

**GOVERNMENT AS A LEADER AND MODEL EMPLOYER:** Government can assume a leader's role, act as a model employer for people with I/DD, and set the path for the business community in competitive, integrated employment.

One person suggested new wording of this section:

GOVERNMENT AS A LEADING EMPLOYER OF PERSONS WITH I/DD: As the largest single employer in Nevada, government (state and local) can have an immediate and lasting impact on competitive, integrated employment rates for persons with I/DD, and concurrently demonstrate and develop best practices for employment in partnership with the private for-profit and non-profit sectors.

Goals:

- A minimum of 7% of those employed by the State of Nevada including the university system and by local governments will include persons with I/DD with a target of 2% including individuals with I/DD
  - Change wording of goal: "By FY 2017, the State of Nevada, including local governments and the publicly-funded university system, will achieve 7% or greater rate of new or replacement (FTE?) hires of persons with I/DD who remain in those positions a minimum of 12 months" (1 person)
  - Target of 1.5 % I/DD year 1
    - Change percentage: "Target of 2.5% I/DD year 1" (1 person, 1 other person believed the percentage may need to be adjusted (comment on right))
  - Target of 4% I/DD year 3
    - Change percentage: "Target of 5% I/DD year 3" (1 person, 1 other person believed the percentage may need to be adjusted (comment on right))
- The State of Nevada supports policies, regulations and practices that increase opportunities, foster innovation, reduce barriers, and promote choice
  - Wording change at end: "and promote informed choice" (1 person)
  - Clarification: "Basis for all services should be the person-centered service plan for each individual" (1 person)
  - Change wording of goal: "By FY 2017, the employment policies, procedures, regulations and practices of State of Nevada state and local governments, including the publicly-funded university system, will increase opportunities, foster innovation, reduce barriers, facilitate accommodations, and promote choice for persons with I/DD consistently across the state" (1 person)
- Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes. Information is gathered on key indicators across employment and other related systems and is used to evaluate and track results, inform policy, and improve provider contracts and service agreements
  - Change wording of goal: "By FY 2017, the State of Nevada will be collecting and reporting data about competitive, integrated employment for persons with I/DD" (1 person)
- There are measurable increases in employment of Nevadans with I/DD within the general workforce, earning minimum wage or higher with benefits

**Commented [AP1]:** Two people believe the document does a good job capturing the issues and challenges

One person noted the highlighted portions DO NEED to be a component of the document.

One person noted that all of the objectives are very broad, but cover the essentials.

**Commented [AP2]:** What does this 7% refer to?

**Commented [AP3]:** I think CDC says incidence of IDD in adults over the age of 19 years is <1%. If so, we'll need to adjust the goals for this section.

**Commented [AP4]:** I'd see the following be a part of the regulations, policies and practices going forward: Employment First policies and regulations, where competitive integrated employment is the first option and outcome for the individual, that promote increasing competitive integrated employment (competitive: work resulting in minimum wage or higher, integrated: working with employees who are not disabled).

- Add wording: “There are measureable increases in competitive integrated employment” (1 person)

**Commented [AP5]:** •competitive: work resulting in minimum wage or higher  
•integrated: working with employees who are not disabled

Strategies may include:

### Leadership

- Combine leadership strategies: “Conduct a thorough review of all policies, procedures, regulations and practices to bring all aspects of hiring across all agencies consistent with best practices” (1 person)
- Combine leadership strategies: “Eliminate separate eligibility processes for state services and reduce geographic disparities in terms of services and supports” (1 person)
- Align the statewide infrastructure to implement Nevada’s plan
- Align public policy to promote competitive, integrated employment
  - Add wording to end: “as the first and preferred outcome” (1 person)
- Promote a policy that day habilitation programs will work with individuals with IDD to be self-identified as either 1) a long-term placement due to their likely inability to acquire long-term and stable employment, or 2) a temporary placement with a specific plan in place to establish employable skills and independence
- Mandate coordination between Voc Rehab / Regional Center and school districts
  - Two people noted this was good
  - Include colleges, universities, Center for Independent Living, and the State Department of Education (1 person)
- Promote policies to protect SSI benefits against income earned to support access to needed supports that contribute to an adequate quality of life
- Eliminate separate eligibility processes for state services and
  - -(This strategy is incomplete)
- Promote consistent services across the state and reduce geographic disparities in terms of services and supports

