



The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities was a strong supporter of the Employment First law passed last April, and appreciates the work the three cooperating departments have put into developing a draft plan to improve overall employment outcomes statewide for people with disabilities, particularly those with the most significant disabilities. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. Here are our observations and recommendations:

Section 1

- We appreciate efforts to consolidate and disseminate existing employment success story videos and resources. We would like to see a robust and specific dissemination plan coordinated among departments with special attention played to the roles of the CLTS program in DHS and DPI/public schools to ensure families get this valuable information. BPDD would work with the departments on a dissemination strategy. We appreciate the focus on measurement. We do not see a specific plan for improvement identified. As an example, we recommend incorporation of evaluation to measure increased numbers of youth participating in DVR, engagement and quicker connection to services.
- People with disabilities and families continue to believe that work jeopardizes all benefits. Unified materials with similar look and language across departments will be very useful. Thank you. These materials should be reviewed/tested with people with disabilities so that language is clear.
- We support the DHS Pay for Performance initiative and would like to see other “pay for outcomes” strategies used to implement this law. We think collaborative materials are a great idea. We recommend shared cross-agency meetings and communication for true collaboration. We believe the rate system for employment supports needs to focus on paying for outcomes, with enhanced or tiered rates to ensure those with the most complex needs also get high-quality supports. We also support milestone payments between Discovery and customized employment and other ways to pay for progress. We would like to see a specific effort to begin outreach and messaging before transition: at IEP and CLTS meetings beginning in elementary school.
- We appreciate the work done to streamline the intake process and to ensure that DHS staff know when a referral has occurred. We will continue to meet with DVR about the referral process.

Section 2

- Regarding data sharing, this is a complex issue and requires collaboration at the Department Secretary level. We also recommend that participants be informed decision-makers who can confirm final agreements to expedite the process.
- The plan should identify specifics of how benchmarks are set and how public input will be gathered to establish them. The benchmarks should be quantifiable and significant to measure actual change. We support the identification and reporting of common individuals to measure change.
- We agree that evidence-based employment practices are critical, and would like the plan to specifically address providing evidence-based supports to direct service providers who are responsible for job development and ongoing supports.
- The inter-agency agreement currently on the website is from 2010 and does not reflect significant changes in both WIOA and HCBS. Updating this MOU and communicating who will pay for what needs to be a top priority and be expedited so local service systems understand who to bill. The additional DHS/DVR MOU is also from 2010 and needs to be updated. We recommend providing guidance to local entities on local collaboration expectations and policy alignment. We also recommend developing a feedback loop to regularly assess effectiveness of collaboration at local levels. We support the assignment of committed staff to a workgroup, and strongly recommend that there are quarterly updates at the Secretary level to ensure continued leadership support for quantifiable improvement in integrated employment outcomes.
- Thank you for developing and committing time/resources to the DHS External Employment Managed Care Organization (MCO) and IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) meetings. We recommend promoting the continued engagement of leadership from the DHS employment team and DVR to develop and implement practices that improve CIE Outcomes. We recognize and appreciate the planned meeting for May 2019, which will convene the MCO and ICA employment leadership along with DVR WDA Directors, as an effective way to promote collaborative work and to advance effective and efficient practices at the local level. Encourage these efforts to expand to include DPI coordination for effective practices for youth in transition. On third bullet referencing dissemination of best practices, we also highly recommend dissemination of best practices directly to front-line providers. We also recommend exploration of DVR and DHS enhancing the rates for employment providers using best practices, particularly those providers using best practices in serving the clients with the most complex support needs. We support the sharing of information and development of best practices at the local level.

Section 3

Thank you for developing a specific section focused on children, youth and families, with a focus on the critical roles and family and community expectations play on the long-term employment success. BPDD board member consistently point to the need for early education, exposure and support to young families with a strong message that even people with the most significant disabilities can work successfully in the community with appropriate supports and job fit. We have seen specific strategies used in Promise and Let's Get to Work lead to quantifiable

improvements in outcomes: Family Navigators to help disconnected and traditionally under-served families to connect to supports, early school inclusion and community-based job experiences, expanded use of CLTS codes for mentoring and community inclusion emphasized rather than respite, etc. We believe that, at minimum, new resources marketed toward participants and families should be translated into Spanish.

- We agree revision of the TAG needs to be prioritized to give clarity at the local level to providers, families and others about who pays for which services. We also recommend a consumer-friendly version that has been vetted for language and comprehension through a family focus group so that program participants and their families understand the service delivery and funding mechanisms.
- We appreciate the focus on cross-agency professional development and training, and agree that all the identified joint trainings are critical topics. We recommend setting up a timeline for reaching both state department staff and direct providers to cover all areas of the state within the next two years. We also support development of a sustainability plan for ongoing training and resources across departments in recognition of staff turnover. We recommend prioritizing first the areas of the state that are specifically under-served and areas where data shows poorer outcomes.
- We support showcasing successes, and recommend development of a mentoring effort where high-performers in all departments (school teams, CLTS and Family Care/IRIS teams, DVR counselors/regions) provide guidance and strategies to entities that are struggling or want to create specific improvements.
- We appreciate establishment of a repository of resources that can be accessed statewide, and recommend developing specific resources for potential program participants and their families.
- We also appreciate the commitment to the WiCoT, and recommend a specific identified role, outcomes, and coordination team to ensure the WiCoT is part of the overall feedback loop between the plan, benchmarks and activities. Collaboration between DVR START, DHS CLTS, DPI and TIG should also include DCF representation because so many children who would be eligible are in foster care. We recommend development a structure for this group to meet regularly with specific participants and a timeline for developing resources. We recommend that updates on the CIE Plan be included into a wide array of stakeholder listservs: DHS employment initiatives listserv, ADRCs, DPI transition listservs, WDA listservs and more.

Thank you to the three state departments for their efforts in developing this plan, and their commitment to establishing a leadership team to ensure implementation. BPDD looks forward to partnering in any way to improve employment outcomes for Wisconsinites living with developmental disabilities.