



## GOALS

To achieve competitive, integrated employment in Nevada goals were identified and prioritized by the Taskforce. Goals include:

2015-2018

### ***Resource Development and Sustainability***

1. Education, employment and other related systems within Nevada have and maintain sufficient resources and funding for competitive, integrated employment.
2. Systems within Nevada implement a reimbursement structure for service providers that increases competitive, integrated employment for people with I/DD.

### ***Collaboration and Coordination***

3. Nevada develops effective partnerships that include all stakeholders to implement competitive, integrated employment.

### ***Professional Development***

4. Nevada has well-trained, competent professionals that educate and prepare people with I/DD to achieve competitive, integrated employment.

2015-2020

### ***Transportation***

5. People with I/DD have affordable and reliable transportation options across all regions of Nevada to participate in all aspects of life.

### ***Employer Engagement, Development and Support***

6. Nevada provides ongoing training and support for employers and their employees with I/DD.
7. Nevada companies have enough information about and access to people with I/DD seeking employment to make informed business decisions to hire them.

2015-2025

### ***Government as a Leader and Model Employer***

8. There are measurable increases in employment of Nevadans with I/DD within the State of Nevada, including local governments and the publicly-funded university system.
9. The State of Nevada, including the publicly-funded university system, is a model employer who supports policies, procedures, regulations and practices to increase opportunities, foster innovation, reduce barriers, facilitate accommodations and informed choice for competitive, integrated employment of people with I/DD consistently across the state.
10. Information is gathered and reported annually on key indicators for competitive, integrated employment across education, employment and other related systems.

### ***Early and Timely School Assessment and Planning for Transitions***

11. Young people with I/DD have work experiences that are typical of their peers.
12. Every individual with I/DD in Nevada transitions to adulthood with vocational experiences and the education that will enable them to obtain competitive, integrated employment.



## Detailed Progress by Goal

### 1. Education, employment and other related systems within Nevada have and maintain sufficient resources and funding for competitive, integrated

Progress has been made regarding funding on three particular fronts which include additional state and federal dollars, restructuring how the Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR)'s Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) structures its budget and the identification and tracking of supplemental funding opportunities. Additionally, there are partnerships and efficiencies that are being developed to support the best use of resources currently available. Each are summarized below.

#### Funding



**Draw-down of Additional Federal Funding.** Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCAs) are drawing down additional Federal funds. Total Federal Funds earned and expended by TPCAs have increased 72 percent from SFY2015 to SFY 2016.<sup>3</sup> There was a federal review by the Rehabilitation Services Administration that mandated changes to these TPCAs in the manner in which match is generated. This caused VR to pause the establishment of any new TPCAs. Once the new process is established VR is open to developing additional third party cooperative arrangements, however, there are staffing considerations involved in the administration of any new arrangements formed.

**Additional State Funds.** In SFYs 2015 and 2016, VR received state grant funds from the Fund for a Healthy Nevada, which was nearly double the amount it received in SFYs 2013 and 2014.

**Restructuring VR Budget.** The existing budget process supplants general fund dollars with funding received through supplemental sources. This prevents VR from growing its budget over time in an effort to enhance its service spectrum. VR has restructured how it built its budget requesting over match dollars from its TPCAs be added to client service funds and will request an exception to the Appropriations Bill, Section 7, to carry forward federal grant funds into the second year that are matched in the first year.

**Identification and Tracking of Supplemental Funding.** The task force has connected with the Chief of Grant Procurement, Coordination, and Management who has agreed to make grant opportunity notifications available to everyone on the task force. All supplemental funding opportunities related to integrated employment being pursued by task force members are being reported on and tracked during monthly meetings.

#### Partnerships

VR has begun collaborative projects with:

- University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)
- School districts and school sites
- Children's Cabinet and the juvenile justice system
- Mental health providers

These collaborative projects spread funding to other systems which support integrated employment efforts.

## Efficiencies

Various State entities are working together to create efficiencies. The Office of Workforce Innovation provides support to the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Governor's Office, and Sector Councils. The Executive Committee of the Governor's Workforce Development Board works with Development Board and the Office of Workforce Innovation to make recommendations regarding workforce funding allocations.

## 2. Systems within Nevada implement a reimbursement structure for service providers that increases competitive, integrated employment of people with I/DD.