**Commented [AP6]:** One person would like all Leadership strategies condensed into these two bullets.

**Commented [AP7]:** We need to assure that all changes in “infrastructure honor the choices of the individual as stated in their person-centered service plan.

**Commented [AP8]:** I have two problems with this: 1) this is very judgmental because it is very black and white, you’re either qualified or unqualified, there is no room for improvement or progress. What happens when a person is deemed unqualified, but five years later is now qualified? Regardless of one’s disability, a person is able to participate in competitive and integrated employment. and 2) who will make decisions. This should be a person-centered plan that focuses on the individual’s informed choice. Without a person-centered plan, the person can be influenced by other voices who benefit from the status quo.

### Model Employer

- Combine model employer strategies: “Evaluate the structure of each new or replacement position as a potential opportunity to hire a person with I/DD by considering necessary accommodations and approaches such as job sharing or job carving” (1 person)
- Combine model employer strategies: “Promote each new or replacement position to all agencies, nonprofits and advocacy groups serving persons with I/DD to reach the largest pool of candidates” (1 person)
- Combine model employer strategies: “Reorient candidate sourcing, evaluation, interviewing and hiring procedures using best practices to accommodate persons with I/DD” (1 person)
- Create a fast-track hiring process for people with I/DD
- Create retention plans for employees with I/DD
- Implement innovative approaches such as job carving and job sharing
  - Add wording: “approaches such as job shadowing, customized employment, job carving” (1 person)

**Commented [AP9]:** One person would like the Model Employer and Employer, Engagement, Development, and Support strategies to be condensed to these 3 bullets.

**Commented [AP10]:** Civil service rules and labor contracts may be an obstacle. We need to identify the obstacles and address them.

- Promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities to the workforce by making integrated employment a priority, and implementing the same strategies used with the broader workforce
  - 3 people noted this was good
  - Add wording: “the workforce by making competitive integrated employment” (1 person)
- Co-locate vocational rehabilitation counselors and services in high school

**Commented [AP11]:** This statement is similar to what Employment First is working towards.

**Commented [AP12]:** Aren't BVR staff already in schools?

### Employer Engagement, Development and Support

- Establish one point of contact for businesses at the state
- Dedicate staff with business expertise who can make the business case for hiring individuals with I/DD to employers
- Promote public/private partnerships
- Enact policy changes to support employers
- Provide support to understand the impact of work on benefits and supports is essential for implementing integrated employment
  - Add wording: “is essential for implementing competitive integrated employment” (1 person)
- Develop a structure for ongoing stakeholder involvement to support local coalitions that can link providers, businesses, schools and families with individuals with I/DD
- Support partnerships and resources for employers to help them manage legal, tax, and employment requirements Engage a number of industries, including small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures to participate in competitive, integrated employment
  - 2 people noted this was good
- Implement employer incentives and supports including
  - provision of tax incentives to employers that hire individuals with I/DD
  - provision of a workplace stipend to mentor and support co-workers with I/DD in the workplace
  - provision of information and education among employers and co-workers about the individual needs of people with I/DD in the workplace with access to supports when challenges arise

**Commented [AP13]:** Las Vegas' major employers are all in the hospitality industry and most of these employers have labor contracts. If these contracts do not allow preferences for hiring, job carving and customized employment, someone will need to address these issues.

**Commented [AP14]:** One person wanted Employer Engagement, Development and Support to be its own section. The suggestion is listed at the end of this document.

