

ISAC Recommendation #3: Increase Employment



Employment is a centerpiece of adulthood and must be available for every person. The benefits of employment for people with disabilities are significant and are the same as for people without disabilities.

Current Strategy	Accomplishments that support this Strategy	Recommendation for this Strategy (retain, revise, replace)
1. Inform families about employment opportunities when their children are young; inform self-advocates as they approach the age of transition.	<p>ODP is a member of the National Community of Practice of Supporting Families throughout the Lifespan and promotes the use of the Charting the LifeCourse™ Framework to help individuals and families of all ages develop a vision for a good life, including employment opportunities.</p> <p>ODP's Supporting Families Statewide Initiative Coordinator and Statewide Employment Lead have conducted trainings on employment using the LifeCourse Framework including trainings for the Community on Transition Webinar Series.</p> <p>ODP participates in the Statewide Transition Leadership Team, collaborating with the Department of Education, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and other Department of Human Services (DHS) program offices to better coordinate services and promote competitive integrated employment opportunities in transition-age youth.</p>	Retain.
2. Build an Employment First assumption in all supports coordination planning activities, including the ISP redesign and training.	ODP, in conjunction with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), conducted a series of trainings targeted at Supports Coordinators. Resources, such as the SC toolkit and the	Retain.

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	<p>Guidance for Conversations about Employment, were developed.</p> <p>ODP amended the waivers to include that Supports Coordinators must provide a participant and his or her family with information on competitive integrated employment during the planning process and upon request.</p> <p>ODP and OVR conducted a series of webinars for new SCs on the “employment first” philosophy.</p> <p>ODP and OVR released a joint bulletin specifying that an individual should be referred to OVR as soon as the individual expresses an interest in seeking employment.</p> <p>ODP and SELN conducted a series of listening sessions with Supports Coordinators. From those sessions, themes were identified and incorporated into a workplan for future initiatives.</p>	
3. Provide training and ongoing technical assistance to service providers and supports coordinators.	ODP, in conjunction with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), conducted a series of trainings targeted at Supports Coordinators.	Retain.

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	<p>ODP has held face-to-face regional events for SCO Directors and Supervisors. Regional employment leads have conducted an employment first for new SCs.</p> <p>ODP amended the waivers to include the requirement for specific credentials/certifications for direct support professionals who are supporting individuals to find competitive integrated employment. ODP and OVR jointly funded training opportunities for this and ODP provides discounted training for these staff through its College of Employment Supports.</p> <p>ODP and OVR worked collaboratively on a series of bootcamp trainings for providers that are available on MyODP.</p> <p>ODP held a provider transformation bootcamp targeting providers of prevocational services paying subminimum wage.</p>	
4. Establish a baseline number of people receiving employment services and those employed; routinely publish data on work and wages.	ODP established baseline data in July of 2017 and continues to collect data on monthly basis.	Retain.

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	In 2018, ODP published the inaugural Comprehensive Employment Report. Updates to the report are currently under way for the first three quarters of FY18-19. Moving forward, the report will be published annually and updated every quarter.	
5. Connect OVR Workforce Development information system and ODP information system (HCSIS) to enable the departments to share information.	<p>ODP and OVR entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that allows for the exchange of information quarterly. The purpose of the exchange in data is to assist in service coordination, the utilization of comparable benefits, and the duplication of services. The first set of data was shared between OVR and ODP in February of 2019.</p> <p>The MOU also allows for ODP SCs to have access to the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) and OVR ID/A Counselors to have access to HCSIS. ODP is prepared to grant access to the OVR counselors and is currently waiting on OVR.</p>	Retain.
6. Support provider transformation to employment services.	On July 1, 2017, ODP amended the waiver definitions, transforming two previous services into Community Participation Support (CPS) and focusing the definition of CPS on supporting an	Retain.

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	<p>individual to build skills to reach an employment outcome.</p> <p>ODP held a provider transformation bootcamp targeting providers of prevocational services.</p>	
7. Facilitate public-private partnerships and local interagency coalitions to support employment opportunities and encourage innovation.	<p>The Administrative Entity (AE) Operating Agreement was updated to include that each AE must work with the community to develop a local employment coalition where none exists or to enhance current coalitions. There are currently 28 AE-established employment coalitions covering 36 counties. In addition, each AE must assign a staff person as an employment subject matter expert to work collaboratively with local stakeholders, individuals and families, and ODP regional offices to promote competitive integrated employment.</p> <p>ODP participates in monthly business coalition meetings with the OVR Business Services and Outreach Division, as well as other DHS program offices (Office of Long-Term Living and Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services).</p>	Retain.

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8. Add benefits counseling to inform individuals, self-advocates, and families about options to work without losing benefits including the ABLE Act and Medicaid buy-in.	ODP added Benefits Counseling to the ID/A waivers July 1, 2017.	Revise. ODP suggests this strategy is revised to include building provider capacity for the Benefits Counseling service and increasing awareness of how this service can support individuals and families.
9. Promote and increase government hiring of people with disabilities.	None at this time.	<p>Revise or replace. ODP adheres to hiring policies established by the DHS Office of Administration's Human Resources and the State Civil Service Commission.</p> <p>In 2018, the Employment First Act was signed into Pennsylvania law. The Act requires all state agencies, including DHS, to take steps towards employing individuals with disabilities and review hiring, placement, and advancements practices on an ongoing basis. In addition, the Act requires the Governor's Office of Administration to develop a framework for individuals to self-report a disability and the State Civil Service Commission to review and consider changes to its policies to support state agencies.</p> <p>ODP will respond to and actively participate in the above initiatives, if requested to do so by the DHS Office of Administration,</p>

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		Governor's Office of Administration, or State Civil Service Commission.
10. Offer P/FDS waiver services to high school seniors interested in work and who transition into competitive, integrated jobs.	ODP established and implemented the "graduate initiative" which provides waiver services for individuals age 21 upon graduation from high school.	Replace.
11. Support the growth and advancement of post-secondary education programs.	ODP revised the definition of Education Support Services to support post-education programs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying that payment can be made through self-direction and Organized Health Care Delivery Systems. (Universities don't have to enroll and bill directly.) • Clarifying that needed on-campus support is covered through the Education Support service or through Companion or In-Home and Community Support. 	Retain.
12. Create service definitions and rates to incentivize providers and support individuals, self-advocates, and families.	In July of 2017, the service definitions in the ID/A waivers were revised. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Employment was revised to include three distinct components of Career Assessment, Job Finding or 	Replace.

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	<p>Development, and Job Coaching and Support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Supported Employment was created as an outcome-based service. • Small Group Employment was revised to include that individuals receiving the service must be paid minimum wage or above. • Benefits Counseling was added. 	

New Strategies and/or Strategies that have been implemented but were not included in the original 2016 list

1.