

**EXPECT
EMPLOYMENT**

'17

EMPLOYMENT FIRST TASK FORCE
REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR



A NOTE FROM **GOVERNOR BILL HASLAM**

August 1, 2017

As we move toward the end of 2017, Tennessee's economy is surging. Today, more Tennesseans are working than at any point in history, our unemployment rate is at 3.6 percent for the first time in recorded history, and job creators across the country are turning to Tennessee's workforce to get the job done. This represents a tremendous economic opportunity for workers statewide, including for the 3 in 10 Tennesseans who experiences a disability.

The work of the first four years of the Employment First Task Force has uniquely positioned Tennesseans with disabilities to have access to this economic opportunity. Innovative employment programs are producing results. State agencies are working together, communicating, and learning from each other like never before. And yet, there is still room for growth. Leaders at the Department of Economic and Community Development are bringing their valuable insight, resources, and contacts to the table. Task force members are expanding the focus of their work to be more inclusive of people living with mental illness, substance use disorders, and co-occurring disorders. Stakeholders are using data to highlight bright spots, track progress over time, and set ambitious new goals for the state.

I witnessed the inspiring work of task force members this spring. I was proud to have Jason Rogers serving on my staff as an intern during a very busy legislative session. You will read more about Jason's experience interning in my office later in this report, but I can tell you his work ethic and abilities are similar to that of so many Tennesseans. They simply need an opportunity to prove themselves. The members of this task force can take pride knowing they have created that opportunity for countless Tennesseans, positively influencing their lives for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Haslam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill Haslam
Governor of Tennessee

EXPECT EMPLOYMENT

CONTENTS

**4 EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

**6 GOAL ONE
STRENGTHENING COORDINATION**

**19 BY THE
NUMBERS**

**20 GOAL TWO
BUILDING COMMUNITY COMMITMENT**

**24 GOAL THREE
WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS**

**28 GOAL FOUR
MAKING TENNESSEE STATE GOVERNMENT
A LEADER**

**30 GOAL FIVE
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT**

EMPLOYMENT FIRST A
Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE ORDER B
NO. 28

EMPLOYMENT FIRST C
Task Force Members

TASK FORCE D
Workgroup Participants

EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE E
Agency Membership

EMPLOYMENT FIRST Partner Agencies

Department of
**Intellectual &
Developmental Disabilities**

Department of
**Labor & Workforce
Development**

Department of
Human Services

Department of
Education

Division of
TennCare

Department of
**Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

Council on
Developmental Disabilities

Department of
**Economic &
Community Development**

Department of
Health



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2013, Governor Bill Haslam signed Executive Order No. 28, which designated Tennessee as an Employment First state and established the Employment First Task Force. The goal of the task force is to identify and eliminate barriers to employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health diagnoses including mental illness, substance abuse disorders, and co-occurring disorders, physical, and other disabilities.

The task force meets quarterly and is comprised of self-advocates and families, state agencies who support people with disabilities through the lifespan, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders. Through this collaboration of public agencies, private organizations, and people impacted, the goal is to improve competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities in Tennessee.

For the first two years, the task force and the TennesseeWorks Partnership focused on identifying barriers to employment in the state and looked at ways to expand employment opportunities by examining programs and policies in various state agencies. After that research, as well as holding “Community Conversations” across the state with families, employers, and stakeholders, the task force created the first strategic plan.

Over the past two years, the task force has focused on completing the objectives laid out in the original strategic plan. In addition, it developed a new plan with new objectives to guide its work over the next three years, starting the past fiscal year.

Over the course of the fiscal year, several task force members completed major objectives in the strategic plan. Those include the implementation of the Employment and Community First CHOICES program and launch of the Transition Tennessee site. In addition, several agencies operationalized Memorandums of Understanding to further streamline services for people whose support needs may overlap two or more state agencies. The task force has also brought in new members and agencies, including the Department of Health. In an effort to bolster employer outreach, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development joined the task force and embraced its mission wholeheartedly.

This year's Expect Employment Report documents the task force's successes goal by goal, objective by objective. It is clear reading through the report that collaboration has allowed for change to happen more quickly. In addition, throughout the report are the stories of real people who have been positively impacted by the programs and policies developed through the work of state agencies, task force members, and partner organizations.

In the first year's Expect Employment report, many of the programs and policies that are mentioned in this year's report were in the initial planning stages or had just been implemented. However, through the collaboration and buy-in of the task force and stakeholders, these programs were able to scale up more quickly and are becoming embedded in the service-delivery models.

That does not mean the task force's work is over. Rather, it has just started. In order to sustain these programs, improve their operations, and continue meaningful work that has been achieved, it takes a collective commitment from all stakeholders and the guidance of the Employment First Task Force. While the numbers of people with disabilities who have competitive, integrated employment have grown, there are still many Tennesseans with disabilities who are still looking for jobs.

The Employment First Task Force continues to work towards removing barriers to employment that still exist today. As it makes progress on fulfilling the goals and many objectives outlined in the strategic plan, the focus remains on the overarching mission: to ensure Tennesseans with disabilities have the opportunity to pursue their employment goals in their communities.

GOAL 1

ALIGN EXISTING AND NEW SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVE: CREATE A SYSTEM TO COLLECT, INTEGRATE, AND ANALYZE DATA OF EMPLOYMENT WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

One of the recommendations made in the 2014 report by the Employment First Task Force was to strengthen the quality and the scope of data collected by state agencies related to employment of people with disabilities. Every partner agency has made strides in accomplishing this goal. These efforts are reflected in the Employment First Partnership Data Dashboard by TennesseeWorks, which integrates data from public and private sources. This includes data provided by, but not limited to, the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), Department of Human Services—Vocational Rehabilitation (DHS/VR), Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Bureau of TennCare, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuses Services (TDMHSAS) and Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC).

employment baseline, highlight success areas, direct resources to areas of need, set goals and benchmarks for the state to achieve, and track progress at the state, regional, provider, and individual levels.

TennCare continues to collect annual employment data across all Medicaid LTSS programs through the Employment Data Sheet. This data includes whether or not the person is working or interested in working, and if the person is working, the type of job, employer, and whether or not the person is earning at least minimum wage. With the implementation of the Employment and Community First CHOICES program, TennCare implemented several employment-related managed care organization (MCO) reporting requirements to collect and monitor data on each participant's employment status. This includes a breakdown of the number of hours worked and wage for those employed, and data regarding participants actively engaged in employment exploration, development or preparation – including data about individuals participating in the employment exploration service which provides people with an opportunity to explore possibilities for employment and make an informed choice about pursuing employment with help from the program.

In addition, both DIDD and TennCare use data from the National Core Indicators™ Survey (or National Core Indicators – Aging and Disabilities™ Survey) as both an external validation point for state-collected or MCO reported data, as well as a source of additional detail, including gauging the volume of people who are interested in pursuing employment and actively engaged in pursuing employment as a goal in their person-centered plan.

The most recent data from various agencies can be found in this report on the data page, pg 19.



INTERACT WITH THIS REPORT
You can check out the Data Dashboard using this QR code here...

This dashboard is key to understanding the statewide employment rate across various service delivery systems. While challenges exist, the data workgroup of the Employment First Task Force has been instrumental in pushing this objective forward.

In May 2017, DIDD launched a new employment data collection tool to capture a comprehensive data set for persons supported in Section 1915(c) HCBS waivers operated by DIDD across the state, including employment status, type of employment, wage, hours, and industry. Data is submitted by providers and supplements information collected by TennCare and the National Core Indicators (NCI) Survey. This achievement represents an important milestone because DIDD can now establish an accurate

ABOUT OUR ENHANCED REPORT

We have enhanced this report with video allowing you to interact with our success stories and other resources in a whole new way. If you are not sure about using QR codes there is no need to worry. We have included instructions to the right to guide you.





SUCCESS STORY CJ'S EMPLOYMENT STORY

TIP:
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VIDEO.

A corporate culture of community inclusion is paying dividends for people with disabilities in the Chattanooga area and elsewhere. At Tazikis Mediterranean Cafe, corporate leaders encourage local franchise owners to partner with the community to create an inclusive workplace.

The owner of two Tazikis franchises in Chattanooga started a partnership with Orange Grove Center in the spring of 2016. That partnership has created opportunities for people like CJ McGhee. He is responsible for the tableside customer experience. He works in the dining room before the restaurant opens to make sure the tables are clean and orderly and ready for the lunch rush.

In addition to his normal duties, CJ is an avid cook and loves making food for his family and friends. *"I cook all Southern food. I cook ribs, hamburgers, hotdogs, and chicken kebobs,"* CJ said.

For general manager Sean Bain, working with employees with varying abilities is a lesson in leadership. *"You start from complete scratch knowing that this person wants to learn, but you have to start from the absolute basics, and that's what you have to do with all of your employees,"* he said.

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GOAL 1

ALIGN EXISTING AND NEW SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVE: ASSESS IMPACT OF ALL INTERAGENCY MOU'S THAT PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

One of the initial barriers identified by the Employment First Task Force at the start of its work in 2013 was a lack of coordination among state agencies that administer funding and programs for individuals with disabilities. Several memorandums of understanding (MOUs) were developed between state agencies as way to bridge the gaps and ensure that people are able to seamlessly transition among service delivery systems in order to access the employment services they need. The very first MOU signed among Task Force members was the most ambitious: led by the Council on Developmental Disabilities, a total of six state agencies signed a single agreement to help focus on coordination for youth transitioning out of high school, specifically. Now, two years after its development, the six state agencies now work together to operationalize this MOU, with oversight provided by the Council.