Progress has been made in three areas, which include efforts to revise the current rate and reimbursement structure within Nevada, aligning service and standards among service providers, and ensuring that integrated and competitive employment is represented in applicable state plans that are part of the Nevada system of care for people with I/DD. Each of these are summarized below.

### Reimbursement Structure

The Strategic Plan for Integrated Employment identified that current rates for Medicaid-funded providers of employment services are outdated and that the rate setting process as it currently exists is not adequate, and needs to be overhauled. To address this issue, there is interest in exploring studies of rate structures in other states to replicate in Nevada, with Oregon as a potential model.



Additionally, there are four bills being considered during the 2017 legislative session which address the reimbursement structure to include:

- SB 28 would require an annual review of certain rates paid by Medicaid.
- SB 95 would establish a cost study be conducted for personal care services.
- SB 96 would establish a cost study be conducted for all waiver services.
- AB 108 would require all rates be reviewed every 4 years, and make cost comparisons Nevada specific.

To view status of each bill, please go to:

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/79th2017/Reports/>

### Service and Standards Alignment

There are similar services being offered through various State agencies, however, the deployment and reimbursement structures for these services are not aligned. This can cause confusion and conflict for families accessing care as well as providers trying to deliver care. State agencies, such as VR and ADSD, are working together to develop alignment (through shared definitions of services) in an effort to streamline service delivery and create standardized rate structures.

**Focus on Integrated Employment in all State Systems Serving People with I/DD.**

Implementing integrated employment will require cross-agency efforts that stretch beyond VR and throughout ASD. For this reason, it is important that integrated employment is a priority throughout complimentary state plans. To date, 23 state plans include at least one area of focus contained within the strategic plan for integrated employment.

In addition, ASD has been an active member of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) since 2009. SELN is a membership-based network of state intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) agencies committed to improving employment outcomes and making changes in their service systems. SELN prepared a document titled: Funding Strategies Study Recommendations for Nevada. This document summarizes suggestions to realign Nevada’s funding strategy. The document provides a description of the features needed to support high rates of individual participation in integrated employment and recommendations for potential changes for the state.

**3. Nevada develops effective partnerships that include all stakeholders to implement competitive, integrated employment.**

There are a number of efforts underway to develop effective partnerships that benefit integrated employment. State Departments have been building their capacity, agencies are strengthening relationships, and case management systems are being overhauled to support data sharing. Each of these are summarized below.

**Partnership Strengthening**



**Collaboration.** ASD and VR have revised their MOU, establishing a closer working relationship and providing a mechanism to share service providers between the two state agencies who are tasked with the bulk of services which support integrated employment. They are also leveraging their training and technical assistance resources for the benefit of both agencies. The collaboration is intended to ensure continuity of services and strengthened standards for service delivery.

Other collaborations that are occurring between State Departments to support integrated employment include:

- VR and the Department of Education work together to support pre-employment, transition, and other VR related services to students with disabilities. More on this can be found later in the document.
- The Office of Workforce Innovation works with a number of stakeholders such as DETR, Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), local workforce development boards, and the Governor’s Office of Economic Development.
- ASD has a workgroup that is working on the implementation of Career Planning Services under the Home and Community-Based Waiver for Persons with I/DD.

## Partnership Strengthening (CONT)

**Extending Opportunities to Partner Effectively.** VR continues to identify ways to extend its reach beyond the provision of direct support. One example of this includes their contracting with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to develop plans for the provision of pre-employment transition services, to develop and implement plans to spend Federal funds more efficiently and to develop interagency agreements to implement elements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

## Technology Solutions

A common issue identified in multiple state plans is the need to develop a data sharing system that allows State Departments to work better together. Individuals with I/DD seeking employment will access multiple state systems throughout their lifetime.

Having a shared data system will support these efforts significantly. VR has received federal grant funds to pilot a virtual assistant and data sharing software (SARA). They are developing an implementation plan for the system. VR is also requesting an upgrade to its case management system. This upgrade will facilitate better data sharing among agencies and efficiencies of staff time.

4. Nevada has well-trained, competent professionals that educate and prepare people with I/DD to achieve competitive, integrated employment.

Efforts have been made to identify best practices and to increase the number of well-trained, competent professionals in their implementation of best practice service delivery. Other state plans have also identified this need and are working on implementation of this strategy.

## Best Practices



**Research and Development.** There is an identified need to research, track and identify best practice approaches to ensuring integrated employment throughout the state. UNLV is compiling a research brief of best practice approaches the state can consider for customization and future implementation.