**Commented [AP15]:** When we want to promote access to services for people with disabilities we use the “no wrong door” strategy. Should we use the “no wrong door” strategy for interested employers?

**Commented [AP16]:** Are there current policies that impede employers? If so they should be addressed. But the reason employers hire and retain people with disabilities is because it's a perceived as a good business decision.

What kind of changes and supports?

**Commented [AP17]:** To whom do we want to link people up with?

**Commented [AP18]:** The reason employers hire and retain people with disabilities is because it's a perceived as a good business decision, not because of incentives, etc.

### Outcome measurement and review process

- Combine Outcome Measurement and Review Process strategies: “Establish data collection and reporting systems that measure progress across key indicators, evaluate and document outcomes, and can be used to inform policy and improve practices among all key constituencies” (1 person)
- Establish outcomes tied to longevity of employment, wages, benefits and satisfaction in the workplace
  - Add wording: “longevity of competitive integrated employment” (1 person)
- Measure appropriateness of placement including individual and employer satisfaction
- Collect data beginning in school to track, follow and measure key data elements including assessment, placement, retention, wages and satisfaction
  - Change wording of “placement”: “including assessment, employment outcome, retention” (1 person)

**Commented [AP19]:** We need to be careful in establishing the “norms”. If providers perceive the “norms” as unreasonable Nevada may have few (if any) providers for these services.

**Commented [AP20]:** How will the employer provide this information on the employee? This could be confidential information that employers are not comfortable providing

**Commented [AP21]:** If we want to change the expectations of people with disabilities and their families we need to start in school.

- Track outcomes at an individual and systems level with an annual review and refinement of statewide strategies
- Shared on a regular basis with other state agencies to report results and improve quality

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY: Nevada doesn't have sufficient resources to implement competitive, integrated employment and many are concerned that state and federal funds are not being utilized to their fullest potential. A lack of sufficient resources and the need for sustainable funding strategies threatens the success of any plan or system developed by Nevada. Funding, coupled with the need to overhaul the rate setting process is essential to the success of integrated employment in Nevada. Ensuring sufficient resources for the services that promote competitive, integrated employment is a critical issue to many stakeholders.

Add wording in second to last sentence: "is essential to the success of competitive integrated employment" (1 person)

Goals:

- Systems within Nevada will increase resources and funding for competitive, integrated employment
  - 2 people noted this was good, one said funding should go towards competitive integrated employment first
- Systems within Nevada will review, define, revise, implement and enforce a reimbursement structure for service providers that increases competitive, integrated employment of persons with I/DD
  - 2 people noted this was good

**Commented [AP22]:** We need to assure that there are adequate resources in the system to support all requested in an individual's person-centered plan. We also need to assure that there is a "safety net" so if an individual tries a community placement and the placement does not work, there's a place to go back to.

**Commented [AP23]:** I am not sure what we mean by "enforce"? All services should be driven by the choices of each individual as stated in their person-centered plan.

Strategies may include:

- Establish a funding and rate plan for sustainability
  - Add wording to end of bullet: "that includes braided and blended funding across agencies, and re-balancing funds and staff" (1 person)
- Access all available resources and funding for programs and services for individuals with I/DD and ensure funding is sufficient so that quality services and supports are available as needed for long-term employment success
  - Add wording: "available as needed for long-term competitive integrated employment" (1 person)
- Maximize and leverage existing resources including actively seeking all funding available including Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) benefits, and all Medicaid/WIOA and SSI/SSDI resources
- Maximize available state and federal resources through improved rate and payment systems offered by the RSA Section 110 dollars to increase competitive employment
  - Add wording at end: "competitive integrated employment" (1 person)
- Combine both "Maximize" bullets into: "Maximize and leverage existing resources including actively seeking all funding available including Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) benefits, and all Medicaid/WIOA, SSI/SSDI resources, and RSA Section 110 dollars" (1 person)

**Commented [AP24]:** What effect will Medicaid Managed Care have on the sustainability of the funding for community integrated employment?