This year, several new MOUs were developed between state agencies to better meet this objective. To support the employment goals of the new Employment and Community First CHOICES program, TennCare and Vocational Rehabilitation entered into a MOU to provide high quality employment services that lead to competitive integrated employment in a non-duplicative and seamless manner. The MOU, which is being held up as a national model, clearly outlines the roles of each agency and managed care organizations (MCO), including the responsibilities of support coordinators and VR case managers. Through clearly defined roles, set timelines, funding delineation, well-defined communication processes, and shared support, the goal is that the transition between agencies and funding is not noticeable to the person supported. To achieve this goal, TennCare and VR conducted joint training at sites across the state for MCO Support Coordinators and VR case managers in

the EMPLOYMENT



CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE ~

OBJECTIVE: ASSESS IMPACT OF ALL INTERAGENCY MOU'S THAT PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

April and May of this year. Both agencies are participating in an implementation workgroup to ensure the MOU's successful implementation. Regional staff members play an important role in the discussions to help identify potential challenges and brainstorm opportunities for improvement.

The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuses Services and VR are in the beginning phases of developing an interagency agreement to streamline services for persons participating in the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program. The goal of the interagency agreement is to outline responsibilities between the two agencies. This is being done in part with technical assistance offered through the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program through the United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

DIDD and VR are also developing an interagency agreement to provide funding for job placements for people living at the Harold Jordan Center (HJC). This will support HJC staff efforts in helping people achieve their employment goals, making this a sustainable practice and setting a strong precedent for intermediate care facilities, where traditionally employment has not been

an area of concentration.

Two years after its development, the MOU for Transitioning Youth has better aligned services and resources, eliminated duplication, and maximized funding. Six state agencies now work together to operationalize this MOU, with oversight provided by the Council on Developmental Disabilities.

To complement the agreements made on paper, the state agencies get together in person during the monthly Employment Roundtable, convened by the Council on Developmental Disabilities. Started in 2013, the Employment Roundtable now includes 20 agency representatives who oversee a vast network of programs impacting people with disabilities. This group ensures that agencies across the disability service system know each other, communicate on a regular basis, and identify opportunities to coordinate. Through this constant communication and formation of strong relationships, the roundtable partners are able to work together to remove barriers on an individualized basis for people who are accessing a variety of state services and make sure no one is falling through the gaps.

ROUNDTABLE



GOAL 1

ALIGN EXISTING AND NEW SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVE: TRACK IMPLEMENTATION OF WIOA COMBINED STATE PLAN SECTIONS FOCUSED ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, SPECIFICALLY THE INTEGRATION BETWEEN DOL AND ENTITIES WITH A DISABILITY FOCUS.

In April 2016, Tennessee submitted a Combined State Plan to meet the requirements set forth in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Since WIOA's inception, several areas, including the Department of Human Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), were required to realign how services are delivered. The focus is to give students as young as 14 years old, education, training, and work experiences while still in the supportive high school environment. Through this work, VR has partnered with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to offer 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services.

VR has 42 Letters of Agreement to provide at least three out of the five services. It is important to note that students may choose to participate in one or several of these services depending on their future goals.

Another way VR works with local education agencies to prepare youth for employment or post-secondary opportunities is through Transition School to Work (TSW) programs. This cost-sharing partnership between VR and school districts allows training to be provided either by school system personnel or by VR staff when students reach working age. In the 2016-2017 school year, VR maintained 33 contracts with 39 LEAs, serving 118 high schools across the state. These programs have flourished and are providing meaningful job experiences for students across the state of Tennessee.

Another area of WIOA that concentrates on disability services is a limitation on the use of subminimum wage under 14(c) certificates (under Section 14(c) of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act), which allow employers to pay less than the minimum wage to their employees with disabilities. Currently, DIDD providers that offer services in sheltered workshops and Vocational Rehabilitation training centers hold most of the certificates in Tennessee. Section 511 of WIOA places restrictions on use of a subminimum wage, especially for people with a disability under the age of 25.

DIDD has done a significant amount of work through its technical assistance from ODEP to transition people working in sheltered workshops to competitive, integrated employment, which assists in its compliance with the Home and Community Based Services Settings Rule under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. According to the United States Department of Labor, the number of 14(c) certificates held in the state of Tennessee decreased in 2016, from 63 community rehabilitation providers at the start of 2016, to 44 providers on January 1, 2017. In addition, the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and Disability Rights Tennessee have developed practice briefs providing information about 14(c) certificates, which can be used to assist in changing policy and practice.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

- 1 JOB EXPLORATION & COUNSELING
- 2 WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES
- 3 POST-SECONDARY TRAINING & EDUCATION
- 4 WORKPLACE READINESS INSTRUCTION
- 5 SELF-ADVOCACY TRAINING



SUCCESS STORY

DOBYNS-BENNETT HIGH SCHOOL

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In the course of one school year, a new program has made a big difference in the futures of students with disabilities at Dobyns-Bennett High School. Starting in the 2016-17 school year, the school offered a Transition School to Work program. Similar programs exist at high schools across the state, but the unique combination of support and success has made the DBHS program a leader.

The program is led by coordinator Ben Robertson. The assistant football coach takes a similar approach to his students as he does with his players. "The goal is, we want the students to be as independent as possible, so when they leave here, they can go get a job on their own and compete for a job and be able to move up in those positions just like anybody else would be," Robertson said.

Robertson's work to create employment connections in the community has produced several successful placements. Students in the program work with Walgreens, Food City, Golden Corral, and Shoney's. They have uniforms and nametags just like every other employee. They've also acquired valuable job skills that make them appealing to employers. At Golden Corral, Timmy Etherton has learned all different jobs from back in the kitchen and the dish room to the front door. He frequently welcomes customers and takes their drink orders. "I can get a job here because they already know what I can do," he said.

For many students, participation in the TSW program has already turned into gainful employment. Caleb Peters started as a bagger at Food City but quickly became bored and wanted to take on new tasks. Working with his Employment Readiness Specialist and his manager at the grocery store, Caleb got to explore new areas of the store. He worked his way into a paying job in the deli. For store manager Mark Hubbard, participation in the program is a positive in multiple ways. "It's a win because we get the push we needed, they get the experience, they get the customer service, and it makes them better and more ready for the real world," said Hubbard.

GOAL 1

ALIGN EXISTING AND NEW SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVE: PROPOSE POLICIES, REGULATIONS, LEGISLATION, AND FUNDING THAT INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

One of the biggest barriers to employment has been the concern that job income may impact a person's eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid, which many people with disabilities depend on to support and maintain their jobs. Last year, after the passage of the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE), the Tennessee legislature approved a measure to give individuals a savings option that would not impact their eligibility for federal means-tested programs.

about the benefits of an ABLE account. As of June 2017, ABLE TN had approximately 1,050 funded accounts totaling more than \$5 million in assets. Since its inception, the program has experienced a low rate of withdrawals, which demonstrates that beneficiaries in the program are utilizing ABLE TN as a long-term savings and investment vehicle.

This past legislative session, the Council on Developmental Disabilities led an effort to add a focus on disability employment to an existing program: the Governor's Office of Diversity Business Enterprise (Go-DBE). This program serves as the central point of contact to attract and assist certain types of businesses to pursue contracts with the State of Tennessee. Prior to this year, the program assisted minority-owned, women-owned, and service disabled veteran-owned businesses, in addition to small business enterprises. Legislation passed in 2017 added "businesses owned by persons with disabilities" as a category of business owners given preference and assistance for state business. Certification as a "diversity business enterprise" with Go-DBE provides businesses with greater exposure to opportunities with the state of Tennessee and access to technical assistance. This effort was achieved in collaboration with other state departments, including the Department of Economic and Community Development and Department of General Services, and disability organization partners, including The Arc Tennessee, Disability Rights Tennessee, and the Tennessee Statewide Independent Living Council.



INTERACT WITH THIS REPORT
Learn more about ABLE using this QR code...

In June 2016, Tennessee launched the ABLE TN Program, which is designed to help people with disabilities save and invest money to pay for qualified disability expenses. People who meet the disability requirements are empowered to continue to work, earn income, and contribute up to \$14,000 annually, for an account total of \$100,000, without impacting their federal benefits. ABLE TN is overseen by State Treasurer David Lillard and was the second ABLE plan launched in the nation.

ABLE TN formed partnerships with disability organizations and advocates on a local and national level to educate families





In addition to providing a vehicle for saving and spending employment earnings and working to increase state business opportunities, several stakeholders worked to ensure Tennesseans with disabilities are empowered to make decisions about employment.

Supported Decision-Making is an emerging best practice that allows persons with disabilities to retain their decision-making capacity by choosing trusted people to support them in making choices. Those “trusted people” might be friends, family members, or professionals who agree to help the person with a disability understand and carefully consider decisions and then effectively communicate those decisions. In March 2017, the Council on Developmental Disabilities brought in national Supported Decision-Making expert Jonathan Martinis for a week of meetings and presentations to different community groups, including the Employment Roundtable. Supported Decision-Making is a tool that can support people with disabilities to make choices about when, where, how, and how often they work. Further implementation of Supported Decision-Making continues to be a priority for the Council, the TennesseeWorks Partnership, and many agencies represented on the Employment First Task Force. Work continues through the Supported Decision-Making Workgroup and the launch of a strong education campaign, as advocacy groups work to codify this process in state law.