**Implementation of Best Practices.** The state has adopted a person-centered planning framework throughout ADSD. Training efforts are underway to support staff implementation of this best practice approach to service.

In addition, VR is working with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to support a standardized training curriculum for the State and other agencies to support customized employment.

The NGCDD received a Communities of Practice Technical Assistance grant from The Employment Learning Community; a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Communities of Practice allows states within this grant who have common interests to come together to share their knowledge, provide solutions to problems, and develop

## Best Practices (CONT)

resources to be used more broadly within their own Consortium/organization/agency.

ADSD is also an active member of SELN, as described earlier in the document. SELN also provides an active community of practice where members meet to connect, collaborate and share information and lessons learned across state lines and system boundaries. SELN provides ADSD with technical assistance which is customized to their unique needs geared towards improving outcomes. ADSD continues to work with SELN and other partner agencies to analyze key elements in the system and to improve integrated outcomes for individuals with I/DD.

### 5. People with I/DD have affordable and reliable transportation options across all regions of Nevada to participate in all aspects of life.

Progress has been made in the areas of improving transportation for people with I/DD, and the distribution of information to support these efforts. Each of these are summarized below.

#### Transportation



Transportation in Nevada is commonly noted as a barrier, particularly for people with I/DD, and those living in rural areas. In FY2014-15, the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) provided funding to the Sierra Nevada Transportation system. They also helped establish a Village Project (Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada/N4) designed to facilitate neighborly connection with time banking, volunteer programs, social activities, and transportation support.

In addition to these efforts, NGCDD also supported the distribution of information about how to use public transportation effectively to ensure that people with I/DD were aware of public transportation options.

In the rural part of the state, the NGCDD awarded a grant to Elko County for the Nevada Rural Transit Association Project. This project created a web-based center where an association of transit providers could share information. This web-based project included an online knowledge center for the public as well as compliant materials for providers. The membership of this association was made up of transit providers and stakeholders. The ultimate goal of the association was to create connectivity between rural communities with metropolitan communities through coordination of services.

VR will soon be able to provide vouchers for consumers to utilize Uber, when appropriate.



## 6. Nevada provides ongoing training and support for employers and their employees with I/DD.

Training employers on the benefits and supports available when hiring employees with I/DD is occurring through VR. Increased efforts are likely in the event that the 700-Hour Program is expanded. This is summarized below.

### **Employer Training**

To support integrated employment, VR has created Business Development Teams to foster relationships with businesses and to provide them outreach training on disability issues and discuss the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.



Overall, VR provided outreach to 23,225 individuals in SFY16.

Additionally, a proposed expansion of the 700-Hour Program, which provides temporary limited appointment of individuals with disabilities into state employment not to exceed 700 hours, will include a training component for those state employers.

### **Employee Supports**

The Business Development Teams have partnered with employers to create work-readiness, on-the-job training programs with Starbucks, PepsiCo, OfficeMax / Office Depot and Zulily. They are in discussions with Walgreens, CVS Health, FedEx, and Jet.com to expand efforts.

## 7. Nevada companies have enough information about and access to people with I/DD seeking employment to make informed business decisions to hire them.

Progress has been made to ensure companies have the information about and access to people with I/DD who are seeking employment. Activities which have occurred are summarized below.

### **Employer Outreach**

VR launched a public relations and marketing campaign in SFY 2015 with employers as its target audience. VR's employer webpage ([vrnevada.org](http://vrnevada.org)) and YouTube success videos feature employers talking about their positive experiences in hiring individuals with disabilities.

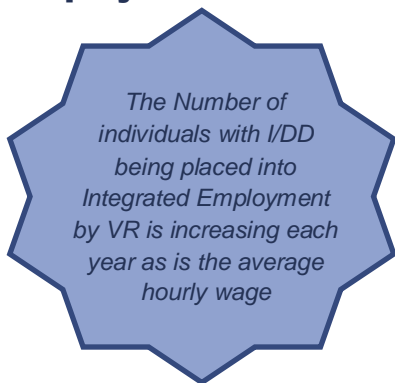
### **Employer Education**

In FY 2014-15, the NGCDD funded ADSD-driven education efforts directed to community-based employers and employer groups so that they are able to make informed business decisions to hire people with I/DD.

