

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.

New York State Partnerships in Employment

October 2011 to March 2015

Project Overview

In 2011, the New York State Partnerships in Employment (NYS PIE) project formed the Steering Committee and Statewide Consortium. NYS PIE aimed to build strong youth and young adult self-advocacy communities and partnerships with statewide and local business councils committed to hiring individuals with I/DD. NYS PIE included work at the state, regional, and local levels to improve integrated, competitive employment outcomes.

Steering Committee

Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)
NYS Department of Education’s Office of Special Education (NYSED-P-12/OSE)
Adult Career and Continuing Educational Services—Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)
Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) at the University of Rochester Medical Center

Project Goals and Vision

NYS PIE set out to accomplish seven goals, including:

1. *Improve Job Readiness Curriculum*
2. *Increase the number of youth with I/DD transitioning from high school to competitive employment*
3. *Increase competitive employment for young adults with I/DD*
4. *Establish sustainable cross-agency collaboration*
5. *Increase and improve resources to stakeholders*
6. *Engage additional partners*
7. *Create at least eight demonstration programs*

This profile highlights NYS PIE 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 collaboration, and implementing strategies and promising practices to support integrated, competitive employment.

Developing or Changing Policies

Employment First

At the beginning of this project, New York lacked a formal Employment First policy. Since then, New York’s OPWDD, a key Steering Committee and Consortium member, adopted an Employment First policy in 2013, and New York’s Governor signed an Executive Order establishing an Employment First Commission in 2014. In 2015, NYS PIE Steering Committee members participated in informational interviews that were included in the Commission’s report to the Governor.

Funding Legislation or Policies

NYS PIE supported OPWDD's transformation of the I/DD service delivery system. In 2013, OPWDD system reform efforts included collaborating with ACCES-VR to draft a work plan for CMS and no longer reimbursing programs or services provided in segregated settings. In 2014, OPWDD doubled the reimbursement rate for supported employment and provided incentives to agencies transitioning individuals from day habilitation programs.

Removing Systemic Barriers

Building Program Capacity

NYS PIE, in partnership with NYS Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE), compensated the exam cost for supported employment agency personnel completing the Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) certification. In 2015, 39 individuals signed up to take the exam. SCDD is conducting a follow-along impact and outcome evaluation of job coaches completing the CESP.

Alternative Certificates

NYS PIE supported the release of two new exiting credentials by NYSED-P-12/OSE that emphasized employment readiness and training. Effective in the 2013-2014 academic year, the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential replaced the IEP diploma and the NYS Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential supplemented a diploma or an exiting credential. As part of NYS PIE, NYSED P-12/OSE and OPWDD collaborated to develop a Job Readiness Curriculum that provided teachers with effective tools to teach job readiness skills and enhanced post-school trainings offered by OPWDD and ACCES-VR.

Pilot Projects

Expansion of Project SEARCH™: As the statewide coordinator for Project SEARCH™, a one-year, high school employment transition program, SCDD collects and tracks longitudinal outcome data. In 2015, 13 Project SEARCH™ sites operated across the state, including five NYS PIE pilot sites. As of September 2014, 95 percent of PIE Project SEARCH™ participants completed the program with an average 47 percent of individuals moving into integrated, competitive employment upon graduation.

Expansion of Employment Training Program (ETP) in high schools: After a review of 35 different curricula in use across the state, Consortium members compiled recommendations and provided feedback to develop modules for the Job Readiness Curriculum. OPWDD provides direct support for the four high school ETP pilots.

In 2015, the first community training was held in Western New York with 17 school districts and other community members attending.

Table 1: Number of NYS PIE Pilot Sites by Academic Year

Number of Sites by Academic Year			
	'12-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15
Project SEARCH™			
<i>NYS PIE</i>	3	3	5
<i>Other Funding</i>	6	8	8
Employment Transition Program			
<i>NYS PIE</i>	-	3	4
Total NYS PIE Pilots	3	6	9

*Reported by NYS PIE on a semi-annual basis to The Lewin Group

Table 2: Number of NYS PIE Pilot Participants by Academic Year

Number of Participants by Academic Year			
	'12-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15
Project SEARCH™			
<i>NYS PIE</i>	5	18	45
Employment Transition Program			
<i>NYS PIE</i>	5	14	19
Total NYS PIE Participants	5	32	64

*Reported by NYS PIE on a semi-annual basis to The Lewin Group

Building Cross-System and Cross-Agency Collaboration

Steering Committee & Statewide Consortium

Between October 2011 and March 2015, NYS PIE held at least 42 Steering Committee or Statewide Consortium meetings. As NYS PIE continued to increase membership and work together, several partners noticed improved relationships. One member noted, "as a direct result of NYS PIE, the significant changes taking place within the NYS systems are not proceeding in silos, but rather are discussed openly in terms of how changes in one system may impact other systems." Another member noted that the "role of the Steering Committee to bring stakeholders together and advance project objectives has shifted as agencies now work directly with each other to increase integrated, competitive employment."