INTERACT WITH THIS REPORT

Learn more about Governor's Office of Diversity Business Enterprise using this QR code...



“Supported Decision-Making gives people the chance to make their own decisions about what they want to do and where they want to work. Forty years of research says that when people with disabilities have more control over their lives - when they make more choices - they have better lives: including better employment at higher pay.

This is especially important in employment services. In vocational rehabilitation, counselors and agencies are required to give people informed choice: that is, they are supposed to explain options so the person can choose they are employment goal and the services they need to reach it. That's just another way of saying “supported decision-making.”

Jonathan Martinis, legal expert and Supported Decision-Making advocate

GOAL 1

ALIGN EXISTING AND NEW SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVE: ASSESS THE IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY FIRST CHOICES PROGRAM

On July 1, 2016, TennCare launched the new Employment and Community First CHOICES program, the first Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) program in the nation that is specifically geared toward promoting and supporting integrated, competitive employment and independent living as the first and preferred option for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are three different benefit groups designed to support people in meeting their personal goals for employment and community participation. An array of 14 employment services developed in consultation with subject matter experts from the federal Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) creates an opportunity to explore employment, supports to achieve employment, and supports to maintain and advance in employment. All of the employment services are based on evidence-based practices that make employment possible, even for people with significant disabilities. Outcome-based and other value-based payment approaches align incentives for employment service providers to help ensure that individuals achieve their employment goals. Community Integration Support Services, Transportation, Independent Living Skills Training, and other wraparound services that support employment are combined with Self-Advocacy and Family Support Services to enable and empower individuals to achieve their employment, community living, and community involvement goals.

As of June 30, 2017, approximately 1,400 people were enrolled in the program, including 1,331 working-age individuals. Of those working age individuals, about 70% have a goal to obtain, maintain, explore, or advance in competitive, integrated employment. A total of 833 participants in the program were working-age and no longer attending school. Of this group, 15.4% worked in competitive, integrated employment. Data as of June 30, 2017 indicates that, on average, workers earn nearly \$8.60 per hour and work nearly 17 hours a week. Another 364 participants received pre-employment services, designed to help people learn about job possibilities, develop skills for employment success, and take critical steps toward obtaining employment.

The program is expected to grow in fiscal year 2018 by up to another 1,000 people, with an additional appropriations approved by the Tennessee General Assembly as well as funding that will be reallocated to the new program from slots vacated in the three 1915(c) waivers operated by DIDD.

SUCCESS STORY

ZAK'S DREAM JOB

Zak had been working for near minimum wage at a small grocery store in East Tennessee for five years. It was neither the job, nor the wage he expected for himself. This led him to request Career Advancement services through Employment and Community First CHOICES, with the one goal of working in a local factory. Zak's mother had apprehension about this goal, with strong concerns that her son could not handle the work. Zak did not have any hesitation, and his Career Advancement provider shared and supported that optimism.

The provider assisted Zak with putting in three applications, as well as helped him prepare for the interviews and decide whether he needed to request accommodations. Zak obtained the job he so strongly desired at the factory, and is now making \$9.25 an hour. He is eligible for a raise every 60 days, and is very proud of both his job and his wage. He is working six days a week, and has been in this position, with good evaluations from his employer, for three months. If Zak keeps his job for year, it is reported he will make \$23 an hour.

To add to this wonderful story, his mother is very excited about her son's work and accomplishment. This program has helped a family raise their bar of expectations and possibilities and helped Zak reach one of his dreams. Competitive employment at a livable wage is the key to true integration and independence for Zak.

GOAL 1

ALIGN EXISTING AND NEW SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

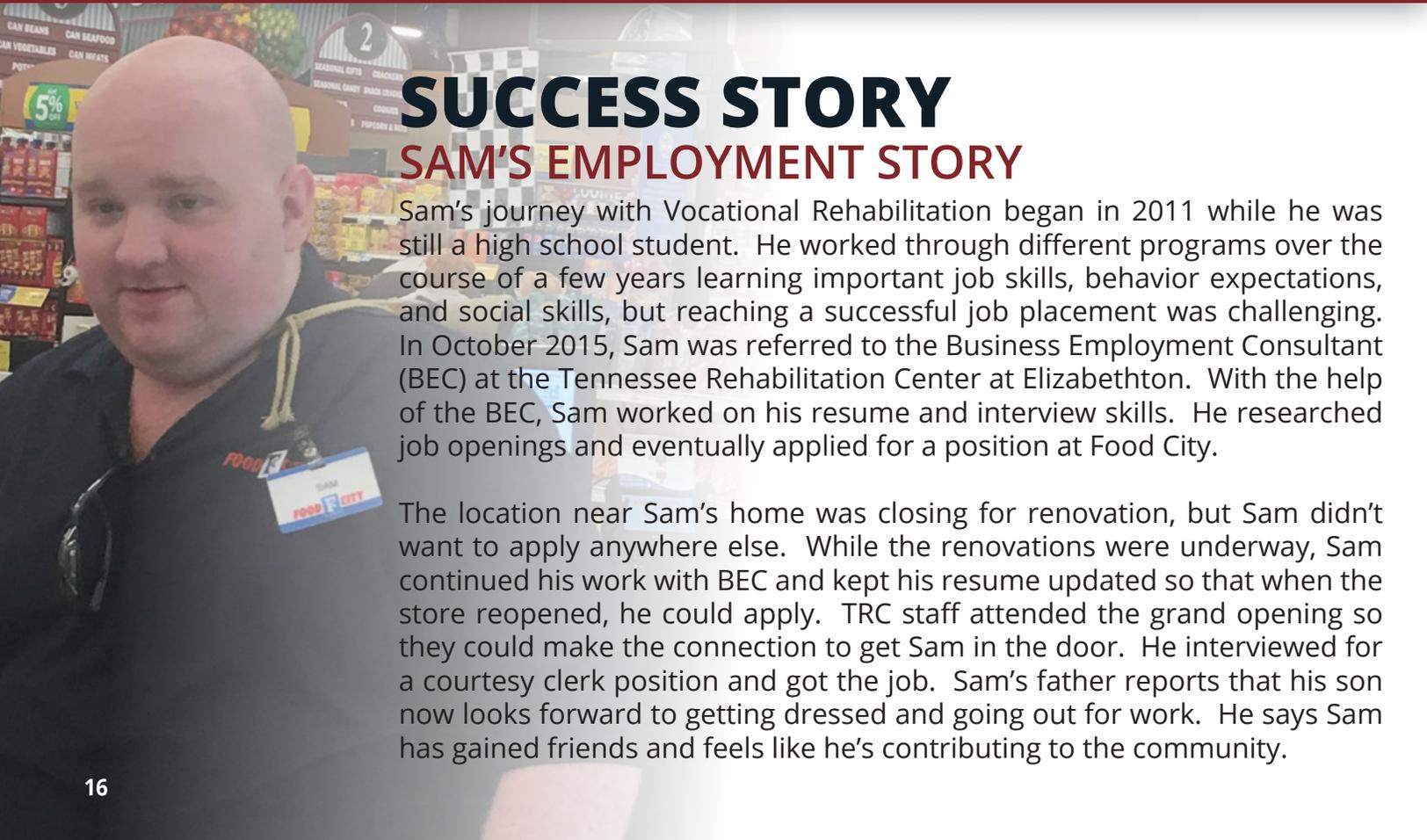
OTHER WORK ON **ACHIEVING GOAL 1**

INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Program continues to grow across Tennessee. This model of supported employment has been very successful in helping persons with behavioral health disorders including mental illness, substance use, and co-occurring disorders obtain competitive, integrated employment, and is a partnership between the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuses Services and Department of Human Services-Vocational Rehabilitation. By the end of summer 2017, it is expected that 12 behavioral health providers will be implementing IPS, and 30 counties in Tennessee will have at least one IPS Employment Specialist.

This past year, additional Federal Mental Health Block Grant dollars were allocated to the First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI), which is designed to provide early intervention services, including IPS Supported Employment, for people between the ages of 15-30.

In fiscal year 2017, 806 adults were served through IPS Supported Employment Services, with an additional 66 transition-age youth and young adults being served. Forty-one percent of those served were placed in competitive, integrated employment, with 29 percent employed for 90 days or more.



SUCCESS STORY

SAM'S EMPLOYMENT STORY

Sam's journey with Vocational Rehabilitation began in 2011 while he was still a high school student. He worked through different programs over the course of a few years learning important job skills, behavior expectations, and social skills, but reaching a successful job placement was challenging. In October 2015, Sam was referred to the Business Employment Consultant (BEC) at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Elizabethton. With the help of the BEC, Sam worked on his resume and interview skills. He researched job openings and eventually applied for a position at Food City.

The location near Sam's home was closing for renovation, but Sam didn't want to apply anywhere else. While the renovations were underway, Sam continued his work with BEC and kept his resume updated so that when the store reopened, he could apply. TRC staff attended the grand opening so they could make the connection to get Sam in the door. He interviewed for a courtesy clerk position and got the job. Sam's father reports that his son now looks forward to getting dressed and going out for work. He says Sam has gained friends and feels like he's contributing to the community.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST STATE LEADERSHIP MENTORING PROGRAM

The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has served as core state lead for the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) through the United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) since 2012. The program provides technical assistance focused on systems transformation and improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. This year, Tennessee is focusing its EFSLMP assistance in three key areas: provider transformation, capacity building, and behavioral health including mental illness, substance use, and co-occurring disorders.

