



OPWDD EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
Directors' Meeting

August 2023

Innovations in Employment Supports



# Welcome & Housekeeping

- Welcome & Introductions
- Please stay muted during the presentation.
- Participants registered prior to entering the training site, do not need to put their name in the chat box.
- In order to bill, attendees must be on camera the entire duration of the meeting.
- Participants will receive Innovations credits (3).
- We will address questions briefly. Please write your questions in the chat box.




# OPWDD Employment Services Directors' Meeting

*Agenda*



1. New York Employment First & NEON
2. Culture/Business Model Change- Program Design Technical Assistance
3. Career-Specific Vocational Training for I/DD
4. Increasing Employer Engagement
5. SEMP Policy and Regulation Revisions
6. OPWDD SEMP, Pathway to Employment and Prevocational Services Updates
7. Innovations in Employment Supports Updates





# New York Employment First & National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON)



# NEON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

## Background

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) ODEP's National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) new initiative is to improve employment outcomes within their statewide systems that serve individuals with disabilities.

States selected as NEON Core States will be offered intensive policy consulting, capacity building support, and ongoing mentoring to support the strategic aims of their efforts to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities in their state.



# NEON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

## New York Preliminary Objectives

- Develop a statewide cross-agency Employment First set of principles. The state agencies will agree and clearly articulate an Employment First vision for New York that could become an Executive Order or at a minimum be adopted by each agency.
- Create a matrix of agency responsibilities related to competitive integrated employment.
- Develop MOU's or Operating Agreements between state agencies as it relates to serving people with competitive integrated employment. Currently there are existing MOU's that are outdated and do not reflect current services.





# Culture/Business Model Change- Program Design Technical Assistance



# Culture/Business Model Change: Program Design Technical Assistance

- The EMCA unit continues to work with state and voluntary agencies to change their culture and business model to increase movement toward employment and make services more flexible to meet people's career development needs.
- Goal is to reduce dependence on site-based programs and increase the number of agencies that offer the full array of services.
- A coordinated process involving both Central Office and the Regional Field Offices exists to review requests involving new, expanded and/or redesigned services.
- Agencies must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the attention of the Regional Field Office Director and notify the EMCA unit as applicable.





# EMCA Unit's Program Design Review Process

- Collect information
- Review and recommend applicable Eleversity trainings
- Provide regulation, ADM and service-specific guidebooks, forms and related technical assistance documents
- Answer questions and provide technical assistance tailored to the agency with involvement of local ETP Supervisor(s)
- Provide ongoing support related to program implementation during regularly scheduled quarterly meetings



# New, Expanded and/or Redesigned Services to Increase Employment Outcomes

OPWDD has worked with 28 provider agencies and 5 state agencies this year to increase community based prevocational services (CBPV) and improve supported employment services. These efforts will:

- Better prepare people for employment
- Bridge day habilitation to prevocational services and employment services
- Build career paths
- Reinforce skills to increase job retention
- Address challenges to employment success

# Career Specific Vocational Training (CSVT)



# Career Specific Vocational Training (CSV T) Background

- December 2022 – OPWDD issued a Request for Application (RFA) to award funding to agencies to develop and deliver career specific vocational training to individuals with I/DD
- The combination of career specific vocational training developed and delivered through the grant and community vocational experiences funded through the HCBS Waiver is intended to:
  - o Increase the marketable skills of individuals enrolled in HCBS Waiver services
  - o Provide job-specific skill training
  - o Increase the number of people with I/DD in competitive integrated employment (CIE)



# CSVT Programs At a Glance

Region	Lead Agency	Training Topic(s)	EMCA Liaison
1	Community Services for Every 1	Hospitality	Lynne Thibdeau
2	Access CNY	Janitorial	Kristine Snyder
2	Upstate Caring Partners (UCP)	Food Service	Kristine Snyder
3	Access Supports for Living	Hospitality	Bryan Bischoff
3	Jawonio	Retail	Bryan Bischoff
4	AHRC	Janitorial	Lynne Thibdeau
5	FREE	Office Skills	Julia Kelly
5	FREE	Custodial	Julia Kelly



# CSV T Lead Agency Contacts

Region	Lead Agency	Lead Agency Contact	Contact Email
1	Community Services for Every 1	Michelle Zangerle	<a href="mailto:mzangerle@csevery1.com">mzangerle@csevery1.com</a>
2	Access CNY	Russ Gentile	<a href="mailto:russ.gentile@accesscny.org">russ.gentile@accesscny.org</a>
2	Upstate Caring Partners (UCP)	Dawn Gentile	<a href="mailto:dawn.gentile@upstatecp.org">dawn.gentile@upstatecp.org</a>
3	Access Supports for Living	Evelyn Cintron	<a href="mailto:ecintron@asfl.org">ecintron@asfl.org</a>
3	Jawonio	Stacey Kantrowitz	<a href="mailto:stacey.kantrowitz@jawonio.org">stacey.kantrowitz@jawonio.org</a>
4	AHRC	Francklin Morose	<a href="mailto:francklin.morose@ahrcnyc.org">francklin.morose@ahrcnyc.org</a>
5	FREE	John Gallagher	<a href="mailto:jgallagher@familyres.org">jgallagher@familyres.org</a>