- Develop sustainability plans to respond to funding changes and the WIAQ-WIOA
- Develop new and promote existing partnerships and collaborations between all state agencies charged with supporting people with disabilities
  - Change wording: "all state agencies and non-profits statewide that support people with disabilities" (1 person).
- Pursue alternative funding through private foundations and grants
  - Change wording of "alternative:" "Pursue complementary funding" (1 person)
- Explore entrepreneurial ventures that could generate revenue to go back into the system

**Commented [AP25]:** Would be great if the state could allocate small amount of funds for grants for different agencies to implement and disseminate new practices.

**Commented [AP26]:** Ability/One contracts and Preferred Purchase contracts fit this description.

**COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION:** Collaboration and coordination is needed between schools and the state agencies serving individuals with I/DD in terms of resources, data sharing, eligibility processes, and transition planning and implementation.

Add wording: "needed between schools, businesses, service providers, nonprofits, and state agencies serving individuals" (1 person)

Goal:

Nevada will develop effective partnership to implement competitive, integrated employment State agencies, school districts and service providers collaborate effectively to implement competitive, integrated employment

Add wording to end: "as the first and preferred outcome" (1 person).

Condense wording: "State agencies, school districts and service providers collaborate effectively to implement competitive, integrated employment" (1 person)

Strategies may include:

- Establish memorandum of understanding (MOUs) with key state and local agency partners, such as vocational rehabilitation, education, mental health, and the state Medicaid agency to remove barriers to employment supports as people transition from one funding stream to another
  - Add wording near end: "to remove barriers to competitive integrated employment" (1 person)
- Expand innovative partnerships and collaborations could leverage resources and expand opportunities for employment. This includes projects like customized employment, VOICE, Project Search and other pilot efforts.
- Secure funding to implement innovative projects statewide
- Implement data sharing policies, practices and systems with state agencies, school districts and providers of competitive, integrated employment services
- Identify redundancies and reduce duplication of efforts
- Streamline eligibility processes to eliminate waste and promote seamless service transitions

**Commented [AP27]:** Ensure these programs are in compliance with IDEA

**Commented [AP28]:** Do we want "statewide" projects or do we want projects throughout the State?

**Commented [AP29]:** We need to encourage competition and we need to assure that people with disabilities have a choice of service providers.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Appropriate assistance is needed for both Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) and Job Developers to improve outcomes for job seekers with I/DD, including the use of best practices

Goal:

- Nevada invest in the funding, development, training, and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce, building the skills of job coaches and developers, supervisors, and key staff working with professionals that helps individuals with I/DD attain complete, integrated employment
  - Add wording to end: "as the first and preferred outcome" (1 person)

**Commented [AP30]:** Doesn't Nevada already have access to training through San Diego State & RSA? What do we need that they do not provide?

Strategies may include:

- Link state colleges' and universities' disability services with career services
- Incorporate evidence based and best practices into community college and university curriculum
- Incorporate career-readiness content into the educational curriculum, linking state college and university disability services with career services
  - 1 person suggested removing the above strategy
- Create classes that teach how to provide students with specific knowledge and skills to be successful
  - 1 person suggested removing the above strategy
- Add strategy: "Create a minor in IDD Employment Services to create a trained workforce" 1 person
- Add strategy: "Change the rate structure to raise salaries to levels commensurate with careers in the field, rather the just hourly jobs that pay like McDonalds and Starbucks" (1 person)
- Add strategy: "Promote and support the Direct Service Professional positions as meaningful human services and economic development careers rather than administrative positions" (1 person)

**Commented [AP31]:** If we are ensuring colleges are doing these things we also need to ensure that related agencies are doing the same.....

**Commented [AP32]:** How? We can't ensure what college professors use in their classes and in their curriculum. I don't see the cause and effect.