The department continues to support providers as they transition facility-based and sheltered workshop models toward a focus on competitive, integrated employment. In addition to working with ODEP subject matter experts (SME), DIDD is also leveraging the expertise of a local subject matter expert and will continue cultivating state SMEs who can support fellow providers in their transformation efforts.

This year's capacity-building focus centers on creating a customized employment consortium in East Tennessee, which brings providers together to hone their customized employment skills, share job leads, and engage in collective job development for persons supported.

EFSLMP has supported Tennessee in strengthening its focus on increasing employment outcomes for people with behavioral health diagnoses including mental illness, substance use, and co-occurring disorders. A newly formed mental health workgroup is currently providing direction in two key areas. First, the workgroup is developing strategies to increase funding and penetration rates for IPS services statewide for individuals with behavioral health diagnoses. Second, DIDD, DMHSAS, and DHS/VR are teaming up with Frontier Health to implement a dual diagnosis pilot, which will utilize the IPS model to support individuals in gaining employment who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability and a mental illness. In addition to these two goal areas, EFSLMP is also supporting Tennessee in developing an interagency agreement between DMHSAS and DHS/VR to streamline the delivery of IPS services across the state.



SUCCESS STORY DEREK'S STORY

In just over a year, Derek Dickerson has seen incredible changes in his life that he attributes to AIM Center and the IPS program. When Derek became a member of AIM Center in April 2016, he could barely walk through the doors without shaking from his chronic anxiety. His therapist told him that AIM Center helped adults in their recovery from mental illness using a Clubhouse program model that focuses on meaningful work and building relationships. He soon became involved in the center's Visual Communications unit helping to produce the weekly AIM TV broadcast. After finding his place at AIM Center, Derek developed an employment goal as part of his recovery plan, and joined the IPS Program in July 2016.

Derek found a position with Variable, Inc., a start-up company located in the Chattanooga's Business Development Center. He has been working using his graphic arts and computer background for this company for almost a year. Derek is a hard worker, both at his job and with his personal goals. He is also a self-starter! When job searching, he took ownership in the teamwork that it took for him and his employment specialist to find a job. Derek believes, "the support given me by AIM Center staff and members has been invaluable to me in keeping and maintaining my job at Variable, Inc."

Derek is managing his mental illness and no longer shakes when he comes to the AIM Center, but instead, he smiles proudly. Through his accomplishments of obtaining and maintaining employment, improving his health, making new friends, and expanding his independence, he has motivated other members in the Clubhouse community that say, "Hey, if Derek can do this, maybe I can get a job too!"

GOAL 1

OTHER WORK ON ACHIEVING GOAL 1



DISABILITY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The first class of the new Leadership Academy for Excellence in Disability Services graduated in May 2017. This academy was created by the Council on Developmental Disabilities in partnership with the Department of Human Resources, which conducted the Academy. This academy aims to create a shared set of values, goals and an aligned customer-focused approach for state agencies that directly impact the lives of people with disabilities. Participating agencies include the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Veterans Services, TennCare, and the Commission on Aging and Disability. Twenty-nine employees, many who have a role in shaping or carrying out employment-related policies and practices, strengthened cross-agency relationships and learned how all agencies can support a positive path towards employment and community living for individuals with disabilities across the lifespan. The second class will begin in fall 2017.



INTERACT WITH THIS REPORT

Learn more about Leadership Academy for Excellence in Disability Services using this QR code...

PARTNERSHIPS IN EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS CHANGE

Since 2012, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living has provided support to facilitate systems change at every level in Tennessee through the five-year Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Grants. The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and Vanderbilt University have used this funding to support the growth of the statewide TennesseeWorks Partnership.

The partnership has focused its work on legislative and policy changes; development of training and technical assistance through websites and training including TennesseeWorks.org and transitiontn.org, expanding capabilities for evaluation of data and analysis across Tennessee departments, networking with and supporting Tennessee employers who want to employ people with disabilities, and providing information and resources for individuals with disabilities and their families.

BY THE NUMBERS

from

DIDD

Statewide Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Rate

16.6%

(working age, 22-62)

Average hours worked for individuals in CIE

10

(hours per week)

Average wage of individuals in CIE

\$8.17

(per hour)

Percentage of persons supported by DIDD now working in CIE who previously worked in a sheltered workshop

27.6%

Average length of time a person supported by DIDD spent in a sheltered workshop prior to working in CIE

13.8 (years)

from

Employment and Community First CHOICES

Percentage of working-age participants with a goal to obtain, maintain, explore or advance in competitive, integrated employment

70%

Percentage of individuals participating in Employment Exploration Service who decided to pursue competitive integrated employment after completing this service

82%

Number of working-age members receiving Pre-Employment Services

364

Percentage of working-age people, no longer in school, who are working in competitive integrated employment

15.4%

Employers Engaged

91

from

Individual Placement and Support Program

Number of transition-age youth served through IPS

66

Number placed in competitive, integrated employment for 90+ days

29%

Number of adults served through IPS

806

from

Project Search

Number of Project SEARCH Programs

10

Number of Participating Interns

79

Employment Rate

75%

from

Vocational Rehabilitation

Number of Vocational Rehabilitation closures with employment

1987

Percentage of Percentage of Vocational Rehabilitation closures with employment

56%

Engagement after School

73.5% of students with disabilities left high school engaged in post-secondary education, employment and/or training

GOAL 2

BUILD SHARED COMMUNITY COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYMENT FIRST FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

objective

CULTIVATE EMPLOYMENT FIRST CHAMPIONS ACROSS TENNESSEE INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, COMMUNITY LEADERS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, SCHOOLS, PRIVATE CITIZENS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS



community conversation events held over the last year, 229 attendees generated more than 800 ideas to expand on their progress and create sustainable action in their communities focused on improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Some action steps taken across communities include: developing a parent leadership and advocacy group, hosting job fairs for individuals with disabilities, creating a business advisory council with local schools to strengthen partnerships, providing training on customized employment to local employers and disability providers, creating community-based transition worksites for high school students with disabilities, designing community asset maps highlighting transportation and employment features, kickstarting marketing campaigns to highlight employers that currently hire people with disabilities, and creating success story videos and Public Service Announcements (PSA) to share on local television stations and websites.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

For the last two years, TennesseeWorks has supported seven communities across the state in their efforts to expand competitive employment for people with disabilities in their communities. As part of the project, communities invited a diverse group of stakeholders including employers, service providers, faith community members, family members, people with disabilities, educators, and other concerned citizens to share their ideas and strategies to address underemployment in their communities. Local planning teams hosted two community conversations 12-18 months apart and worked with their communities to take actions based on what was shared at their first community conversation.

Communities involved in the project included: Nashville, Germantown, Macon County, Knoxville, Bristol, Gibson County, and Montgomery County. Across the five





THINK EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT

TennesseeWorks continues to hold the annual Think Employment Summit every September. The summit brings together students, self-advocates, families, educators, policymakers, and providers to focus on raising expectations for employment for people with disabilities. The day is packed with informational sessions aimed to empower self-advocates and educate families about the changing employment landscape for people in Tennessee. Throughout the day, students and adults with disabilities are assigned a short block of time to visit employer tables at the summit. During this “mix and mingle” there is structured time to encourage attendees to speak to employers about their industry and learn about the types of jobs that are available in their organizations. This is a natural way for them to practice networking with employers and have professional conversations to prepare them for future interviews.

Last year’s session was held at the Embassy Suites in Cool Springs, with Anthony Ianni, a former Division 1 Athlete diagnosed with autism as the keynote speaker. The fifth annual summit is scheduled for September at Nashville’s Music City Center, cosponsored by DIDD and the Council on Developmental Disabilities through the Supporting Families Community of Practice.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

The Supporting Families Community of Practice is a national learning community, funded through a federal grant, focused on examining how states can better offer supports to all families impacted by disability and how to improve policies and practices that affect the daily lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. In Tennessee, this initiative is led by the Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The Supporting Families team in Tennessee has conducted a number of employment-focused presentations for families, advocacy organizations, case managers, educators, and other stakeholders about tools that can help families set a vision and develop goals for their family member’s employment success and where to find or develop needed supports that can help them achieve their goals.



GOAL 2

BUILD SHARED COMMUNITY COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYMENT FIRST FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

objective
IMPROVE AND EXPAND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

In 2015, the Employment First Communications Subgroup was formed as a way to align messaging, share resources, and maximize the collective social media audiences of members to better promote competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities. Participating agencies include communications professionals from TennesseeWorks, DIDD, the Council on Developmental Disabilities, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, DHS/VR, Tennessee Disability Pathfinder, and The Arc of Tennessee. The group meets quarterly to give agency updates and brainstorm ways to promote employment to Tennesseans with disabilities and their families, policymakers, and the public.

The largest coordinated effort by the subgroup comes during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, when all agencies partner on the "Hire My Strengths" Campaign. In 2016, this campaign had its largest reach, and several national partners, including the Office of Disability

Employment Policy and Association of University Centers on Disabilities, contributed to its reach. In just one week of the month-long campaign there were 100 social media posts on Twitter using the HireMyStrengths hashtag, which were seen more than 100,000 times. In addition, the group collaborated in social media promotion of the presentation of the Expect Employment Report to Governor Haslam, which took place at the Grand Ole Opry. Clancey Hopper, a member of the Council on Developmental Disabilities, who works as a tour guide and was featured in last year's report, gave the governor a brief tour before presenting the report on the Opry stage. Using the #TNe1st hashtag, tweets about the event reached 450,000 people and were seen 2.2 million times.

