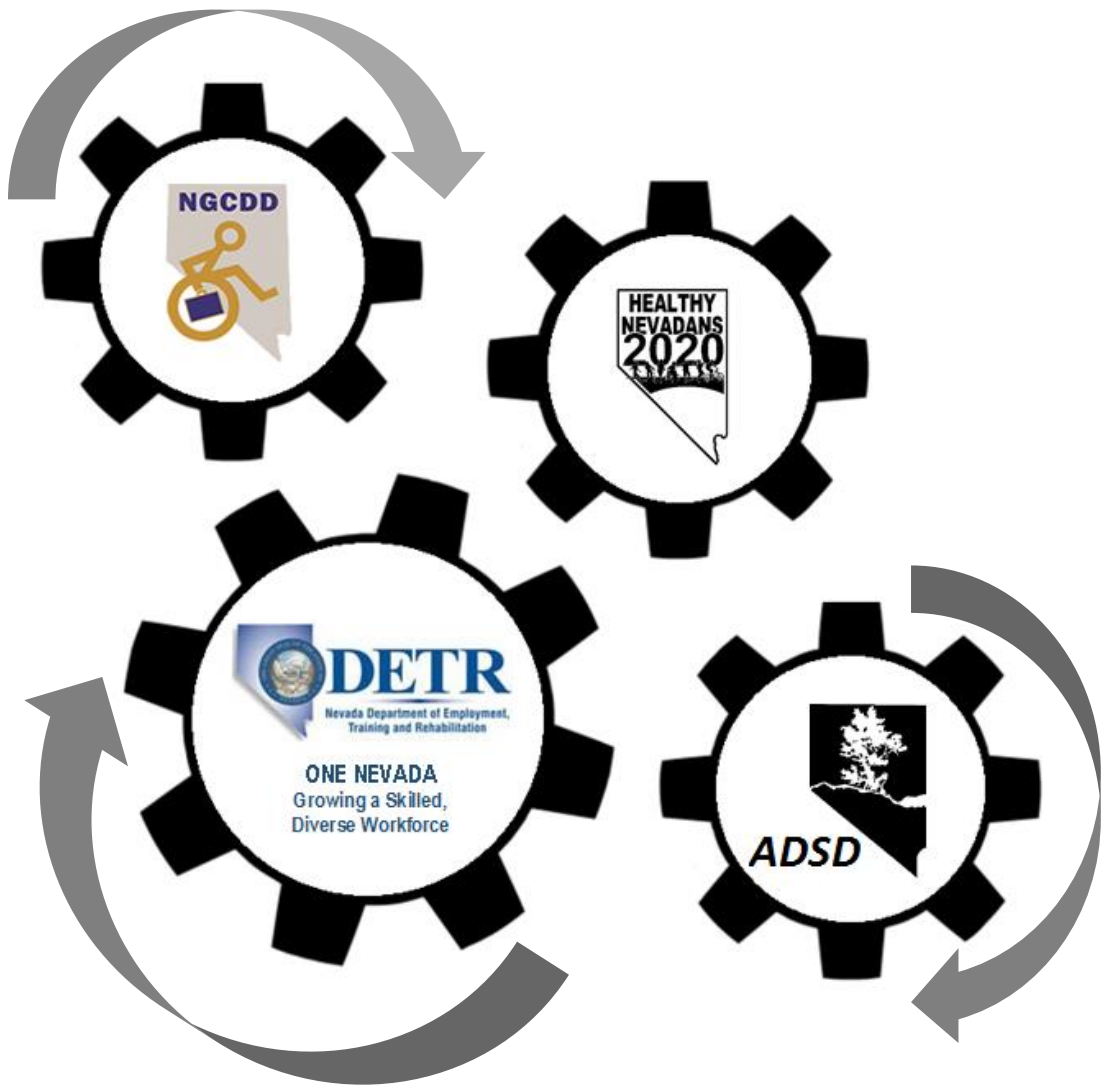




2015-
2025

Nevada's Strategic Plan on Integrated Employment

Developed by the Governor's Taskforce on
Integrated Employment



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This plan was developed by Social Entrepreneurs, Inc., whose mission is to improve people’s lives by strengthening organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

On July 21, 2014, through Executive Order 2014-16, the Governor’s Taskforce on Integrated Employment (herein referred as “Taskforce”) was established by Brian Sandoval, Governor of Nevada. The Taskforce is responsible for examining and evaluating current employment programs, resources, funding, available training, and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (referred to throughout as I/DD), and for providing a report to the Governor, on or before July 1, 2015.

The Taskforce is also responsible for developing a three, five, and ten-year strategic plan (2015-2025) that will result in “creating a more integrated workforce and expanding competitive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.”

A review of state and national literature identified the following key opportunities that Nevada could address in its plan. More details on the research related to these findings are detailed in the 2015 [Integrated Employment Research Report](#). The Research Report was presented to the Taskforce and used to develop its strategic plan.

- **Government as a model employer**

Government represents a significant opportunity to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Government can assume a leader’s role, act as a model employer for people with disabilities, and set the path for the business community in integrated employment. Creating a fast-track hiring process for people with disabilities, focusing on retention of these employees, and setting hiring goals are examples of actions that government can adopt to cultivate an environment that encourages employment for people with disabilities.

- **Business as an employer and partner**

The business community is critical to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Many businesses are willing to hire people with I/DD, but they need support from schools and government to address the barriers that people with disabilities face. Encouraging the business community to play a stronger role as a partner in integrated employment requires understanding the business perspective. Government should not rely solely on the business community but instead act as a long-term support agent and resource.

Promoting Competitive, Integrated Employment

People with disabilities face unique barriers such as low expectations for their future and lack of work-based experience. Students with disabilities may not expect to get a job after they leave high school, and many of them do not receive the same kind of work-based experiences as their non-disabled peers. It is important to improve employment outcomes by offering individuals the support they need to successfully enter the workforce

(The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), 2012)

It is essential that government change its approach with businesses regarding employing people with disabilities. Government should not appeal to businesses' corporate responsibility, but should instead show businesses how hiring people with disabilities will meet businesses' needs (The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), 2012).

