



# Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

The Survival Coalition appreciates the development of this draft plan in accordance with Wisconsin's new Employment First law to advance integrated employment statewide for people with disabilities, particularly those with the most significant disabilities. We also recognize that this plan is only as strong as the implementation of the different component parts, so appreciate the level of specificity outlined in many parts of the plan. As an organization with statewide first-hand experience examining both the challenges and the promising practices statewide that impact integrated employment, we share with you the following recommendations for further specific implementation strategies.

## Section 1

- a. Any new videos should be tested with children, youth, families and adults to ensure they move people to actively participate in employment supports. We also would like to see a dissemination plan for the videos, that might include paid use in social media, in required DVR meetings and outreach activities, during school PTP and IEP meetings with students and families, and in trainings with ADRC, CLTS and LTC staff. We are not clear how families and guardians are ensured to get the information. Survival Coalition membership is happy to work on a dissemination plan with state agencies to ensure maximum exposure for any videos developed.
- b. In addition to gathering baseline, we support developing a protocol to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries receive info on the Ticket to Work program and the opportunity to enroll. We recommend developing a consumer-friendly document to educate individuals.
- c. We appreciate the focus on measurement. We do not see a specific plan for improvement identified. As an example, we recommend incorporation of evaluation to measure increased numbers of youth participating in DVR, engagement and quicker connection to services.
- d. We support this effort. What strategies will be used to directly reach children and families? Can a joint messaging campaign be tested on children, youth, and families to ensure it is effective in increasing participation in employment supports. Again, Survival offers to work with state agencies on a dissemination plan.
- e. The topic of misconceptions on loss of benefits is critical to address. Unified materials with similar look and language across departments will be very useful. Thank you. These materials should be reviewed/tested with people with disabilities to ensure they are understood.
- f. We support the DHS Pay for Performance initiative and would like to see other "pay for outcomes" strategies used to implement this law. We think collaborative materials are a great idea. We recommend shared cross-agency meetings and communication for true collaboration. Are systems outside long-term care able to implement incentive payments: e.g. can DVR provide tiered rates for CIE for individuals with more complex support needs? Implementing milestone payments between Discovery and customized employment is another example. We would like to see a specific effort to begin outreach and messaging before transition: at IEP and CLTS meetings beginning in elementary school.

- g. We appreciate the work done to streamline the intake process and to ensure that DHS staff know when a referral has occurred. We will continue to meet with DVR about the referral process.

## **Section 2**

- a. Identified individuals must be decision-makers who can confirm final agreements to expedite the process. Also, recognizing that data sharing is complicated and requires legal counsel input, we recommend attention from Secretary office level leadership to resolve the process.
- b. The plan should identify specifics of how benchmarks are set and how public input will be gathered to establish them. The benchmarks must be ambitious enough to measure change. Survival supports the identification and reporting of common individuals to measure change.
- c. We agree that evidence-based employment practices are critical, with specific attention spent on evidence-based practices for front-line service provision. What are the strategies the respective departments will do to equip direct service providers and evaluate the quality of employment services being provided?
- d. The inter-agency agreement currently on the website is from 2010 and does not reflect significant changes in both WIOA and HCBS. Updating this MOU and communicating who will pay for what needs to be a top priority and be expedited so local service systems understand who to bill. The additional DHS/DVR MOU is also from 2010 and needs to be updated. We recommend providing guidance to local entities on local collaboration expectations and policy alignment. We also recommend developing a feedback loop to regularly assess effectiveness of collaboration at local levels. We support the assignment of committed staff to a workgroup, and strongly recommend that there are quarterly updates at the Secretary level to ensure continued leadership support for quantifiable improvement in integrated employment outcomes.
- e. We acknowledge the effectiveness of the DHS External Employment Managed Care Organization (MCO) and IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) meetings, and recommend promoting the continued engagement of leadership from the DHS employment team and DVR to develop and implement practices that improve CIE Outcomes. We recognize and appreciate the planned meeting for May 2019, which will convene the MCO and ICA employment leadership along with DVR WDA Directors, as an effective way to promote collaborative work and to advance effective and efficient practices at the local level. Encourage these efforts to expand to include DPI coordination for effective practices for youth in transition. On third bullet referencing dissemination of best practices, we also highly recommend dissemination of best practices directly to front-line providers. We also recommend exploration of DVR and DHS enhancing the rates for employment providers using best practices, particularly those providers using best practices in serving the clients with the most complex support needs. We support the sharing of information and development of best practices at the local level.

## **Section 3**

Survival Coalition appreciates a specific section of the plan focused on children and youth with a recognition that family and community expectations about the ability for a person with significant disabilities to work competitively are formed very early in a child's life. We see the importance of specific strategies employed in the Promise and Let's Get to Work model: like Family Navigators to help

disconnected and traditionally under-served families to connect to supports. We also see that early school inclusion, including both academics and extracurriculars expose both children and their families to possibilities that are not available in traditional segregated settings.

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

Thank you to the three state departments for their efforts in developing this plan, and their commitment to establishing a leadership team to ensure implementation. Survival Coalition members are willing to collaborate on any of the activities at any time, and look forward to supporting the implementation of the plan.

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