Individual agencies also continue their outreach to promote employment and clear up misconceptions around employment issues to a larger audience.

EFFORTS

Inside Workforce Development

In 2016, the Council on Developmental Disabilities partnered with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to sponsor an episode of their series "Inside Workforce Development", which is targeted to employers and airs on News Channel5+. For National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2017, the Council is once again sponsoring an episode. Planning for this program is underway and will feature interviews from an employee with a disability whose job at Healthstream, a large healthcare technology company, was created just for her and is supported through the Employment and Community First CHOICES program and the Best Buddies Jobs Program, and Healthstream leadership who hired her. The hope is that by sharing Healthstream's story of finding solutions and job opportunities for young adults with disabilities and the value they bring to the workplace, other employers will be inspired to recruit from this pool of untapped talent.

TennesseeWorks Blog

TennesseeWorks publishes the "Rise to Work" blog, which provides important employment-related information and tackles misconceptions. Several blog posts have been viewed more than 4,000 times, including "When the Sheltered Workshop Closes", "What is the Employment and Community First CHOICES Waiver (Part1)", and "How Employment Can Change the Life of Someone with a Disability and Everyone Involved".



SCAN THE QR CODE TO VIEW THE #WAY2WORK SERIES

#Way2Work Videos

DIDD continues to produce its #Way2Work videos and other success stories. This past year was its most successful yet, with a video about the collaboration between St. Johns Community Services and Sodexo at the University of Tennessee-Martin receiving more than 63,000 views on Facebook and reaching more than 135,000 people. Another video about the Dobyns-Bennett High School's Transition School to Work program garnered almost 41,000 views.

Grand Ole Opry @opry · Oct 13
Clancey treated Gov. @BillHaslam and guests from @DIDD a little serenade from the Circle! #TNe1st #NDEAM
You and Gov. Bill Haslam



Breaking Ground Magazine

The Council on Developmental Disabilities continues to share information about employment success stories and innovative approaches to improving employment outcomes, which is distributed to nearly 5,000 subscribers and at community events across the state. During the past year, some of the employment articles have included profiles of young entrepreneurs with disabilities, Vanderbilt's Putting Faith to Work initiative, and information about the employment services offered through the Employment and Community First CHOICES program.



GOAL 3



INTERACT
WITH THIS REPORT
Learn more about Employer Leadership Committee using this QR code...

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE WHO ACTIVELY SEEK AND HIRE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

outcome

CULTIVATE EMPLOYMENT FIRST CHAMPIONS AMONG BUSINESS LEADERS ACROSS TENNESSEE

As the Employment First Task Force looks to grow the pool of employers who want to hire a person with a disability, it is important to hear from the companies that have taken the lead on disability employment and have embedded inclusion in their business philosophy. This past year, TennesseeWorks launched the Employer Leadership Committee (ELC), which includes more than 30 members from businesses that are committed to hiring people with disabilities.

This year, the business leaders participating in the committee have been involved in helping develop strategy, committing to the Think Employment Summit, and sharing the story about employment of people with disabilities. In June 2017, ELC members had their first “Coffee and Collaboration” luncheon, where employers were guided in discussion about increasing partnerships between businesses and high schools, and what kind of support is needed for businesses to hire people with disabilities.

THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN TASKED WITH:

- ✓ *Increasing positive attitudes, awareness, and knowledge of employers about hiring and effectively supporting young people with disabilities*
- ✓ *Promoting employment to community partners and fostering support for inclusive employment*
- ✓ *Identifying and addressing key concerns and support needs of diverse employers across the state of Tennessee*
- ✓ *Designing a statewide awareness and social media campaign focused on employment*



SUCCESS STORY A PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPLOYMENT

Growth in a long-standing partnership between the University of Tennessee at Martin, food service contractor Sodexo, and St. John’s Community Services is producing new employment opportunities for people with disabilities. For about two decades, a couple of people supported by SJCS and its predecessor have worked in dining services at UTM, but in the last year or so, the number of employees with disabilities has grown to a dozen.

The employees work in all facets of the dining hall operation, and they get to interact with their coworkers and UTM students and even make friends with them. For anyone in the dining hall, it is hard to miss Phyllis Sanford. She has a warm and welcoming personality and an outspoken spirit that makes her a favorite with customers. But it’s not just personality that makes Phyllis a stand-out employee. Her dedication to her salad bar station keeps people coming back. “She just takes ownership of her station to make sure that it is right so the students know what they are getting,” said Executive Sous Chef Agency Perry.

For long-time dining hall employee and current General Manager B.J. Long, his employees who come from SJCS are the best of the best. “From my experience, the folks with disabilities, they want to please, they want to do good with their life, with their career, and we shouldn’t shortchange that. We should give them equal opportunity,” he said.

objective

CREATE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXISTING TN WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

Not only does a successful venture to improve employment outcomes for Tennesseans with disabilities involve empowering and supporting people to reach their employment goals, it also involves cultivating business partnerships and engaging employers to provide the opportunities. In an effort to broaden awareness about the benefits of hiring a person with disability, the Employer Outreach Initiative through TennesseeWorks aims to reach employers in all corners of the state.

As of June 2017, the presentation has been given to 65 groups, with a total attendance of approximately 2,000. TennesseeWorks expects to meet its original goal of 75 presentations by the end of the summer. All of the materials and the presentation are now available to anyone on the TennesseeWorks website.

In addition, TennesseeWorks staff drafted a proposal for a statewide network of single points of contact for employers interested in information and support regarding employing people with disabilities. The proposal provides a description of the concept, successful examples in Tennessee and other states, and options for agencies to assume this responsibility. The proposal provides a point of reference for discussion with stakeholders and for making a decision on implementation.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST CHAMPION *featuring* **DWAYNE WEBB**

Program Director of Day and Employment Services, St. John's Community Services

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY BUSINESSES WHO COULD BE GOOD PARTNERS?

Simply put, we leave no rock unturned. We believe every business holds the potential to become that next great employment partner. We research the HR priorities and marketing strategies of large to mid-sized businesses within the area to establish an understanding of how they regard this untapped source of qualified candidates. For smaller businesses in our area, we take on a more grassroots approach by utilizing our networking channels to get a good feel for a particular company, as well as frequenting those establishments to observe the organizational culture firsthand. In the end, it comes down to our ability to educate employers on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and advocate for this pool of qualified workers to ensure they get access to the employment opportunities they value.

HOW DO YOU START THE CONVERSATION WITH EMPLOYERS ABOUT HIRING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY?

We approach job development as a business-to-business proposition, not a charitable endeavor. Employers in today's marketplace are constantly looking for that competitive edge that will drive down expenses, improve performance and quality, and increase their overall bottom line. One of the key factors in achieving employment success is providing the tools and techniques necessary to effectively address any concerns or questions that may arise from the potential employer. Job developers should have a working knowledge of an employer's businesses operations in order to fully capitalize on the employment opportunity. By having the facts, showcasing a person who will add value to their workforce, and learning how best to navigate some of the challenges faced, you will enhance the overall chances of initiating a good conversation and, subsequently, creating a successful placement. "One Person, One Job" is our motto and how we always approach employment opportunities.

EMPLOYERS HAVE AND HOW DO YOU ADDRESS THEM?

There are certain characteristics employers look for in an employee that ultimately lends itself to the overall success of their business. Employers want to hire individuals who can do the job as specified, but they also want employees who are dependable, trustworthy, and bring a strong work ethic to the table. Some employers mistakenly believe that people with disabilities won't be able to work up to the same standards as other employees, they will be more likely to miss work, or that they will be a distraction to their co-workers and supervisors due to needing more assistance while on the job. Employers also have concerns their business will encounter excessive costs associated with accommodations, health insurance, general liability, and worker's compensation. These perceptions are just not true. On a regular basis, individuals with disabilities meet or exceed company metrics in these categories when compared to other workers. Through ongoing education, business-to-business collaboration, and advocacy, we are slowly dispelling many of these myths and stereotypes that create barriers to employment.

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN THE PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS?

We have been able to build and maintain strong partnerships with employers primarily by how we market and deliver our employment services. Since we approach job development as a business-to-business proposition, we are staking our reputation on the quality of services we have to offer. Employer perception of these services is ultimately our reality. We also continue to foster relationships with employers long after the individual placement has been made. We bring the employer into the SJCS family and recognize their business every opportunity we can. We promote their services just as they do ours. This allows the opportunity to get to know our employers on a more personal level, thus solidifying the relationship through added trust and credibility.