- **Early and timely school assessment and planning for transitions**

Transition and career-readiness services for youth with disabilities 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. Strategies include incorporating career-readiness content into the educational curriculum, linking state college and university disability services with career services, and providing students with specific knowledge and skills to be successful. In addition, hands-on work experience during high school, whether it is paid or not, increases the chances of youth with disabilities finding employment with higher wages after they graduate.

- **A cultural shift**

It is critical to address the traditional paradigm of “prepping young people with I/DD for a life of benefits” and change it to “prepping young people with I/DD to a life of work.” State policies and strategies should promote the inclusion of people with I/DD to the workforce by making competitive, integrated employment a priority, and implementing the same strategies used with the broader workforce.

- **Coordinated schools and economic development authorities**

Close coordination between schools and economic development authorities is beneficial for young people with I/DD. This allows schools to help students with disabilities develop the right skills they need to enter the workforce. Employers then benefit from a broader pool of skilled applicants.

- **Sustainable funding**

Leveraging limited resources and utilizing multiple funding streams is very important to improve competitive, integrated employment for people with I/DD. This includes ensuring that Nevada is fully matching the federal funding for Vocational Rehabilitation. Other strategies include capitalizing on the numerous federal programs, connecting with private-sector and philanthropic resources, and maximizing the efforts of disability experts.

- **Orientation to results**

It is also important to set and measure progress toward employment goals and the return on investment of disability employment programs. Information on progress can be used to improve programs and encourage others to participate in them.

CURRENT SITUATION

In 2013, the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities published a position paper on integrated employment. The paper stated, "The benefits of integrated employment for individuals with IDD are well established in nationwide literature, however, movement from segregated settings has been slow and the percentage working in integrated employment has been flat since the 1990s (Butterworth et al., 2013). In Nevada, the percentage of individuals with IDD in community based programs has increased since the 1990s."



The paper went on to make recommendations that informed the later executive order, established by Governor Brian Sandoval. The executive order established the Taskforce and charged it with examining a number of issues, with the goal that the,

"administration intends to improve cooperation and collaboration among state agencies, community leaders, non-profit organizations and businesses to enhance and strengthen supported employment systems, education, training, and services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, thereby encouraging their success, expanding their ability to make informed choices, and promoting a more integrated workforce."
Executive order 2014-16

From December 2014 to March 2015, the Taskforce on Integrated Employment guided a number of activities to understand the current situation in Nevada related to competitive, integrated employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). This included research and outreach across the state to explore areas of strengths and weaknesses within the existing system as well as opportunities to strengthen service outcomes.

Outreach included:

- **The Alliance for Full Participation State Team Scorecard** was used to evaluate state policies, practices and strategies that impact opportunities for competitive, integrated employment.
- **Ratings of Recommendations** of the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) Position Paper were conducted by Taskforce members.

- **Key Informant Interviews** were conducted with 13 experts to assess the various systems providing individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities with employment training, opportunities and supports.
- **Focus groups** with 93 persons and/or their parents/caregivers were facilitated to identify opportunities and challenges within the existing system.
- **Consumer Surveys** from 356 people or family members were used by the Taskforce to help describe the current situation and make recommendations for systems improvements.



The 2015 Integrated Employment Outreach Summary Report is a companion document to this strategic plan and provides detailed analysis of the outreach results and recommendations that were considered by the Taskforce in response to Executive Order 2014-16 and which informed the development of the strategic plan.

A number of themes emerged from an analysis of the outreach. Some themes were cross-cutting and applied to the overall population of people living with I/DD in Nevada. Other needs were specific to target populations such as those living in northern, southern, and rural/frontier areas of Nevada. Understanding and addressing these needs is essential to the success of Nevada’s strategic plan.

Shared Definition and Vision: There is a lack of a shared definition of what competitive, integrated employment is, what should be measured, and what it means to provide choice or options. Consumer surveys clearly identify three areas that are priorities for people with I/DD. They include: working in a job they like, having access to job training resources, and having the opportunity to earn a wage that is fair for the work they do.

Government as a Model and Leader: Key informants and focus group participants both identified the critical role the state can play in implementing competitive, integrated employment. The state could play a tremendous leadership role by employing people with I/DD and using innovative approaches such as job carving and job sharing. This would also afford the state the vocabulary to speak with employers

"IT'S NOT OUR KIDS WITH I/DD THAT ARE THE BARRIER. IT'S THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE RAISED HERE THAT HAVE HAD LITTLE TO NO EXPOSURE TO PEOPLE WITH I/DD AND THEIR FEARS, INTOLERANCE, AND POOR UNDERSTANDING. EXPOSE THE NEXT GENERATION OF "TYPICALS" TO THOSE WITH I/DD AT A VERY YOUNG AGE AND IN 20 YEARS YOU WILL HAVE A GREATER ACCEPTANCE IN THE WORK FORCE."

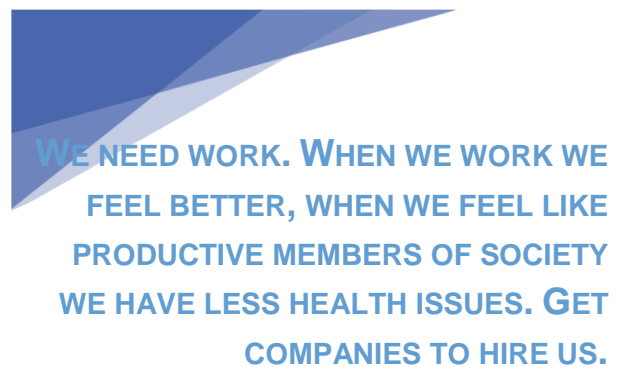
Survey Respondent

knowledgably about what works and how best to integrate people with I/DD into their workforce. Key informants noted that the bureaucracy and risk management constraints at the state often are barriers to the state’s ability to employ persons with I/DD.

Community Awareness: More community awareness and understanding of resources, needs and the service delivery system is needed for individuals, families, providers, employers, and community members to create an environment where competitive, integrated employment can be successful.

