief on cross-agency training and technical assistance, and a local memorandum of understanding brief. Products and policy recommendations from CECY are being incorporated into the development of the blueprint.

### Post-Secondary Education

Over the course of the project, the number of Department of Rehabilitation-funded College2Career programs increased from five to eight sites. The 3-year College2Career (C2C) program offers students with I/DD greater opportunities to pursue post-secondary education. The Tarjan Center led evaluation efforts to determine

employment metrics including certificate programs in community colleges, types of jobs, and length of employment. A review of the data collected from 2011-2014, across the five C2C sites, indicated course enrollments were increasingly in an integrated setting and career driven. For-credit course enrollments increased from 53% (Year One) to 62% (Year Three). Students enrolled, on average, in six courses in 2011-2012 and 2013-14 with a slightly higher average of seven courses in 2012-13. Course enrollments increasingly related to a student's career goals, rising to 61% in Year Three from 47% in Year One. Course enrollments related to a degree/certificate increased from 6% in Year One to 21% in Year Three. Of the 265 students attending C2C in Year Three, 116 (44%) had 154 work experiences. Individual paid jobs accounted for 47% of the work experiences, and volunteer (32%) and unpaid internships (12%) accounted for another half of the work experiences.

### Promising Practices: Local Employment Collaborative Teams (LECTs)

Between 2012 and 2014, CECY supported the documentation and dissemination of selected promising practices in the state. CECY received 20 best practice proposals and selected seven Local Employment Collaborative Teams (LECTs) sites. The LECTs were selected for their existing achievement of employment in CIE outcomes for people with I/DD. Their commitment with CECY was to continue their promising practices, share data from their work, and help “unpack” the promising practices that they were using. The LECTs also agreed to share information and learn from one another's experiences. LECT sites were located in high schools, community colleges, and community programs. LECTs offered participants the chance to develop the skills necessary to gain and keep a job. Each LECT worked with CECY to develop a Community Conversation to engage local stakeholders. Outcome data from the majority of LECTs demonstrated superior rates of employment and earnings in CIE compared to both state and national averages. As of September 2014, CECY discontinued tracking outcome data for the LECTs and created a one-page summary of the work each LECT completed.

Promising practices used and studied by one or more LECTs included:

- Using Workforce Investment Board funding, including On-the-Job Training and Individual Training Accounts to support job exploration and development;
- Multimedia marketing materials focusing on working in the community, finding jobs, supported employment, and addressing employer concerns;
- Developing collaborative partnerships to increase

awareness and interests of employment for individuals with I/DD in the community including local colleges and universities, local employers, Independent Living Centers and other “shakers and movers”;

- Working with local resources to develop “tech” products to support getting jobs such as QR codes on business cards, video resumes, and use of applications for phones and tablets;
- Person-centered planning to help assess the types of jobs that individuals want and skills that they can bring to the job;
- Educating parents on expectations and how to support their family member in supported employment and the workplace and how they can help find jobs;
- Use of a hybrid model and braided funding to achieve employment outcomes and continue to support other interests of the individual.

## Building Cross-System and Cross-Agency Collaboration

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### Consortium

Since the project began, CECY continued to expand its membership. Between October 2012 and March 2015, CECY membership grew from nine to 49 members representing 25 organizations. CECY conducted member surveys and evaluations to ensure that members felt engaged in the Consortium's work as well as increased accountability for the entire group. Meeting activities consisted of strategic planning for future activities and identifying priority action items.

### Youth Self-Advocacy

At the beginning of the project, CECY established the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). CECY disseminated an application with 20 applicants responding and nine youth selected to join. By March 2014, the YAC had met seven times with two in-person meetings and monthly teleconference calls. YAC members attended two CECY in-person meetings and provided guidance on the methods the YAC thought were most effective in engaging youth. One YAC member, a graduate student intern for CECY, co-authored the Taft Community Conversation Brief.

### Family Engagement

CECY established the “Outreachers” Workgroup to engage families. One of the workgroup's first tasks was distributing a survey to families to gather information about expectations for employment, concerns regarding employment, and knowledge of IEP/ITP process. Nearly 500 family members accessed the online survey, and 381 were eligible to complete the survey. The responses

informed CECY's "Unbroken Chain" Workgroup to develop resources including "I Want to Work! I Know I Can!"