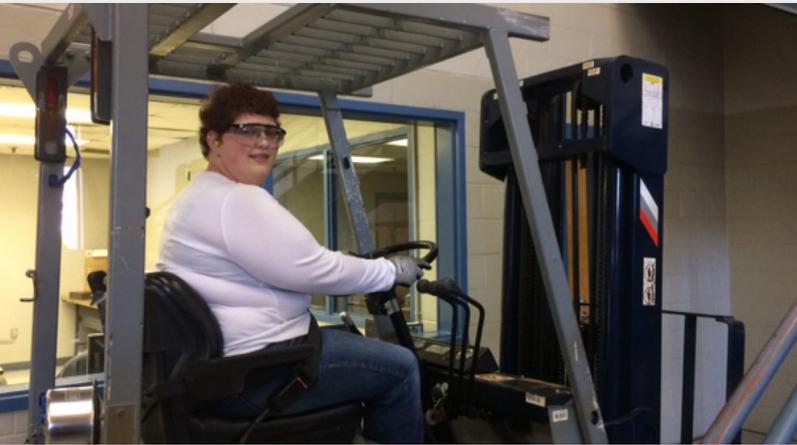
WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

GOAL 3

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE WHO ACTIVELY SEEK AND HIRE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

objective

CREATE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXISTING TN WORKFORCE INITIATIVES



Additionally, the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) has made a significant impact in increasing the number of businesses and employers throughout the state who seek to hire people with disabilities. Through collaborations, public relations, and other outreach activities, businesses have stepped up to provide new internships, volunteer sites, and job opportunities for all TRC programs. To date, TRC has 56 agreements with employers to provide external training opportunities and/or internships for students in their businesses.

AGENCY BUSINESS OUTREACH

Various state agencies have developed business engagement strategies as a method for ensuring people supported through their programs are placed in competitive, integrated employment. Over the past year, some of those programs have broadened their engagement with businesses.

The Department of Human Services - Vocational Rehabilitation formed a Business Service Unit to ensure alignment with WIOA. The unit has a dual purpose of serving people and businesses within the state, and providing and promoting various services to businesses within the community. Through the unit's Business Employment Consultants, VR has worked with businesses to provide discussions regarding accommodations, job coaching for the first days of employment, and regular contact with the business to ensure success in the first 90 days of employment and beyond. These efforts have resulted in 356 cases being successfully closed with competitive, integrated employment for more than 120 days last fiscal year.



With the launch of the Employment and Community First CHOICES program, contracted providers have aggressively sought to increase the number of community employers across the state. Supported employment providers have engaged 91 employers who will employ people with disabilities across the state. These range from small businesses such as local daycares to large employers like FedEx and Best Buy. A coworker supports benefit offers additional flexibility to permit supports beyond the scope of typical supervision that would otherwise be provided by a job coach to instead be delivered by a supervisor or coworker.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST CHAMPION

featuring **TED TOWNSEND**

Chief Operating Officer for the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

WHAT ROLE DOES ECD HOPE TO PLAY IN INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES?

Currently TNECD has multiple opportunities to increase employment for Tennesseans with disabilities.

TNECD has the opportunity to be an active liaison by connecting employment organizations to businesses, an example by employing and hosting internships for individuals with disabilities, and a microphone by increasing awareness statewide about the benefits of working with individuals with disabilities.

WHAT IS TNECD MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

We are most excited about the opportunity to provide pathways to sustainable employment for individuals with disabilities.

WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE?

The greatest challenge is learning how to work within the existing structures in a systematic, strategic method.

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT TNECD AS WE WORK TOGETHER?

Our department is Economic and Community Development. We are a natural partner in the process of gaining employment, and we are ready and willing to do whatever is needed to increase employment opportunities for Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Ted Townsend became involved in the Employment First movement after participating on the National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities. He was appointed to the National Task Force in affiliation with the Council of State Governments and the National Conference of State Legislatures and then nominated to Co-Chair the Entrepreneurship, Tax Incentive & Procurement Committee. Delaware Governor Jack Markell and Nebraska State Senator Beau McCoy recruited him to become a member of the subcommittee.

As DIDD continues its efforts to transition people from sheltered workshops into community employment, providers are continually looking to find jobs for the people they support. In July 2016, Orange Grove Center (OGC), one of DIDD's largest providers, closed its recycling center. After closure, OGC was able to assist in finding competitive, integrated employment for 30 of the 41 people who worked at the center, with the other 11 people choosing to retire. These job opportunities are possible thanks to strong partnerships with community employers in the Chattanooga area.

Part of the IPS Supported Employment model involves developing jobs in the community. IPS Employment Specialists build relationships with employers through multiple onsite visits that are planned to learn about the needs of the employer, convey what the IPS program offers to the employer, and describe an IPS job seeker's strengths that could be a good match for the employer. As of April 2017, more than 1,800 unique employers had been engaged in FY17 by an IPS Employment Specialist. Approximately 150 employers hired a person served by IPS.



GOAL 4

MAKE TENNESSEE A MODEL PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYER THROUGH ACTIONS TO EMPLOY MORE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH POLICY AND REGULATORY CHANGE.

objective

DEVELOP INITIATIVES THAT INCREASE INTERNSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN TENNESSEE STATE GOVERNMENT

The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities has been leading the way on this goal.

Recognizing that the hub of public sector employment is the TN Department of Human Resources (DOHR), one of the Council's first priorities was to meet with staff from DOHR to explain Tennessee's Employment First initiative and the task force's goal in this area. The meeting included senior level staff from both agencies, including the director of recruiting for the state. The Council also led efforts to help state agencies increase their hiring of Tennesseans with disabilities. For example, the Council met with representatives with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) to discuss potential job opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at state parks. As of summer 2017, Paris Landing State Park is pursuing serving as a pilot site for this innovative idea by engaging local jobseekers with disabilities.

Additionally, the Council helped facilitate multiple internship opportunities in state government: one in the Governor's Office and another at the Department of Economic and Community Development, with additional departments developing plans for hosting interns with disabilities during the coming year. The internships have been in partnership with the Lipscomb IDEAL program and the Vanderbilt Next Steps inclusive higher education programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

SUCCESS STORY **THE PATH TO STATE EMPLOYMENT**

After hitting a road block in pursuit of his desired career in social work, an opportunity with the state of Tennessee has C.C. living the life he wanted. C.C. is a 33 year old deaf individual who has been a client of Vocational Rehabilitation off and on for many years. VR was able to help C.C. obtain a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Middle Tennessee State University in 2010, but he wasn't able to obtain employment in his field of study. After graduation, C.C. worked different jobs for about six years, and when he returned to VR for assistance, he was concerned about the trajectory of his life, career, and his ability to continue to support his father. C.C.'s VR counselor worked with him to meet his assistive technology needs and identified the state as a potential employer. Today, C.C. works as a Disability Claims Examiner where he reports that he makes a difference daily, enjoys his job, and is better able to provide for his father. C.C. is in a job that is matched to his capabilities, abilities, aptitudes, interests, and education. He has been so inspired by his experience that he is considering working toward his Masters in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.





SUCCESS STORY

JASON ROGERS' INTERNSHIP *with* GOVERNOR HASLAM

A student from Lipscomb University took an important step toward making state government a more inclusive place to work. He interned in Governor Haslam's office during the spring legislative session.

Jason Rogers is a first-year student with the IDEAL program at Lipscomb. During the spring semester, he spent his Tuesdays and Thursdays working in the Governor's office of constituent services. His duties were common to all interns, but the significance of his role in the office was extraordinary. He is the first person with a disability to intern at the Governor's office.

"Jason went through the same interview process as everyone else," said Joanna Wagner, program manager for off-campus job development for the IDEAL program. "One thing we really work on with our job coaches, and something we have worked with the staff of the Governor's office, is introducing Jason to the environment and remembering that he is no different than any other employee."

Jason earned his place on the team throughout the semester, and he was recognized at the end of his internship with a legislative proclamation honoring his service.

"We couldn't be more thrilled that Jason was selected for this internship and that it's been such a successful experience for all involved," said Wanda Willis, Council on Developmental Disabilities Executive Director. "We hope many other students with disabilities follow in Jason's footsteps."

For Jason, his motivation for pursuing the internship in the governor's office was simple. "I want to help people within the state of Tennessee," said Rogers.



objective

CREATE A TOOLKIT THAT SERVES AS A RESOURCE FOR TENNESSEE COMMUNITIES TO WORK TOWARDS BECOMING A MODEL PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The TennesseeWorks staff compiled information to support state of Tennessee staff in their efforts to become a model employer of people with disabilities. This tool box contains information on policies and practices for each step of the employment process including policies and processes used by the federal government and other public entities to hire and retain employees with disabilities.

GOAL 5

PREPARE STUDENTS IN TENNESSEE SCHOOLS FOR EMPLOYMENT THROUGHOUT THEIR EDUCATION AND CONNECT THEM TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

objective

DEPLOY THE TRANSITION FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATORS AND DISSEMINATE WIDELY

In February 2017, the Department of Education and Vanderbilt University launched Transition Tennessee at the Partners in Education pre-conference. Transition Tennessee is a hub for training and resources on preparing students with disabilities for life after high school. The site is designed to be a framework for educators to use in building a comprehensive transition program for their students.

Transition Tennessee includes professional development courses on many topics including:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AGE-APPROPRIATE
TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS

DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY
TRANSITION PLAN

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

SUPPORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

As of June 30, Transition Tennessee had 1,373 subscribers. While primarily for educators, the site is also being used by families and professionals in other areas. The success of this site is due to not only the strong collaboration between the Department of Education, Vanderbilt University, and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, but also the participation of many other partners.