Collaboration and Coordination: Collaboration and coordination is needed between schools and the state agencies serving people with I/DD in terms of resources, data sharing, eligibility processes, and transition planning and implementation. Collaboration is occurring at the state level but needs to be pushed down to the local level. In addition, transportation is a key factor in success and transportation must be seen as a partner and collaborator rather than a resource to improve. Finally, no collaboration will work if it doesn’t include people with I/DD and their family members at every level of the discussion.

Employer Engagement: A lack of sufficient opportunities for meaningful work was identified repeatedly by key informants, focus group participants, and in stakeholder surveys. More large, small, and entrepreneurial business engagement is needed across the state. The state could play a tremendous leadership role by modeling approaches to setting goals and employing individuals with I/DD, and engaging employers in conversations about how the state overcomes barriers that employers are also likely to face.



SURVEY COMMENT

Resource Development and

Sustainability: A lack of adequate 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 competitive, integrated employment in Nevada. Sufficient resources or the lack thereof was mentioned in every focus group and by every key informant in some context. Therefore, ensuring adequate resources for the services that promote competitive, integrated employment is a critical issue to many stakeholders.

Changing Landscape: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has been adopted but final rules have not been published. Ongoing coordination and identification of the implications of WIOA is essential during planning and implementation of any system changes. In addition, Nevada’s education system is currently undergoing substantive changes with the likelihood of more to follow. Ensuring that people with I/DD don’t get further lost or left behind while schools implement the Common Core or adjust to other changes enacted by the

2015 legislature will be critical. Ensuring schools are actively at the table in all implementation discussions is essential.

Results in Response to the Executive Order

Key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, results from a State Scorecard rating and Taskforce input provided information on issues to be examined per the Executive Order. Key findings include:

STUDENT SERVICES: Students with I/DD are most often identified prior to kindergarten entry, frequently through parent initiated assessments, and in coordination with ChildFind and/or Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS). While school districts do identify students with I/DD, there are no consistent assessment tools utilized across school districts, and resources (including transitional supports) available post-identification are insufficient to meet students' needs.

Existing methods for identifying students with intellectual/developmental disabilities, the implementation of vocational assessments, and the delivery of employment-related planning and training services are not consistent or sufficient across the state. Proactive engagement of individuals to identify interests and match their interests to training opportunities are needed. Earlier intervention, access to more options, and opportunities and better transitions through collaboration, coordination, and shared resources are needed.

WAGE SETTING PRACTICES:

The current practice of paying people with I/DD less than a living wage was identified as a barrier to achieving meaningful employment practices. The impact of wages earned on an individual's SSI benefits exacerbates the challenge as those that acquire employment risk losing access to necessary supports which cannot be acquired on the wages typically earned. Achieving competitive wages, and implementing strategies to address and achieve placements



I WANT MY CHILD TO HAVE OPTIONS AND A CHANCE TO MAKE MINIMUM WAGE. I WANT A FUTURE FOR MY CHILD. I WILL NOT ENCOURAGE MY CHILD TO EXPERIENCE SERVITUDE ENVIRONMENTS THAT DO NOT ALLOW FOR HER TO GAIN NEW SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE GROWTH. WE NEED TO CHANGE THE ATTITUDE OF MANY SERVICE PROVIDERS AND TEACH THEM ABOUT HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT TO SHARE WITH THE COMMUNITY. THEY SHOULD NOT BE HIDDEN AWAY IN INSTITUTIONAL TYPE SETTINGS.

Survey Comment

that are in the highest and best interest of the individual requires a shared definition of competitive, integrated employment. It also requires education and supports for individuals, families, schools, providers and employers. Finally, a pool of employers to provide choices for jobs is needed.

Proactive engagement of businesses is critical for competitive, integrated employment. Job carving and job sharing are two approaches that can achieve placements in the highest and best interest, but in all cases, the focus must fit with the individuals' interests and skills, as well as the employers' needs. Current rates for providers are based on an outdated formula, using ratios that can act as a disincentive to promoting employment and achieving the outcomes sought in the Executive Order. The rate setting process as it currently exists is not adequate and needs to be overhauled.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS:

Collaboration at the state level was noted as a strength by a majority of key informants.

However, focus groups indicated that these collaborations often don't exist at the local level. Focus group participants felt that parents, educational institutions, state agencies and community partners do not work in partnership for the benefit of consumers. More opportunities for shared assessments, communications, and resources are needed and could be addressed through effective collaboration. Nevada has many examples of positive collaboration but has few resources to take those collaborations or resulting pilot projects to scale in a way that would have a statewide impact.



Key informants also stated that employers and individuals with I/DD need to be at the table consistently. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are needed between school systems (districts and higher education), Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional Centers, transportation, and providers to outline roles, responsibilities and agreements.

FUNDING MECHANISMS: 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. In addition, many key informants agreed there is a tremendous need to develop alternative funding options. A minority of key informants were very concerned that the competitive, integrated employment plan would result in a loss of resources for those most vulnerable and in their opinion, unable to work.

Sustainability was a recurring theme when key informants discussed goals, policies or programs. There is a need to support additional services and individualized supports within the educational system, and this is even more pronounced within the adult service systems. While

at least one school district is leveraging federal matching funds to support employment and transitional supports, this strategy is not being utilized throughout the state.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION: Information is not widely available to families in their search for services and supports. School districts, community-based providers, and state agencies' staff are not fully aware of resources themselves, leaving parents and consumers with the responsibility of finding out what is available and how to access care. There was consensus that neither people with I/DD, nor their families, are provided sufficient information to make informed decisions concerning training, services and employment opportunities. Access to information was identified as a key concern at every level of the system, from individuals and families, to communities and statewide systems.

DAY HABILITATION SERVICES: There was considerable concern from many key informants about the effectiveness, demand, and long-term need for "day habilitation" and sheltered workshops in community training centers. At the same time, parents in focus groups and on surveys expressed concern about the need for day habilitation services and more funding for them, particularly in rural areas. Key informants felt that day habilitation should be included in options for people with I/DD but voiced concern that they are sometimes provided as the only viable option, rather than competitive, integrated employment being the first option offered. Day habilitation settings were often not seen as a resource that supports employment preparedness due to a perceived lack of opportunities for skill development.