**Commented [AP33]:** All four of these points are very abstract and hard to implement and I don't see, by doing these, how they will produce the outcome we want.

EARLY AND TIMELY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING FOR TRANSITIONS: Transition and career-readiness services for youth with I/DD should be provided from middle school on to begin shifting expectations toward work and a career. Commonly these services start at high school, but research suggests that starting earlier leads to better outcomes.

**Commented [AP34]:** This is a good and true statement but it shouldn't just be left to the schools to improve employment outcomes. In fact WIOA does mention school district involvement with VR's collaboration.

Goals:

- Young people with I/DD have work experiences that are typical of other teenagers and young adults
- Every individual with I/DD attending a school in Nevada will participate in an assessment process to identify their interest and capacity, and be provided training supports and placement that match those attributes
  - Wording change: Replace the word "Placement" with "employment outcomes" (1 person)

**Commented [AP35]:** I believe that research shows that the best predictor of getting and keeping a job after high school is to have two experiences while you are in high school.

**Commented [AP36]:** We need to work with the students and their families to raise expectations and the best time to do that is when they are in middle school

The phrase "match their attributes" is very demeaning.

Strategies may include:

- Add strategy: "Leverage school district funding to provide for non-traditional employment focused learning experiences, such as college classes or job development/OJT's" (1 person)

- Incorporate career-readiness content into the educational curriculum, linking state college and university disability services with career services
- Provide students with specific knowledge and skills to be successful
- Promote hands-on work experience during high school, whether it is paid or not
- ~~Provide students with specific knowledge and skills to be successful~~
- ~~Promote hands-on work experience during high school, whether it is paid or not~~
- Offer a hybrid of classroom and work-based education
- Provides classes in job readiness and hands-on work experience onsite at businesses to students with intellectual and developmental I/DD
- Focus on careers in high-tech and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields
  - ~~Remove the above bullet (1 person)~~
- Offer time-limited, supported employment transition experience and reimburse employers for students' training costs
  - ~~Add wording: "supported and competitive integrated employment transition" (1 person)~~
- Develop a customized approach to serving individuals with I/DD in their employment needs
  - ~~Add wording: "in their competitive integrated employment needs" (1 person)~~
- Use assistive technology wherever possible and promote tele-services is essential
- Expose individuals with I/DD to many different options and skill sets to create a pipeline for various industries in need of workers
  - ~~Revise wording: "Offer students with I/DD the opportunity to participate in many" (1 person)~~
- Implement services to promote employment first in day habilitation settings including
  - staff training
  - person-centered supports
  - exposure to volunteer opportunities
  - development of soft skills
  - more ways to be out in the community in a variety of settings
    - ~~Change wording: "a variety of" to "integrated" (1 person)~~
  - transportation so people can get to places in the community
  - ~~Add bullet: Pre-employment transition services as defined in WIOA (1 person)~~
- Make resources/services available to help youth with I/DD transition including
  - Field trips to new school campuses
    - ~~Revise wording: "Field trips to new integrated school campuses" (1 person)~~
  - Job shadowing opportunities, including summer work experiences
    - ~~Add to end of sentence: "in a competitive and integrated environment" (1 person)~~
  - Life skills training
  - Develop transition planning as a separate and unique process that is initiated as early as possible (middle school)
  - Develop a "life plan" component to the transitional process to support clearly identified steps for skills development and actions necessary for transition purposes (guardianship paperwork, Voc Rehab/regional center applications, etc.).

**Commented [AP37]:** Some of these strategies are too obvious and goes without saying.

**Commented [AP38]:** This has to be integrated and, if paid, needs to be at or above minimum wage.

**Commented [AP39]:** Duplicates

**Commented [AP40]:** Can this be combined with one of the other strategies?

As long as the experiences promote competitive integrated employment as the first and preferred option.