# Recruitment and Candidate Selection

Ideal candidates for participation in CSVT:

- Are already enrolled in SEMP
- Unemployed
- Have a stated career interest in the CSVT topic
- Have completed Discovery
- Have a written Career and Vocational Plan
- Are enrolled in Community Based Prevocational or Pathway to Employment



# Unemployed and on Agencies SEMP Roster

- The EMCA unit has reviewed Quarterly SEMP Report data to identify people that are:
  - Not employed but continue to receive SEMP services
  - Not being served temporarily
  - Temporarily not working but still on employer's payroll
- ETP Supervisors and EMCA Liaisons are working together to ensure that agencies are informed of CSVT and referring appropriate candidates
- Lead agencies may accept referrals from any agency
- Priority will be given to candidates that meet eligibility criteria
- We encourage you to contact lead and member agencies to learn more





# Referrals to Career Specific Training Programs (CSV T)

## Agencies that refer people to CSV T:

- Continue to provide the HCBS Waiver Service utilized to access Community Vocational Experiences
- Receive support from Project Coordinators within CSV T lead agencies to ensure that CSV T classes and corresponding Community Vocational Experiences are well coordinated and meet stated objectives
- May gain access to new or different businesses, organizations and/or educational partnerships arranged by lead and member agencies
- Will likely become the provider of SEMP/ETP when the person transitions from CSV T
- Can add a completed CSV T Community Vocational Evaluation report to a person's existing Discovery report or utilize it as part of the ETP application upon successful completion of the CSV T program



# Increasing Employer Engagement



# OPWDD's EmployAbility: Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities Training for Businesses

- The EmployAbility training is sponsored by NYS Legislators: Chris Burdick and John Mannion and approved by Governor Hochul to help address the hiring and staffing needs of businesses across New York state.
- The EmployAbility trainings are hosted by the Office for People with Disabilities (OPWDD) with partners, Adult Career & Continuing Education – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), New York Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID) and Eleversity.
- OPWDD and partners will provide live virtual trainings to 140 businesses that signed OPWDD's EmployAbility Pledge in September and an open training for businesses in October.



# EmployAbility Training

- After the initial trainings, OPWDD will develop a self-guided training with resource materials for businesses to access at their convenience.
- OPWDD's website will be updated with the training and new resources, <https://opwdd.ny.gov/community-involvement/about-employability>

## *Topics and resources will include:*

- Benefits of hiring people with disabilities
- Tax Incentives
- Strategies for hiring and supporting employees with disabilities
- Reasonable accommodations
- Website accessibility
- Workplace inclusion
- Sensitivity training
- Supply chain diversity



# Annual Disability Rights & Employment Awareness (DREAM) Symposium

- In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), New York State will host the 2nd Annual Disability Rights and Employment Awareness Month (DREAM) Symposium early October.
- The goal of this event is to promote:
  - That people with disabilities can become valued members of the workforce and have the right to work.
  - The value that people with disabilities bring to the workforce.
  - The importance of workplace diversity.
  - To celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge that there is more work to do.
  - Welcome state agencies, not-for-profits, service providers, businesses and advocacy associations to provide information about their mission and services.



# SEMP Regulation and ADM Revisions



# Background and Revision Process

- Compiled 7 years of changes/corrections as identified by providers
- Engaged Provider Work Group and developed change recommendations
- Met with Counsel's Office frequently and followed revision process
- Presented SEMP Reg & ADM at September Monthly Regulation Meeting – Continued to October meeting in order to present final draft to Provider Work Group
- Met with Provider Work Group to review final draft (September 26, 2022)
- Incorporated changes (not substantive) into SEMP regs & ADM to be presented at October 2022 Monthly Regulation & ADM Meeting



# Provider Workgroup Regulation and ADM Revision Goals/Principles

- More flexibilities in service delivery
- Less administrative burden
- Accountability with less prescription
- Eligibility and enrollment process improvements





## Provider Work Group Members

Member	Title	Provider/Provider Association
<b>Aimee Althoff</b>	Associate Executive Director	Job Path/IAC
<b>Lore Barcelona</b>	Executive Director	Sinergia Inc./IAC, NYAEMP
<b>Richard Bosch</b>	Chief of Staff	Inter-Agency Council of DD Agencies (IAC)
<b>Philip Catchpole</b>	Executive Director	Life Song Inc./ MCNEAP
<b>Donna Celardo</b>	Director of Day and Comm. Support Services	ACLD/IAC/LI Alliance
<b>Jill Dorsi</b>	LCSW Consultant	NY Alliance
<b>Barbara Falcone</b>	Assoc. VP Day Employment Services	HeartShare Human Services of NY/IAC
<b>Rachel Harter</b>	Director of Day Services	Upstate Caring Partners/CP State
<b>Brian Monaco</b>	Director of Employment & Transp. Services	Center for Disability Services of NY/CP State
<b>Mark Nace</b>	Chief Program Officer	Abilities First/Day Service Providers
<b>Donna Poccia</b>	VP Individual and Family Support Services	CP of Rochester & Happiness Home/CP State
<b>Winifred Schiff</b>	Assoc. Exec. Director for Legislative Affairs	IAC
<b>James Scutt</b>	Associate Vice President	People Inc./ President NYS APSE
<b>Michael Seereiter</b>	President and CEO	NY Alliance
<b>Anne Spisiak</b>	Executive Director	Beyond Support Network/DDAWNY
<b>Steve Towler</b>	VP of Programs and Business Development	AHRC of NYC/NY Alliance/ARC/IAC