Day habilitation settings can offer ways for people to contribute to their community and add value. Others noted that they are often staffed by a low skilled workforce. Key informants felt the structure of these settings could be enhanced or reconfigured to support temporary placement based on individualized and progressive skill development for consumers. Truly promoting these services as training centers for assessment and skill acquisition was identified by multiple key informants as a way to enhance the service delivery system. Focus group members and key

I think it's very important to open many doors available to individuals with I/DD in our community. Education is definitely key for community businesses. I also think it's extremely important to find jobs that focus on individual interest and abilities which is not always the case. If we did more of this it would promote longevity with jobs.

Survey Comment



informants felt this will only be possible if these services are supported by highly qualified, skilled, and consistent staffing levels.

TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTS: Transitional supports for individuals are often insufficient to prepare people with I/DD beyond their high school experience. Within the educational system, transitional plans are often established too late and include only rudimentary goals. Additionally, staffing, such as transitional officers are not always available to families. Within the adult serving system (Vocational Rehabilitation and Regional Centers), services are not often initiated prior to the age of 18, and when they are, few resources exist to offer students. Current approaches and opportunities to allow families to plan for transition services in the K-12 setting are not consistent across the state and were not seen as sufficient by the majority of key informants. This issue was frequently cross-referenced with the lack of access to information, particularly about programs and options. Providing transition supports earlier in a person’s life was mentioned by a majority of key informants.

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation to and from work, school, and doctor’s appointments is not widely available to people with I/DD, or is difficult to navigate due to their condition. Issues cited included a lack of sufficient routes, hours of operation, bus driver consistency, and timeliness of the service. Alternative transportation options and training supports are needed, especially in the rural areas of the state. A number of barriers and needed improvements were identified as essential to support transportation for people, the regular rotation of drivers on a route as a disruption, lack of reliability to be at work on time and general concerns about treatment and safety. Transportation to attend appointments for services and general transportation were identified as top services needed by surveys in Carson City from the rural counties.

Nevada’s plan for competitive, integrated employment addresses these key issues, drawing on best practice research and reports and incorporating recommendations from stakeholders across Nevada, while strategically prioritizing goals into three, five and ten year goals.



MISSION, VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission

The Taskforce mission is to develop and implement a sustainable system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to achieve competitive, integrated employment in the setting of their choice.

Values

We believe:

1. Our job is to increase opportunities and decrease barriers
2. All individuals, schools, families and businesses must raise their expectations
3. People will be hired because of their ability not because they have a disability
4. Employment is a win/win for everybody
5. People are healthier, safer and happiest with meaningful work of their choosing

Guiding Principles

Nevada is making competitive, integrated employment happen by:

Changing Expectations: Everyone can contribute and participate in meaningful and competitive employment.

Strengthening Partnerships: Agencies and programs work toward the same outcome and work effectively with each other.

Promoting Choice: Individuals have the right to informed choice through community experience.

Embracing Diversity: Respect and support people of all color, gender, and disability.

Valuing Efficiency: Strive to meet the needs of our community, economy, employers, and workers.

Ensuring Quality: Continually monitor the education, training, employment services, and consumer satisfaction.

Philosophy

The prevailing philosophy that guides all aspects of this plan is that Nevada will be strengthened by promoting competitive, integrated employment where persons with intellectual and or developmental disabilities are employed at or above the state minimum wage.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Following a review of research and outreach results and recommendations, critical issues were identified, the following critical issues were identified and prioritized by the Taskforce for a successful plan for competitive, integrated employment in Nevada.

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. This includes:

Outcomes Measurement and Review Process: It is important to set and measure progress toward employment goals and the return on investment of disability employment programs. Information on progress can be used to improve programs and encourage others to participate in them.

Employer Engagement, Development and Support: More large, small, and entrepreneurial business engagement is needed across the state. The state could play a tremendous leadership role by modeling approaches to setting goals and employing people with I/DD, and engaging employers in conversations about how the state overcomes barriers that employers are also likely to face.

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 competitive, integrated employment in Nevada. Ensuring sufficient resources for the services that promote competitive, integrated employment is critical.

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, transition planning and implementation. Nevada has many examples of positive collaborations but has few resources to take those collaborations or resulting pilot projects to scale in a way that would have a statewide impact. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are needed between school systems (districts and higher education), Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional Centers, transportation, and providers to outline roles, responsibilities and agreements.

Professional Development: Appropriate assistance is needed for both Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) and Job Developers to improve outcomes for job seekers with I/DD. DSPs can benefit from consistent use of best and promising practices. Professional development focused on more training would help DSPs address the needs of people with I/DD by finding job openings, engaging employers to hire, and negotiating job responsibilities with an

employer. Promoting best practices for person-centered career planning, customized employment, job creation, and self-employment is needed.

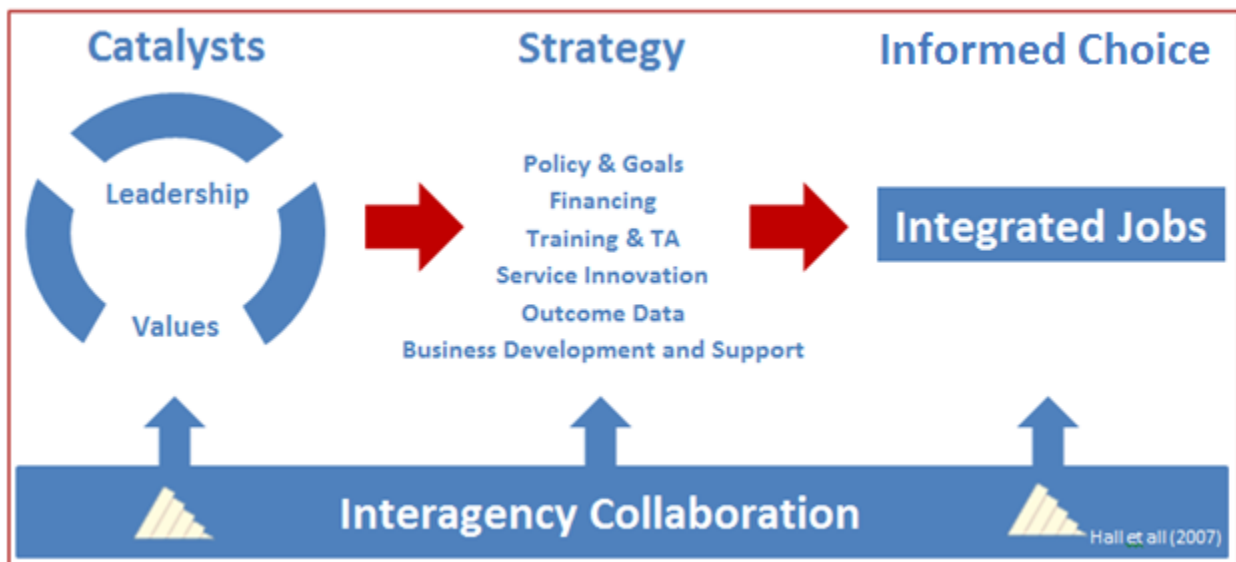
Early and Timely School Assessment and Planning for

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.