INTERACT

WITH THIS REPORT
*Learn more about Transition Tennessee using this QR code...
transitiontn.org*



Lessons & Additional Resources
Click a Video Below to Begin

**What Should I Know About...
INTERNSHIPS?**

<https://dcl.ges/what/req/compliance/what?i=1>

Lesson 1 Career Awareness & Exploration

Lesson 2 Career Preparation Training

Lesson 3 Identifying a Community-based Site

Lesson 4 Job Coaching & Support

Manual

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions

A Guide to Work Experiences

Videos

Resources

objective

EXPAND AWARENESS AND USE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA

The occupational diploma is continuing to be utilized by more and more students across Tennessee as an option for preparing for employment. Students who want to receive an occupational diploma must master the Skills, Knowledge and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA), and complete two years of work experience.

This past academic year, many school districts proudly shared and publicized their recipients of the occupational diploma. This program has now become embedded in many high schools across the state as a key option for students with disabilities looking to prepare for employment.



objective
**PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
AND COACHING FOR TRANSITION
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES**

During the summer of 2016, Department of Education staff traveled across the state, along with representatives from the Department of Human Services-Vocational Rehabilitation, to provide professional development to special education teachers and transition coordinators. The focus of the professional development was developing transition plans and leveraging Vocational Rehabilitation for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services.

The Department of Education trained 850 educators on writing high-quality transition plans, as well as an additional 252 who attended professional development on writing instructionally appropriate Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

As a result of summer professional development, as well as the Partners in Education Conference and Transition Tennessee, several Special Education Directors submitted discretionary grants related to transition-age youth to begin various transition programs within their districts aimed at improving postsecondary outcomes.

SUCCESS STORY

LINDSEY'S TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

Lindsey Leake started at Franklin High School on the special education certificate track when the Occupational Diploma became an option at the end of her sophomore year. Lindsey had already completed some job-based training on her own, and the Occupational Diploma offered the job-based learning she and her family felt was important for her to be successful as an adult.

Lindsey started pursuing the Occupational Diploma at the beginning of her junior year. She continued with her IEP goals, and her mother says the occupational diploma requirements and the teachers around her built her confidence, developed skills like problem solving, and prepared her to enter the work force.

Lindsey graduated in May, and is about to take a job doing childcare at the YMCA. Her mother says the program gave Lindsey a focus, made her more goal-oriented, and promoted her independence while giving the little bit of support needed for success.

GOAL 5

PREPARE STUDENTS IN
TENNESSEE SCHOOLS FOR
EMPLOYMENT THROUGHOUT
THEIR EDUCATION AND
CONNECT THEM TO ESSENTIAL
SERVICES

objective
PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND
COACHING FOR TRANSITION PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT MODULES

In addition, the Work-Based Learning Leadership Council is about to embark on the third year of training colleagues on how to establish Work-Based Learning programs within their school system and how to develop high-quality capstone experiences.

Work-Based Learning is a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high skills careers in Tennessee through experiences like internships, apprenticeships or paid work experiences. Work-Based Learning Coordinators and Career and Technical Education Directors representing all regions serve on the Work-Based Learning Leadership Council to lead trainings and professional development.

There has been a strong presence of special educators in attendance at these trainings. The expectation is this will lead to development of new Work-Based Learning programs that will lead to postsecondary readiness.



SUCCESS STORY WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Work-Based Learning program at Milan High School is changing lives and growing by leaps and bounds. In the 2016-17 school year, seven students participated in the program, but next year the program will have more than double that number.

One student who's graduated from the program is Joey Wall. He was the first student at Milan High School to earn an Occupational Diploma. Joey worked at the middle school cafeteria unloading trucks, stocking shelves, and making food. He is now a proud employee of Milan Elementary School's cafeteria team.

Chase Bardwell's work-based learning experience takes him to Douglas Health Care where he works with an instructional assistant. Chase brings the hydration cart around to the center's residents. When he's not working, Chase enjoys feeding the pet bird that they have at the center and playing the piano and singing.

The Work-Based Learning program gives students opportunities for extra interaction with a Vocational Rehabilitation job coach, a mental health counselor, and other folks from the community. Students have had special visits from the mayor, police department, and others.



TASK FORCE NEXT STEPS

Tennessee is currently seeing its unemployment rate at historic lows. However, high unemployment for persons with disabilities continues to be a reality in Tennessee and across the nation. While the state has made significant progress, several key areas have been identified as priorities to focus on as the state continues to move the needle on employment rates for Tennesseans with disabilities.

As the task force continues its work on the Strategic Plan over the course of the next year, it intends to expand its focus on all Tennesseans with disabilities. This includes its growing concentration on the behavioral health population and the addition of a representative from the Department of Human Services-Vocational Rehabilitation Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind unit to both the task force and the Employment Roundtable.

In addition, data collection and utilization continue to be a challenge and an opportunity. As partner agencies hone data collection systems, there is a desire to see transparency and consistency in the data, a shared data system, and statewide goals and benchmarks for

the employment rate of persons with disabilities. There is also a desire for more specificity about the number of people with disabilities who are either unemployed or underemployed, their location, skill set, and desired occupations.

The data shows that people with disabilities being supported through various state agencies have the drive and desire to work. Continuing to connect businesses with job seekers, resources, and services available to assist people with disabilities who want to work is a critical mission of this task force and partner agencies. In turn, empowering people with disabilities to choose employment and providing the necessary supports through the lifespan is equally important.

Four years ago, this task force convened with a mission to improve the lives of Tennesseans with disabilities through competitive, integrated employment. The task force has made progress on that goal and will continue to work together to address barriers, further streamline processes, and maintain its outreach to persons, families and employers to assist people to reach their employment goals.

APPENDICES

A ~ EMPLOYMENT FIRST STRATEGIC PLAN

B ~ EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 28

C ~ EMPLOYMENT FIRST TASK FORCE MEMBERS

D ~ TASK FORCE WORKGROUP PARTICIPANTS

E ~ EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE AGENCY MEMBERSHIP

EMPLOYMENT FIRST STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

Create and expand opportunities for employment for all Tennesseans with disabilities

VISION

People with disabilities have the same opportunities for employment as anyone

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 28

An order establishing the Tennessee Employment First initiative to expand community employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities

GOALS

1. Align existing and new service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities
2. Build shared community commitment to Employment First for individuals with disabilities
3. Increase the number of businesses and employers throughout the state who actively seek and hire individuals with disabilities
4. Make Tennessee a model public sector employer through actions to employ more people with disabilities through policy and regulatory change
5. Prepare students in Tennessee schools for employment throughout their education and connect them to essential services

GOAL 1

Align existing and new service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities

OBJECTIVE

Create a system to collect, integrate, and analyze data of employment of people with disabilities in Tennessee.

STRATEGIES

- Build an Employment First Partnership dashboard that integrates data from public and private sources, including but not limited to: DIDD, DHS/VR, DOL, TennCare, DOE, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, DMHSAS, Team TN Performance
- Explore the possibility of integrating additional data sources with the Tennessee Longitudinal Data System (TLDS)

OBJECTIVE

Assess impact of all inter- agency MOUs that promote employment for people with disabilities.

STRATEGIES

- Set statewide benchmarks and evaluate progress, specifically longitudinal employment rates
- Articulate how available education data can be used both internally and externally
- Include Department of Health and TennCare in Youth Transition MOU

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL 1 ~ *continued*

Align existing and new service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities

OBJECTIVE

Track implementation of WIOA Combined State Plan sections focused on people with disabilities, specifically the integration between DOL and entities with a disability focus.

STRATEGIES

- Implement the Youth MOU Action Plan to measure the effectiveness of the MOU
- Document a clear delineation of state and local agency roles and responsibilities in planning, services, coordination targeted for helping consumers and families better understand state systems
- Leverage existing grant resources to inform the design of new programs
- Explore the development of a universal form/plan built around the individual
- Utilize customer survey data to assess the efficacy and alignment of local service delivery systems
- Explore and implement strategies to reduce the use of sub-minimum wages, under 14(c) certificates, for people with disabilities [DIDD providers and VR training centers hold most of the certificates, with VR comprising about 25%]
- Explore the use of supported decision-making as one of several tools available to people with disabilities

OBJECTIVE

Assess the impact of implementation of Employment and Community First CHOICES program.

STRATEGIES

- Educate and advocate for the passage of Supported Decision Making Legislation in the 110th General Assembly
- Educate stakeholders (self-advocates, families, educators, medical practitioners, judges and others) about the process of supported decision making for people with I/DD
- Implement VisionQuest product related to training of AJCs on serving people with disabilities that involves support from the Task Force
- Attend and share information/goals at one another's employment-focused departmental leadership, public and provider meetings to encourage collaboration at every level and prevent silo thinking
- Propose legislation and/or seek state/federal funding to support a career ladder funding strategy for staff who work for provider agencies (e.g. <http://www.tecta.info/>)
- Submit request to secure additional state funding for IPS training
- Pilot strategies to effectively support individuals with dual diagnosis (IDD + mental illness) in the workplace
- Explore Customized Employment Consortium model to increase employment outcomes for individuals with significant support needs

GOAL 2

Build shared community commitment to Employment First for individuals with disabilities

OBJECTIVE

- Cultivate Employment First champions across Tennessee, including individuals and families, community leaders, public officials, schools, private citizens, and other organizations.
- Improve and expand communication channels to individuals with disabilities and their families.