8. There are measurable increases in employment of Nevadans with I/DD within the State of Nevada, including local governments and the publicly-funded university system.

This goal has been discussed, with difficulty noted in how the state would measure an increase in employment of Nevadans with I/DD given that there is no current standardized mechanism to collect and compare this information over time. For that reason, the subcommittee has chosen to focus on how it would first collect information on a subsector of this population - the number of individuals with I/DD employed by state government - as a first step to measuring and later addressing this goal.

### Employment Placements



VR does collect information on the number of individual with a disability that are placed into competitive, integrated employment.

- In SFY 2015, VR placed 170 individuals with I/DD into competitive, integrated employment with an average wage of \$9.33/hour (out of 588 eligibilities.)
- In SFY 2016, VR placed 203 individuals with I/DD into competitive, integrated employment with an average wage of \$9.52/hour (out of 685 eligibilities.)
- To date through SFY 2017, VR has placed 172 individuals with I/DD into competitive, integrated employment with an average wage of \$9.59/hour (out of 559 eligibilities.)

As the statistics show, the number of individuals with I/DD being placed into competitive, integrated employment is increasing as is the average hourly wage.

9. The State of Nevada, including the publicly-funded university system, is a model employer who supports policies, procedures, regulations and practices to increase opportunities, foster innovation, reduce barriers, facilitate accommodations and informed choice for competitive, integrated employment of people with I/DD consistently across the state.

The State of Nevada is exploring the expansion of the 700-Hour Program as a first step in becoming a model employer supporting policies and practices aimed at integrated employment.

### 700-Hour Program Expansion

A proposed 2017 bill draft request (AB192) expands the 700-Hour Program throughout state employment. Expansion of the 700-Hour Program would require all State hiring authorities to utilize an employment list containing individuals with disabilities as a first round option to fill state positions. It also supports a mechanism to ensure individuals within state agencies have appropriate training on issues prevalent to people with disabilities in the workplace.

To view status of AB192, please go to:

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/79th2017/Reports/>

## 10. Information is gathered and reported annually on key indicators for competitive, integrated employment across education, employment and other related systems.

The Office of Workforce Innovation has created Sector Councils tasked with issuing recommendations regarding regional information on short-term and long-term job growth.

During the 2017 legislative session, there is a bill (AB 224) which would change the terms (and its corresponding definition) of individuals eligible for care as a result of an intellectual or developmental disability. In addition, the bill, if enacted, would prohibit organizations from contracting to provide for the employment of qualified individuals with ID/DD who are less than 25 years of age from paying less than federal minimum wage.


Core programs under WIOA will begin collecting and reporting on common performance measures starting July 1, 2017. These include:

1. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
2. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
3. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
4. The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, during participation in or within 1 year after exiting from the program.
5. The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and
6. Effectiveness in serving employers.

## 11. Young people with I/DD have work experiences that are typical of their peers.

ADSD and VR have supported programs aimed at providing young people with I/DD work experience. Efforts are summarized below.

### **Student Work Experience**



*ADSD sponsored a career exploration camp to teach 52 students with I/DD real-world experiences*

A **Community Based Career Exploration Camp** has been implemented, a collaborative effort among Washoe County School District, VR, NGCDD, and the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living, designed to teach 52 students with I/DD real-world experience in the workplace through a week-long summer camp.<sup>4</sup> Through this camp, students with I/DD are exposed to opportunities and employment options. They also develop self-advocacy skills and work with community members in fields, such as culinary, industry, manufacturing, and retail.

## **Student Work Experience (CONT)**

**Project F.O.C.U.S.** is a comprehensive post-secondary education program for college-aged students with I/DD. The program provides an inclusive, accessible and productive career education program by incorporating evidence-based research and positive behavior supports that will promote self-determination, community partnerships, and job readiness skills in order to prepare individuals with I/DD for competitive paid employment in the INCLUSIVE community setting. The program, operated by University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), addresses the need to support individuals with I/DD in the Las Vegas Valley and local communities by providing a Post-Secondary Education program that focuses on inclusive Academics, Employment, and Independent Living.

The **Path to Independence** (P2I) Program operated by University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) is an inclusive, two-year, non-degree certificate program offering a college experience to students with I/DD. Each student participates in Person Centered Planning (PCP) each semester. The results of the plan determines the level and direction of academic involvement. The STAR (Students Transitioning to Adult Roles) planning process is used, which includes the areas of Academic Enrichment, Independent Living, Self-Determination, Campus & Community Engagement, and Career Development & Employment.