Transportation: Transportation to and from work, school, and doctor’s appointments is not widely available to people with I/DD, or is difficult to navigate. Alternative transportation options and training supports are needed, especially in the rural areas of the state. Barriers that must be addressed include the cost, areas served, hours of operation, treatment of consumers, and general concerns about reliability, treatment and safety.

Nevada’s Proposed High Performance Model

In examining efforts across the nation, Nevada reviewed best practices and developed a revised version of a national model for competitive, integrated employment. Nevada’s model is:



Nevada’s plan addresses the key components of the model and sets goals to achieve competitive, integrated employment.

GOALS

Goals to achieve competitive, integrated employment in Nevada, and address the aforementioned critical issues were identified and prioritized by the Taskforce. Goals include:

2015-18

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 of persons with I/DD

Collaboration and Coordination

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

2015-20

Professional Development

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

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 persons with I/DD seeking employment to make informed business decisions to hire them

2015-25

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 persons 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

2020-25

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



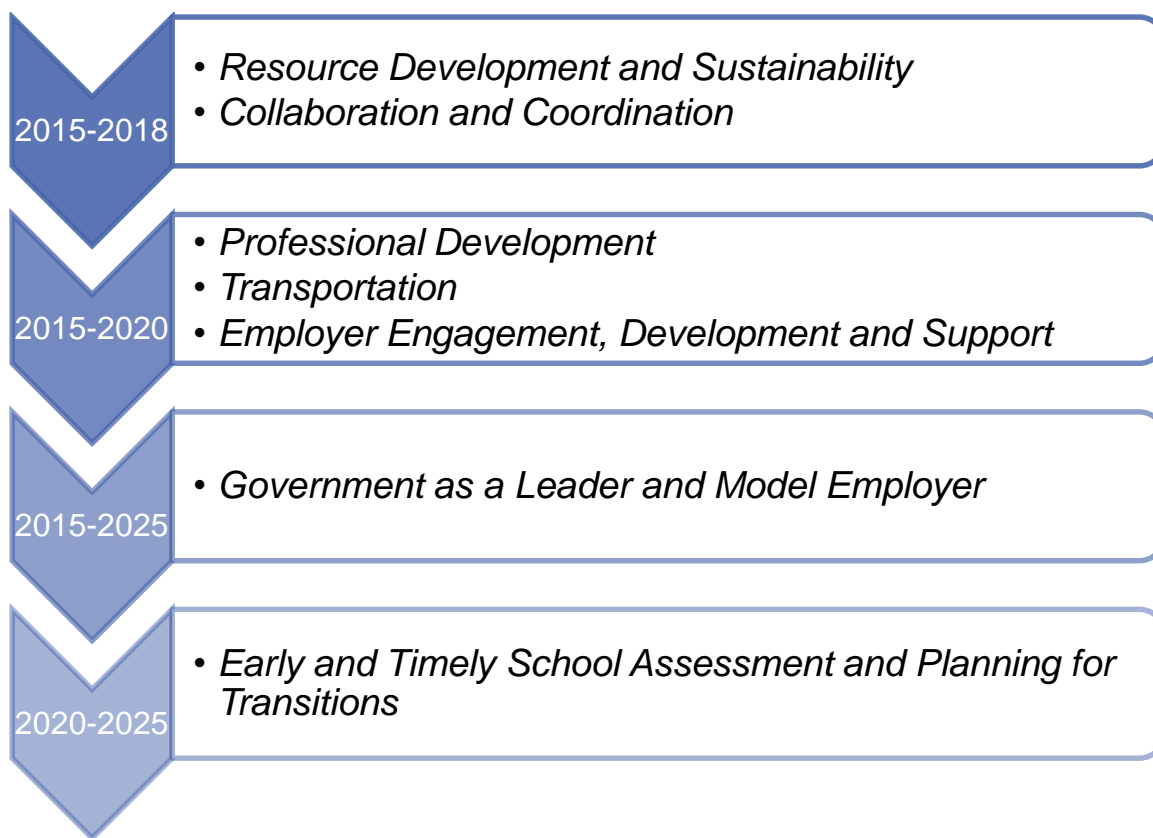
STRATEGIC PLAN

The goals for competitive, integrated employment in Nevada, to address the critical issues identified in this plan, were prioritized by the Taskforce, with timing established based on priorities but also on the estimated time needed to implement strategies. Strategies are provided for each goal, in order of priority.

To implement the plan, the Taskforce recommended establishing workgroups that will include Taskforce members, business, people with I/DD, and others to establish action steps necessary to implement each strategy. Workgroups could report to the Taskforce quarterly, allowing the Taskforce to review and revise strategies and action steps to account for changing conditions, such as the establishment of WIOA rules and regulations, or following policy changes that may impact the implementation plan.

The Taskforce will evaluate progress toward achieving goals on an annual basis and issue a report to the Governor outlining progress to date, successes and challenges, with recommendations for revisions to the plan as needed.

The three, five and ten year strategic plan is outlined on the following pages, based on the timing established by the Taskforce to achieve the goals of the plan, addressing the critical issues, facing Nevada.



2015-2018

2015-18

Resource Development and Sustainability

Critical Issue: 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 competitive, integrated employment in Nevada. Ensuring sufficient resources for the services that promote competitive, integrated employment is critical.