## Community Conversations

In 2014 and 2015, each of the seven LECTs hosted Community Conversations. The Community Conversations were modeled after practices in Tennessee and Wisconsin. A CECY staff member provided 25 hours of training to the LECT planning committees to help them prepare for the events. Attendance at the first five Community Conversations totaled 442 participants with 75 percent of participants noting in a post-conversation survey that they had "learned something new about their communities."

## Memorandum of Understanding

In 2014, the California Departments of Education, Rehabilitation, and Developmental Services, in collaboration with Disability Rights California reached a historic agreement to establish a California State Blueprint for Competitive Integrated Employment. CECY members from each of the agencies are key participants in designing this blueprint that will contain a directive from each department to employees and partners to prioritize CIE, establish measurable goals and objectives, delineate state and local agency roles and responsibilities, inform families and individuals annually, make recommendations for policy and regulatory changes, and create an informal resolution process.

## Employer Engagement

CECY primarily engaged employers through its LECTs and the Community Conversations. Between October 2014 and February 2015, 87 employers attended five of the seven Community Conversations and offered a wide range of perspectives on hiring practices and jobs available in each community. During one Community Conversation, employers who had already hired individuals with I/DD encouraged others to do the same. Other strategies to engage employers included trying to recruit new business partners through a CECY member-developed five-minute video called "Hire Value" highlighting five businesses who have employed individuals with I/DD in paid positions.

## Implementing Strategies and Promising Practices

### Shared Data Systems

By October 2012, CECY had determined there was a lack of common datasets on employment outcomes. In response, CECY created a Data Workgroup, the "Data Nerds," to develop a "data dashboard" to display this information in a format that professionals, families, and self-advocates could understand and use. In 2014, the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities

*California CECY: October 2011 to March 2015*

agreed to host and launch the data platform. The Data Dashboard contains information including the California employment rate and average monthly earnings. The workgroup continued working to make the site more interactive and accessible to more individuals. As of March 2015, the Data Dashboard had been presented at four meetings with stakeholders including K-12 adult education staff, Community College staff, and DDS staff. Between October 2014 and March 2015, 707 unique visitors accessed the Data Dashboard, and time spent on the site had increased steadily.

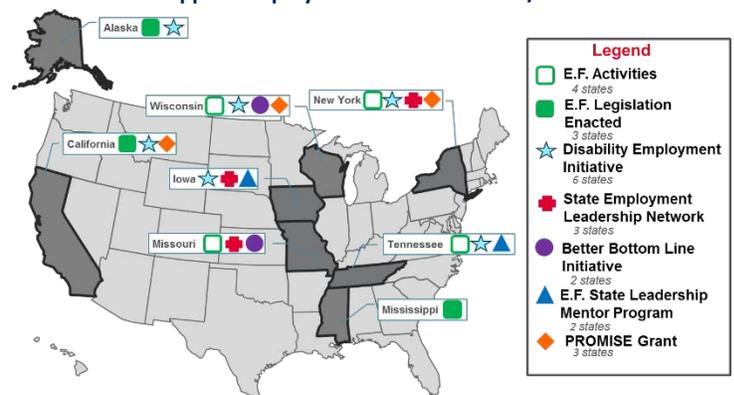
## Continuing to Support Integrated, Competitive Employment

### Other Initiatives

In addition to the PIE project, several other initiatives are underway in California that support improving CIE outcomes for youth and young adults with I/DD.

### Sustainability Beyond PIE

**Figure 1: Partnerships in Employment States Participating in Other Initiatives to Support Employment for Youth with I/DD**



Sustainability efforts in California include discussions about plans for CECY's work after the current grant has ended. CECY has started to determine which parts of its work can or should be carried on through specific member agencies and organizations. The group has also looked into possible funding sources to support future work. A document titled "Expanding CECY's Strategic Map: CECY Member Agency Contribution over the Last Three Years" was developed to highlight the working relationships the consortium and its members have developed over the course of the project with various groups.

The Tarjan Center at UCLA, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, provides administrative leadership to CECY. **Website:** <http://www.semel.ucla.edu/tarjan/employment>

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