**Commented [AP41]:** What does this mean?

**Commented [AP42]:** Don't we already do this?

**Commented [AP43]:** Las Vegas' major employers are all in the hospitality industry and most of these employers have labor contracts. If these contracts do not allow preferences for hiring, job carving and customized employment, someone will need to address these issues.

- Change wording: Change “life plan” to “person-centered planning” (1 person)
  - Increase institutional knowledge on the part of school districts of resources available and provision of such information in a timely fashion to assist families in making informed decisions

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation to and from work, school, and doctor’s appointments is not widely available to individuals with I/DD, or difficult to navigate due to their condition. A number of barriers and needed improvements were identified as essential to support transportation for consumers to individual work places.

Wording addition: “Transportation to and from work, school, and doctor’s appointments is not widely available or reliable to individuals with I/DD” (1 person)

Goal:

- Expand and enhance transportation options for persons with I/DD in all regions of Nevada
- Add goal: “Improve the reliability of all transportation options, while ensuring the affordability” (1 person)

Strategies may include:

- Expand and promote use of taxi vouchers
- Develop rural paratransit service options
- Provide travel training services (in high school and for adult users)
- Provide driver’s license support for high-functioning individuals with I/DD
- Create a system to promote pick-ups and drop-offs at high schools to encourage access to worksites after school
  - Wording addition: “access to competitive integrated worksites after school” (1 person)
- Adopt policies that allow for more flexibility for pick-ups and drop-offs of individuals with I/DD
- Add strategy: “Create a system for paid/reimbursed ride-sharing” (1 person)
- Add strategy: “Reimburse employers for arranging hired transportation for employees” (1 person)

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT: A steady supply of work-ready persons with I/DD is only half the equation in competitive, integrated employment. A steady, informed demand from private employers statewide is essential. For many private employers, the biggest barriers are lack of information about the benefits of hiring persons with I/DD, where to find and how to onboard qualified candidates, how to facilitate accommodations, assess liability, and change internal cultures.

**Commented [AP44]:** The presentations at the last meeting appeared to show that the public transportation system will never be able to meet the needs for people with disabilities. Are there alternatives to the public transportation system (e.g. ride sharing or car-pooling)? Can we incentivize people without disabilities to provide these rides?

**Commented [AP45]:** I think we should reach out to all ground transportation providers for their input on how they can assist. We may want to begin with the Nevada Taxicab Authority.

**Commented [AP46]:** Already being done, but can be expanded.

**Commented [AP47]:** One person was not sure what these refer to.

**Commented [AP48]:** Is this in reference to Paratransit service? If so, we need to be careful that we do not violate the ADA since we would be asking for special treatment based on disability. Special exceptions could be made for non ADA trips, maybe handled by a supplemental provider.

### **Goals:**

1. Nevada companies have enough information about and access to persons with I/DD seeking employment to make informed business decisions to hire them.
2. Nevada companies, in 10 years or less, hire enough persons with I/DD into competitive, integrated employment positions to bring the employment rate for persons with I/DD commensurate with the rate for persons without disabilities.

### **Strategies**

1. Establish a point person in an appropriate agency (DETR?) in each region of the state who has real world business experience and serves as the outreach leader to businesses, and liaison between agencies and businesses (think: "entrepreneur-in-residence").
2. Pursue public/private partnerships with businesses and nonprofits to work with DETR, school districts, ADSD and other relevant agencies to provide technical assistance and resources to be used in the education and training of persons with I/DD for real world competitive, integrated employment positions.
3. Create partnerships with local and state economic development authorities, businesses and nonprofits to mentor and support persons with I/DD to start up and develop entrepreneurial ventures.
4. Utilize business owners and managers in Nevada and other states who have effectively hired and retained persons with I/DD to relate their stories, demonstrate the benefits and share their knowledge and experience on how to create competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

**Commented [AP49]:** This is the suggested Employment Engagement, Develop, and Support section.