GOAL 2 ~ continued

Build shared community commitment to Employment First for individuals with disabilities

STRATEGIES

- Host 5th annual Think Employment! Summit
- Develop a plan to ensure the Think Employment Summit is self-sustaining"
- Explore the possibility of regional summits
- Host and share results from 15 Community Conversations during 2016-2017
- Complete and share findings from employer expectation survey
- Complete and share findings from provider needs survey
- Develop and implement a statewide awareness campaign about the benefits of employing people with disabilities
- Continuously seek input from families and stay current in our understanding about what they want and need
- Engage community and grassroots organizations on ongoing basis to learn from them and to encourage and support their work
- Use Employment First Champions for recognizing businesses that employ community members who have disabilities
- Engage stakeholders in conversations about the importance of holding high expectations for individuals with disabilities
- Use communication tools to effectively distribute materials/information to support individuals and families in securing employment
- Coordinate linkage and messaging across state agency websites
- Survey key stakeholders to measure the effectiveness of communication
- Create a video series featuring self-advocates speaking about employment
- Continue expanding Way2Work series showcasing individuals supported through DIDD who are in competitive, integrated employment and/or "volunteer opportunities
- Produce Way2Work videos targeted to members of the business community
- Maintain updated content for the resource web page on TennesseeWorks
- for families based on areas of need reported in the 2014 TennesseeWorks" family survey
- Produce a weekly blog on TennesseeWorks about issues important to families around employment, independent living, and policy
- Convene the Employment First Communications Workgroup quarterly to coordinate strategies for materials and information to support individuals and families in securing employment.
- Use #HireMyStrengths campaign to address "high expectations" by all (community, providers, policy makers, etc.)
- Plan to expand the #HireMyStrengths campaign to a yearlong campaign and wrap it around other events such as Disability Day on the Hill and the PIE Conference
- Use #HireMyStrengths model to recognize local businesses that employ people with disabilities
- Develop plans to raise awareness among individuals and families about "ABLE TN and ECF CHOICES
- Consider using "education ministries" model through churches
- Ensure parents/caretakers have access to information regarding respite and other related services
- Continue outreach and education about importance of benefits counseling and available resources"

ABLE TN and ECF CHOICES

- Consider using "education ministries" model through churches
- Ensure parents/caretakers have access to information regarding respite and other related services
- Continue outreach and education about importance of benefits counseling and available resources

GOAL 3

Increase the number of businesses and employers throughout the state who actively seek and hire individuals with disabilities

OBJECTIVE

- Cultivate Employment First champions among business leaders across Tennessee
- Use baseline data from 2016- 2017 to set a target for the number of Tennessee businesses employing people with disabilities by 2018
- Create and expand partnerships with existing TN workforce initiatives
- Create additional partnerships between employers and school transition programs

STRATEGIES

- Promote Employment First Champions and Employer Leadership Committee to recognize businesses and business leaders across the state who are hiring people with disabilities.
- Establish Governor's Award for Employment First Champions
- Develop a system to collect and analyze data about businesses that employ people with disabilities in Tennessee
- Explore possibility of using DOL data about Tennessee businesses to support the creation of the business database e.g. (<http://www.chattanooga.com/2017/1/10/339467/Tennessee-Issues-Record-Number-Of.aspx>)
- "Develop a draft plan for review to establish local/regional single points of contact for employers, using successful relationships developed by VR/Corporate Connections as a point of reference
- Establish relationship with Workforce 360 (ECD) and American Job Centers at local and leadership levels to leverage hiring options available to an individual with a disability and increase opportunities in local areas for jobs" for persons with disabilities [Providers]
- Establish additional employer partnerships, including Project SEARCH "transition programs in additional school districts and replications of the Walgreen's REDI and Distribution Center initiatives.
- Present the ""business case"" for employing people with disabilities on the TennesseeWorks website and during Employer Outreach Presentations
- Continue implementing the Employer Outreach Initiative (EOI), including:" developing an employer section of the TennesseeWorks website with "disability employment-related resources for employers; presentations to employer groups statewide on the business case for employing people with disabilities and resources in Tennessee to assist employers to recruit and train people with disabilities to meet their workforce needs.
- Use the Employer Leadership Committee to mirror the success of state Business Leadership Networks; assist in connecting employers to reproduce in local or regional areas.
- Use or repackage DOE module content to meet identified educational/professional development needs of other transition stakeholders
- Explore training programs that enable businesses to recognize and capitalize on the opportunities within their own companies"

GOAL 4

Make Tennessee a model public sector employer through actions to employ more people with disabilities through policy and regulatory change

OBJECTIVE

- Develop initiatives that increase internship and employment opportunities for people with disabilities within Tennessee state government
- Create toolkit that serves as a resource for TN communities to work towards becoming a model public sector employer of people with disabilities

GOAL 4 ~ continued

STRATEGIES

- Define characteristics of successful model public sector employers [E&P]
- Engage the TN Department of Human Resources as a partner in making TN a model public sector employer
- Work with the Commissioner of TN Department of HR on the possibility of expanding internships and employment opportunities within state government
- Approach TN State Parks offices about possibility of hiring people with disabilities
- Promote use of systematic approaches to hire and integrate people with disabilities by government entities [E&P]
- Use Employment First Champions to identify and inventory local communities already engaging in initiatives to employ people with disabilities
- Use Employment First Champions to identify, support and promote public sector employers who are already working towards meeting hiring goals
- Recruit and support up to five communities (city/county governments) who volunteer to become model employer communities [E&P]
- Research and define appropriate metrics for the employment rate of people with disabilities in the public sector
- Share existing videos about the DSP job with Partnership members to raise awareness of the importance of the role and availability of the jobs. [E&P]
- Develop accommodations for required tests and to allow those with learning disabilities to qualify as DSP. [E&P]
- Work with AJC veteran, on-the-job, retiree and apprentice programs to meet staff needs.
- Explore the possibility of using/adapting the public toolkit for private businesses [E&P]

GOAL 5

Prepare students in Tennessee schools for employment throughout their education and connect them to essential services

OBJECTIVE

- Deploy the transition framework for educators and disseminate widely
- Expand awareness and use of occupational diploma
- Provide technical assistance and coaching for transition professional development modules

STRATEGIES

- Deploy a statewide transition manual/guide that includes practical guidance on preparing students for employment
- Develop and implement a plan for professional development that includes both live training and online resources.
- Design and share resources with superintendents and school administrators that demonstrate the importance of investing in transition in their schools
- Use Employment First Champions to showcase schools and programs in the state that are effectively connecting students to early work experiences.
- Develop and share resources that inform secondary educators about community services and supports available to their students during and after high school
- Create resources for families to advocate for work-related experiences in the educational programs of their children
- Increase paid work opportunities for students while they are still in school
- Promote awareness of the value of the occupational diploma among employers, families, and school/district administrators
- Conduct a study of the occupational diploma, its implementation, and impact (including using TLDS)
- Analyze Easy IEP data to answer important key questions related to the quality of transition assessment and planning
- Establish baselines and measure outcomes for transitional professional development modules
- Conduct additional studies to examine professional development needs in areas beyond transition planning/assessment (i.e. last year's study)
- Explore the implications of the following policy issues: adding a transition specialist certification in the state; including the occupational diploma in graduation rates; offering state-approved professional development credits; providing more specificity on the substance of transition plans in the state rules

EXECUTIVE ORDER

BY THE GOVERNOR

No. 28

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE TENNESSEE EMPLOYMENT FIRST INITIATIVE TO EXPAND
COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, Tennesseans with disabilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders and other disabilities, disproportionately experience high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and dependence upon publicly funded programs; and

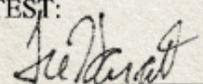
WHEREAS, my Administration is committed to supporting the Employment First Initiative establishing competitive and integrated employment, where work is performed in a typical work setting for a competitive wage.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Haslam, Governor of the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Tennessee Constitution and the laws of Tennessee, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. State agencies coordinate efforts to increase opportunities for integrated and competitive employment for Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illnesses, substance abuse disorders and other disabilities.
2. The Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities convene an Employment First Taskforce ("Taskforce").
3. The Taskforce shall consist of representatives from the agencies administering disability services, family members of persons receiving employment services, vocational rehabilitation, workforce services and education, as well as consumer advocates and third party disability service providers.
4. This Taskforce shall:
 - a. Identify state agency policies and procedures that create barriers and disincentives for employment of people with disabilities and develop recommendations to reduce or eliminate those barriers and disincentives to better meet the needs of individuals who desire employment;
 - b. Identify best practices, effective partnerships, sources of available federal funds and opportunities for shared services among existing state agencies to increase integrated and competitive employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities;
 - c. Review and consider the recommendations of the Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP) to increase opportunities for integrated and competitive employment for Tennesseans with disabilities.
 - d. Develop training on disability employment for state agencies, provider agencies, individuals being supported and their families in order to raise awareness of effective strategies for achieving integrated and competitive employment outcomes.
5. The Taskforce shall convene for its initial meeting on or before August 1, 2013. Thereafter, the Taskforce shall meet quarterly and provide an annual progress report to the Governor.

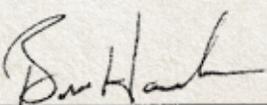
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my signature and caused the Great Seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed this **19th** day of **June, 2013**.

ATTEST:



SECRETARY OF STATE





GOVERNOR

EMPLOYMENT FIRST **TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

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* *Deceased*

EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE **AGENCY MEMBERSHIP**

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Department of Children's Services

Department of Education

Department of Health

Department of Human Services

Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Department of Labor

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Department of Treasury

Disability Rights Tennessee

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center



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Department of
**Intellectual &
Developmental Disabilities**