Youth Self-Advocacy

NYS PIE continued efforts to engage self-advocates through partnerships with the National Youth Leadership Network, the Self-Advocates of NYS (SANYS), and Independent Living Centers in Western New York. During the 2012-2013 academic year, a training program was developed and piloted in Western New York. This program included three in-person youth self-advocate summits with more than 100 students. Another region of the state hosted a self-advocacy summit in 2013 with 70 youth, family members, teachers, and professionals.

SANYS noted that participating in NYS PIE led the organization to “focus more on youth employment and become a partner on several initiatives across the state.”

Family Engagement

Parents, as well as other stakeholders, completed two NYS PIE administered surveys in 2012 and 2014. The Statewide Consortium also provided funding for a Parent-to-Parent group, based in NYS, to provide technical assistance to grant partners.

Implementing Strategies and Promising Practices

Shared Data Systems

NYS PIE supported NYESS: In 2013, the state launched the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) as a single point of access for all New Yorkers seeking employment and employment supports. The platform also contained outcome data specific to individual partner state agencies for the employment of individuals with I/DD. As of March 2015, provider agency buy-in and timely entry in NYESS remained barriers. In order to address this, the Employment First Commission’s report included a recommendation for mandatory use of NYESS.

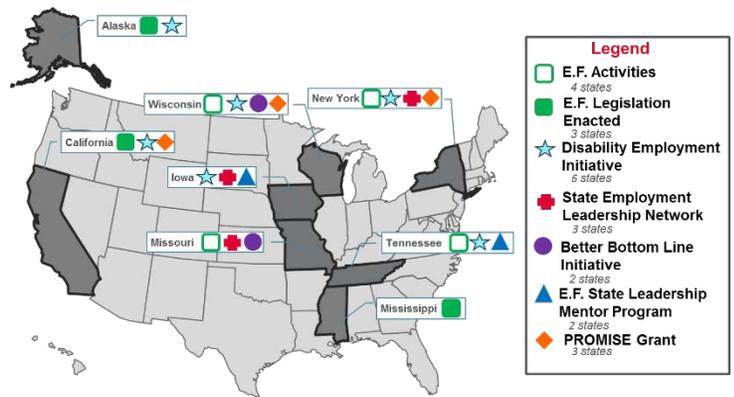
NYS PIE coordinators facilitated development of MyPathNY: In 2014, NYSED-P-12/OSE, OPWDD, and ACCES-VR worked together to develop MyPathNY, an online tool to help individuals and their families navigate the transition-to-work process. As of March 2015, MyPathNY was almost complete with testing to begin in summer 2015. SCDD will continue to support the development and testing of MyPathNY.

Continuing to Support Integrated, Competitive Employment

Other Initiatives

In addition to the Partnerships in Employment project, several other initiatives are underway in New York that support improving employment outcomes for youth and young adults with I/DD.

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



Sustainability Beyond PIE

Between October 2011 and March 2015, NYS PIE enhanced relationships and partnerships among state agencies. In addition, NYS PIE pilot projects increased employment opportunities for youth and young adults with I/DD at the local level. NYS PIE’s support of two new data sharing platforms created additional resources for individuals seeking employment in NYS. As NYS PIE enters the final year and a half of the project, the Steering Committee and Statewide Consortium will focus on sustainability. NYS PIE is in the early stages of identifying plans for sustainability beyond the project period, including identifying strategies to engage consortium members, monitoring the effectiveness of best practice models for transition-to-work, such as Project SEARCH™ and Employment Transition Programs, and assessing the availability of agency funding to sustain transition-to-work models.

The Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) at the University of Rochester Medical Center provides administrative leadership for NYS PIE.

The Lewin Group, under Contract HHSP23320095639WC Task Order HHSP23337017T, developed the New York PIE profile.

Email: PIE-EVAL@Lewin.com