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Access and leverage through collaboration all available resources for programs and services for persons with I/DD to ensure all funding is maximized and sufficient for long-term employment success. including Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) benefits, and all Medicaid/WIOA and SSI/SSDI resources		
B. Engage the Governor and the Legislature to add the resources to the system that are needed to achieve the outcomes of competitive integrated employment		
C. Develop new and promote existing partnerships and collaborations between all state agencies charged with supporting people with disabilities		

D. Pursue alternative/complementary funding through private foundations and grants		
E. Identify and link grant seeking staff across agencies to leverage information and increase grant success.		
F. Develop third party cooperative arrangements between state agencies and education systems		
<p>Goal.</p> <p>2. Systems within Nevada implement a reimbursement structure for service providers that increases competitive, integrated employment of persons with I/DD</p>		
Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Establish a funding and rate plan for sustainability that includes braided and blended funding across agencies, and re-balances funding and staff.		
B. Maximize available state and federal resources through improved rate and payment systems offered by the RSA Section 110 dollars to increase competitive, integrated employment		
C. Educate legislators to understand the importance of increased State funding of Vocational Rehabilitation to draw down increased Federal funds		
D. Develop sustainability plans to respond to funding changes and WIOA		
E. Require competitive, integrated employment to be addressed in all applicable state plans that are part of the Nevada system of care		

2015-18

Collaboration and Coordination

Critical Issue: Collaboration and coordination is needed between schools and the state agencies serving individuals with I/DD in terms of resources, data sharing, eligibility processes, transition planning and implementation. Nevada has many examples of positive collaborations but has few resources to take those collaborations or resulting pilot projects to scale in a way that would have a statewide impact. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are needed between school systems (districts and higher education), Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional Centers, transportation, and providers to outline roles, responsibilities and agreements.

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Expand innovative partnerships and collaborations to leverage resources and expand opportunities for employment. This includes projects like customized employment, Third Party Cooperative Arrangements, Project Search and other pilot efforts		
B. Establish memorandum of understanding (MOUs/interlocal agreements) 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		
C. Implement data sharing policies, practices and systems with state agencies, school districts and providers of competitive, integrated employment services		

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D. Secure grant funding, including braided or blended funding to implement innovative projects statewide		
E. Provide outreach and specialized staff training across agencies and schools to ensure understanding and ownership of the process and outcomes for transition students		
F. Increase communication between Vocational Rehabilitation, Special Education Teachers and Paraprofessionals and Section 504 Coordinators		
G. Continue Taskforce work groups which include all regions of Nevada stakeholders		
H. Research and employ evidence-based best practices, including person-centered planning		
I. Identify redundancies and reduce duplication of efforts. Streamline all processes to eliminate waste and promote seamless service transitions		
J. Provide assistive technology, as needed, including training on its use, and ensure a seamless transition with said technology when students leave high school		
K. Develop a webpage with links to ADSD, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education and Job Connect to create a “No Wrong Door” approach to supported employment		

2015-2020

2015-20 Professional Development

Critical Issue: Appropriate assistance is needed for both Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) and Job Developers to improve outcomes for job seekers with I/DD. DSPs can benefit from consistent use of best and promising practices. Professional development focused on more training would help DSPs address the needs of people with I/DD by finding job openings, engaging employers to hire, and negotiating job responsibilities with an employer. Promoting best practices for person-centered career planning, customized employment, job creation, and self-employment is needed.

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Invest in building the skills of job coaches and job developers, supervisors, and key paraprofessional staff who work with people with I/DD to improve competitive, integrated employment outcomes		
B. Provide evidence based curriculum, career readiness professional development and training to teachers and classified support staff who directly supervise students with I/DD		
C. Link state colleges' and universities' disability services with career services		
D. Change the rate structure to raise salaries for Direct Service Professionals and Job Developers to levels commensurate with careers in the field		

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E. Promote and support Direct Service Professionals and Job Developers positions as meaningful, competitively-compensated human services and economic development careers rather than administrative positions.		
F. Ensure that teachers and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors have knowledge on competitive, integrated employment, and adopt transition competencies		
G. Work with the higher education systems to create a minor in I/DD employment services		

2015-20 Transportation

Critical Issue: Transportation to and from work, school, and doctor’s appointments is not widely available to people with I/DD, or is difficult to navigate. Alternative transportation options and training supports are needed, especially in the rural areas of the state. Barriers that must be addressed include the cost, areas served, hours of operation, treatment of consumers, and general concerns about reliability, treatment and safety.

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Develop rural paratransit service options		
B. Expand and promote use of taxi vouchers		
C. Provide travel training services in high school and for adult users		
D. Work with transportation companies (including taxi and limo companies) to create a system for paid/reimbursed ride sharing		
E. Provide driver’s license support for high-functioning people with I/DD		

F. Adopt policies that allow for more flexibility for pick-ups and drop-offs of individuals with I/DD		
G. Apply for grants and alternate funding sources in order to expand transportation services		
H. Partner with employers on ride-sharing options for their employees with I/DD		
I. Create a system to promote pick-ups and drop-offs at high schools to encourage access to worksites after school		
J. Reimburse employers for arranging hired transportation for employees		

2015-20

Employer Engagement, Development and Support

Critical Issue: More large, small, and entrepreneurial business engagement is needed across the state. The state could play a tremendous leadership role by modeling approaches to setting goals and employing people with I/DD, and engaging employers in conversations about how the state overcomes barriers that employers are also likely to face..