VR also supports student work experience through the following projects:

- Vocational Opportunities for Inclusive Career Education (VOICE), in collaboration with the Washoe County School District (WCSD).
- Careers, Recreation and Vocational Education (CRAVE), in collaboration with the UNLV.
- Project SEARCH Program, in collaboration with the Clark County School District (CCSD) and local businesses.
- Job Discovery Program, in collaboration with CCSD, Opportunity Village and Desert Regional Center.
- Pathway to Work, in collaboration with Opportunity Village and Desert Regional Center.
- Job Exploration and Expectation Program (JEEP), in collaboration with CCSD.
- Career Development Academy, in collaboration with High Sierra Industries (HSI) and the Northern Nevada Regional Center.
- Various summer camps, including with Alpine Academy, Odyssey Charter School, Western Nevada College (WNC), Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), and Goodwill Industries of Southern Nevada.
- Community-Based Assessments through local businesses.

12. Every individual with I/DD in Nevada transitions to adulthood with vocational experiences and the education that will enable them to obtain competitive, integrated employment.

The State is receiving technical assistance to ensure individuals in Nevada transition into adulthood with the necessary skills and education to obtain competitive, integrated employment. Activities associated with this TA are summarized below.

**Technical Assistance** VR and the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) entered into a technical assistance agreement so that VR can support students with disabilities as they transition out of high school. The technical assistance will support VR in creating innovative programs that provide vocational experiences, work readiness training, self-advocacy training and vocational counseling to support transition age students to obtain competitive, integrated employment.

In addition, in early 2016, DETR published a booklet outlining the stages of transition for students with disabilities ages 14-22.

**Legislative Activities** Assembly Bill (AB64), proposed in the 2017 session, would revise the requirements for receipt of a standard high school diploma for people with disabilities.

**Coordination Efforts** A new statement of stipulations has been developed and fully executed between VR and the Department of Education with the purpose of facilitating and coordinating the receipt of pre-employment transition services, transition services and other Nevada VR services to students with disabilities in order to facilitate a smooth transition from school to post-school employment-related activities, and competitive integrated employment. This cooperation is a requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

## NEXT STEPS

The subcommittee has established a detailed implementation plan to guide its efforts in realizing the goals established in the Strategic Plan for Integrated Employment. It will focus on the following issues in the coming year:

- **Sustain and Grow Support for Integrated Employment:** Support for Integrated Employment is required at multiple levels and mandates the need to continue to elevate the issue with key stakeholders. Over the next year, efforts will take place to celebrate accomplishments and extend support for continued progress.
- **Enhance Funding Mechanisms:** Efforts to enhance funding mechanisms will include the establishment of additional Third Party Cooperative Arrangements as well as revising the rates reimbursement structure for service providers. Additionally, efforts to implement recommendations contained in SELN [Nevada Funding Strategy Study](#) will take place.
- **Deepen Partnerships:** Efforts to deepen existing partnerships between ADSD and VR will continue to take place while cross-coordination with school systems will be strengthened.
- **Implement Best Practices and Operational Efficiencies:** Systems change efforts to position the state and community-based organizations to implement practices and operational efficiencies which support competitive integrated employment will continue to be a focus in the upcoming year.

## PERSISTENT ISSUES

Despite progress made, persistent issues remain which pose barriers to the state in realizing competitive, integrated employment for all individuals. These issues include:

- **Funding:** Despite gains made by VR to draw down additional federal funding, there is still a significant amount of money that is being reverted back to the federal government (approximately 8 million per year).
- **Workforce Issues:** Without an investment in the necessary number and increased quality of staff to support the system, it will be difficult to achieve competitive, integrated employment.
- **Cultural Shift:** An ongoing need to support a cultural shift to employment first and person-centered care still needs to be a focus throughout state and public systems serving people with I/DD.

### Commission on Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD) Integrated Employment Subcommittee Members

Brian Patchett, Chair	Shelley Hendren	Mark L. Olson
Sherry Manning, Vice-Chair	Tiffany Lewis	James Osti
Joshua Baker	Jack Mayes	Cara Paoli
Mary Bryant	Kate McCloskey	Santa Perez
Edward Guthrie	Pat McCloskey	Louis Renshaw
Monica Harrison	Rosie Melarkey	Ken Rodriguez