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Develop continued employment support for individuals with I/DD who have achieved more than 90 days of successful employment; i.e. 180 days, 360 days		
B. Support partnerships and resources to expand outreach efforts to inform employers of available supports		
C. Pursue creative partnerships with employers to include job carving and job sharing and to provide on the job training, work-readiness and self-advocacy training for persons with I/DD on their worksites		
D. 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 best practices on how to create competitive, integrated employment opportunities		

E. Provide benefits planning to persons with I/DD and their families to understand the impact of work on benefits and supports		
F. Assure that every Rehabilitation Counselor has the training and tools to maximize the amount of earned income for each person they serve while still protecting necessary benefits		
<p>Goal.</p> <p>7. Nevada companies have enough information about and access to persons with I/DD seeking employment to make informed business decisions to hire them.</p>		
Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Dedicate staff with business expertise with persons with disabilities in each region of the state who can effectively serve as the outreach leader to businesses, and liaison between agencies and schools (think “entrepreneur-in-residence”)		
B. Engage a number of industries, including small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures to participate in competitive, integrated employment		
C. Provide outreach, training and support to employers and HR groups to dispel myths and fears, and to educate them about hiring individuals with I/DD, the benefits to doing so, and the job supports available to sustain these employees		
D. Develop a structure for ongoing stakeholder involvement to support local coalitions that can link providers, businesses, schools and families with individuals with I/DD		
E. Create and implement marketing strategies and share success stories with employers. Promote business opportunities through social media		

<p>F. 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</p>		
<p>G. Facilitate partnerships with local and state economic development authorities including GOED and EDawn, businesses and nonprofits to mentor and support persons with I/DD to start up and develop entrepreneurial ventures</p>		
<p>H. Pursue public/private partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, and persons with I/DD and their families to work with DETR, school districts, ADSD, RTC and other relevant agencies to provide technical assistance and resources to be used in education and training of persons with I/DD for real world competitive, integrated employment positions</p>		
<p>I. Add a tab on the Secretary of State’s webpage to share information on resources and linkages to hiring people with disabilities for new businesses in Nevada</p>		
<p>J. Include an Employer Forum at the Chamber of Commerce level, SHRM, Sector Council and WIA to create employer linkages to facilitate the hiring of people with disabilities</p>		

2015-2025

2015-25

Government as a Leader and Model Employer

Critical Issue: 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.

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Identify the barriers to employing people with I/DD (e.g. civil services rules, terms of labor agreements, etc.) and develop strategies to remove the barriers		
B. Promote the inclusion of people with I/DD to the workforce by making integrated employment a priority, and implementing the same strategies used with the broader workforce		
C. Implement innovative hiring approaches such as job carving, job sharing and part time/non-traditional shift offerings		
D. Align the statewide infrastructure to implement Nevada’s plan including JobConnect and One Stop offices		
E. Create a fast-track (or preferential) hiring process for people with I/DD		

<p>F. Ensure the State has a centralized fund source for accommodations and assistive technology for employee</p>		
<p>G. Create more under-fill, intern and trainee positions in the state system</p>		
<p>H. Develop communications and marketing, including social media, career fairs and job announcements that encourage qualified applicants with disabilities to apply</p>		
<p>I. Utilize Vocational Rehabilitation’s counselors to identify job carving opportunities within state agencies for Vocational Rehabilitation’s clients</p>		
<p>J. Information on diversity awareness and employment supports is readily distributed and taught at employee orientation</p>		
<p>K. The State uses the contracting system to promote the hiring, retention and promotion of people with I/DD by state contractors, much like the federal Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act</p>		
<p>L. Evaluate the structure of each new or replacement position as an opportunity to hire a person with I/DD by considering necessary accommodations and innovative approaches such as job sharing or job carving</p>		
<p>M. Ensure all the State’s internal and external web sites are accessible</p>		
<p>N. Promote each new or replacement position to all agencies, schools/universities, nonprofits and advocacy groups (use a special email listserv) serving persons with I/DD to reach the largest pool of candidates</p>		

<p>O. Create a state team that shares the experiences with other organizations regarding the advantages of using individuals with IDD as an employee</p>		
<p>Goal.</p> <p>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 persons with I/DD consistently across the state</p>		
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Timeline for Completion</p>	<p>Lead Entity</p>
<p>A. Align the statewide infrastructure for data sharing and universal application to implement Nevada’s plan</p>		
<p>B. Align and adopt guiding principles, public policy and state statutes and regulations to promote competitive, integrated employment</p>		
<p>C. 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</p>		
<p>D. Promote policies to protect SSI and other benefits against income earned to support access to needed supports that contribute to an adequate quality of life</p>		
<p>E. Promote access to and consistent services and supports across the state and reduce geographic disparities</p>		

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<p>F. Promote coordination between Vocational Rehabilitation / Regional Center, school districts, people with I/DD, families and providers</p>		
<p>G. Implement and utilize existing employer incentives and supports including; tax incentives to employers that hire individuals with I/DD, a workplace stipend to mentor and support co-workers with I/DD in the workplace, 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</p>		
<p>H. Encourage government employees and leaders to publically champion and educate about hiring people with I/DD, including sharing success stories and publically praising employers who are leaders of inclusion</p>		
<p>I. Economic Development will promote hiring people with I/DD with employers during early and ongoing negotiations.</p>		
<p>J. Make available Medicaid or Vocational Rehabilitation funded supports to facilitate summer, weekend, and after-school employment experiences</p>		
<p>K. Educate local and statewide workforce development boards so they fully support integrated employment for people with I/DD as a winning strategy for workforce development</p>		
<p>L. Bring all aspects of hiring persons with I/DD, including candidate sourcing, evaluation, and interviewing, consistent with best practices through a thorough review of all policies, procedures, regulations and practices</p>		
<p>M. Ensure small business centers and tools are accessible, and staff are trained to include and service small business owners who are people with I/DD, and encourage micro-lending to these individuals</p>		

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Establish outcomes tied to length of time to achieve employment, longevity of employment, wages, benefits and satisfaction in the workplace		
B. Develop and adopt statewide universal data elements to capture data related to key indicators across the lifespan		
C. Measure appropriateness of placement including individual and employer satisfaction		
D. Collect data beginning in school to track, follow and measure key data elements including assessment, placement, retention, wages and satisfaction		
E. Monitor, track and share performance measurements, trends and other data at the individual and program/system level. Utilize the data annually to review and refine statewide strategies		
F. Use the WIOA mandated Unified State Plan, Performance and Accountability team’s recommendation for creation of a Universal Data Collection and Reporting System. Ensure the team regularly gathers and reports performance measurements and other data across education, employment and other related systems		
G. Ensure the State has a confidential process for employees to self-identify as having a disability		

<p>H. Emphasize longitudinal studies that measure qualitative as well as quantitative person-centered parameters such as: a) satisfaction with their job as structured and as appropriate to their skills and desires; b) actual interaction with co-workers; c) actual support from agencies, providers and employers; and, d) ability to change jobs as skill levels and interests change</p>		
<p>I. Assess students exiting school using a standardized tool to use as a benchmark for student readiness</p>		

2020-2025

2020-25

Early and Timely School Assessment and Planning for Transitions

Critical Issue: More large, small, and entrepreneurial business engagement is needed across the state. The state could play a tremendous leadership role by modeling approaches to setting goals and employing people with I/DD, and engaging employers in conversations about how the state overcomes barriers that employers are also likely to face.

Goal.

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

Strategy	Timeline for Completion	Lead Entity
A. Incorporate career-readiness content into the educational curriculum, linking state college and university disability services with career services		
B. Provides classes in job readiness and hands-on work experience onsite at businesses to students with intellectual and developmental I/DD		
C. Provide opportunities for paid or unpaid, hands-on work experiences including in the form of career-based assessments, internships, job shadowing, mentorships, volunteer work, and summer jobs		
D. Require community based career exploration and job training for all high school students with I/DD across all regions of Nevada		
E. Work with school districts to create an internal expectation that Vocational Rehabilitation will be included in all junior and senior IEP meetings to facilitate best practice transition planning		

<p>F. Create advisory panels of typical high school and college young people to provide technical assistance and mentorship to young people with I/DD on where to find, and how to get employed at, work experiences typical of their peers.</p>		
<p>G. Focus on in-demand careers, including in high-tech and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields when offering classes, transition planning, work experience and internships</p>		
<p>H. Utilize models such as Wisconsin’s Youth On the Job training wage (funded by Vocational Rehabilitation) to offer a wage subsidy of up to 100% for up to 500 hours for a permanent job</p>		
<p>Goal.</p> <p>12. Every person with I/DD in Nevada transitions to adulthood with vocational experiences and the education that will enable them to obtain competitive, integrated employment</p>		
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Timeline for Completion</p>	<p>Lead Entity</p>
<p>A. Develop a customized approach to serving people with I/DD in their employment needs. Use assistive technology wherever possible and promote tele-services.</p>		
<p>B. Make resources/services available to help youth with I/DD transition including: field trips to new school campuses, job shadowing opportunities, summer work experiences, and life skills training</p>		
<p>C. Develop transition planning as a separate and unique process that is initiated as early as possible (middle school)</p>		

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<p>D. 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, Vocational Rehabilitation/Regional Center applications, etc.)</p>		
<p>E. Work with school districts to increase their institutional knowledge about available transition resources and streamline the information and referral process</p>		
<p>F. Implement services to promote competitive, integrated employment 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, and transportation so people can get to places in the community</p>		
<p>G. Increase communication between Vocational Rehabilitation, Special Education Teachers and Paraprofessionals and Section 504 Coordinators</p>		
<p>H. Promote peer to peer networks and mentoring</p>		
<p>I. Provide opportunities for paid or unpaid, hands-on work experiences career-based assessments, internships, job shadowing, mentorships, volunteer work, and summer jobs</p>		
<p>J. Utilize teams of business professionals from industry sectors to work with schools and Vocational Rehabilitation to development transition and skills development certificate programs that mirror the most likely jobs in those sectors</p>		
<p>K. Increase the number of third party cooperative agreements with school districts across all regions of Nevada which support competitive, integrated employment</p>		

<p>L. Create the expectation for people with I/DD that they should have a full and enriching day comprised of competitive/integrated work, supplemented with volunteering, classes at the community college and activities personal entertainment/enrichment</p>		
<p>M. Evaluate implementation of the Work Link/Transcen model in use in California, www.transcen.org</p>		
<p>N. Change policies to allow a student transitioning into work or postsecondary options, to keep their assistive technology devices after high school.</p>		
<p>O. 19. For students with I/DD transitioning out of high school, Vocational Rehabilitation will develop and implement a common application that will be across agencies.</p>		

Terms and Definitions

ADSD—Aging and Disability Services Division

Competitive, Integrated Employment—Work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which the individual is compensated at or above minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and levels of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

- competitive: work resulting in minimum wage or higher
- integrated: working with employees who are not disabled

Developmental Disability— The definition used by the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disability, means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that—is attributable to mental or physical impairments or a combination of mental and physical impairments; is manifested before age 22; is likely to continue indefinitely. This disability must result in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care; receptive and expressive language; learning; mobility ; self-direction; capacity for independent living; economic self- sufficiency In addition reflect the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services. Individual supports or other forms of assistance that are life-long or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

DETR—Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation

DSPs—Direct Service Professionals

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—IDEA was originally enacted by Congress in 1975 to ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education, just like other children. The law has been revised many times over the years. The most recent amendments were passed by Congress in December 2004, with final regulations published in August 2006 (Part B for school-aged children) and in September 2011 (Part C, for babies and toddlers).

(I/DD) — Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disability

Informed Choice—Informed choice is the process of choosing from options based on accurate information and knowledge. These options are developed by a partnership consisting of the consumer and the counselor that will empower the consumer to make decisions resulting in a successful vocational rehabilitation outcome.

Intellectual Disability— this Nevada Administrative Code indicates Mental Retardation, the NAC has been revised to Intellectual Disability. School districts across the State of Nevada are required to follow this statute when initially determining eligibility for special education. NAC

388.055 “Mental retardation” defined. (NRS 385.080) “Mental retardation” means a condition that:

1. Is characterized by intellectual functioning at a level that is significantly below average, and which exists concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following adaptive skill areas:

- (a) Communication skills;
- (b) Self-care;
- (c) Home living;
- (d) Social skills;
- (e) Use of the community;
- (f) Self-direction;
- (g) Health and safety;
- (h) Functional academics;
- (i) Leisure; and
- (j) Work;

2. Manifests before the age of 18 years; and

3. Adversely affects the educational performance of a pupil.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Education, eff. 7-14-88; A 11-23-93; R085-99, 2-16-2000)

NGCDD—Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities

NEIS—Nevada Early Intervention Services

SSI—Social Security Insurance

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)—WIOA was signed into law by President Obama on July 22, 2014 to help job seekers — including those with disabilities — access the services they need to succeed in employment and match employers with skilled workers.