# Changes to SEMP Regulations & ADM

- Two services were added to allow SEMP billing for quality: managing and planning service delivery.
- Addition of language that allows SEMP services delivered on behalf of an individual (example: job development) while the individual is in another Medicaid service. This is the same language as Community Prevocational Services.
- Rounding to the next 15 minute increment will be allowed when between 10-14 minutes were provided after day's minutes have been combined.
- Sections were reordered to provide clarity and organize the regulations in a more coherent manner. For example, all paragraphs related to Intensive SEMP were moved into one section with a separate section for Extended SEMP to assist providers.



# Changes to SEMP Regulations & ADM

- Language changes were made for clarity but were not substantive in nature.
- Changed training requirement dates to full calendar year to relieve administrative burden.
- Changed the number of days an individual can be unemployed without requesting approval for Intensive SEMP from 45 to 120.



# Changes to SEMP Regulations & ADM

- Changed the time for training new staff from one year to two years.
- Updated language: removed Hab Plan, changed some programmatic terms.
- Reordered and combined some allowable services.
- Added Innovations Training as an allowable service.



# New SEMP ADM/Regulations

- Effective date of SEMP ADM/regulations will be 1/1/24.
- New SEMP ADM and forms distributed on 7/31/23 for comments by 8/18/23. Submit comments to [rau.unit@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:rau.unit@opwdd.ny.gov).
- New SEMP regulations distributed on 7/13/23 with a 60 day proposed regulation period.
- New content is underlined and deleted content is in brackets [...]



# Examples of Allowable Services Changes

- Service categories were consolidated and streamlined
- Added assessment and instruction in the use of remote and assistive technology
- Clarified travel and transportation services
- Expanded meetings, reports, and communication with OPWDD staff
- Expanded documentation of the delivery and support of all allowable SEMP services
- Added planning and managing services
- Added preparing and reviewing documentation and reports



# Documentation Streamlining & Updates

- For Requests to Bill Additional Extended SEMP services there are no limits for hours requested, however, requests for more than 100 Individual or 600 Group hours require a second level review prior to approval.
- Tracking staff training requirements now be based on a calendar year after the new employee has completed one year from date of hire.
- Quarterly SEMP Report is required and will be web-based.
- NOT NEW - The service provider must maintain documentation that funding is not available or not required from NYS ACCES-VR. This applies to the OPWDD and ACCES-VR Letter of Agreement.
- Clarified that state-funded SEMP services do not require a Life Plan and other documentation can verify the person's choices to be employed or self-employed.



# Flexibilities & Other Improvements

- Clarified “remote” versus “telehealth” service delivery.
- SEMP services can include “remote” service delivery if it is not the only or primary service delivery method used.
- If “remote” is the primary mode of service delivery providers would need to follow the guidelines for “telehealth”. (see 21-ADM-03 **Ability to use Technology to Remotely Deliver Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)**)
- Format and language consistent with other ADM/regulations (prevocational and Pathway to Employment).





# How will Recommended Changes Impact Employment + for Individuals Served by OPWDD?




Individuals will receive more hours of individualized services from staff to help gain employment.



Individuals will experience more continuity of service when they need to find a job after losing their current job.



Individuals will receive higher quality services because managers can guide and mentor job coaches.



# OPWDD SEMP, Pathway to Employment and Prevocational Services Updates



# SEMP Employment Tracking System Update

*OPWDD is in the process of developing a streamlined web application for SEMP providers to submit SEMP Quarterly Status Reports, anticipated to launch this fall/winter.*

- Improvements to format and functionality that make inputting changes to the SEMP Quarterly Status reports easier.
- SEMP providers will no longer need to manually add or remove individuals on their SEMP Quarterly Status Reports. Information will auto populate through CHOICES.
- The discontinued practice of submitting SEMP Quarterly Status reports via e-mail.



# SEMP Employment Tracking System Update

- Access to reports that help measure an agency's status, progress and outcomes.
- Basic reports will be available at launch with more detailed reports becoming available at a later date.
- Agencies must identify two people per region for initial access. These should be directors/managers.
- The new application will be located in the same web portal as the SEMF Fee System used to submit billing state-funded SEMF billing.



# SEMP Employment Tracking System Update

## *What happens next?*

- We will share instructions on gaining access to the new system in the near future
- OPWDD will offer training for SEMP managers closer to launch
- For now, please continue to submit Excel SEMP reports to [supported.employment.data@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:supported.employment.data@opwdd.ny.gov)
- You should have received the 2023-2024 Excel OPWDD SEMP Report
  - March-June 2023 was due July 22
  - July-September 2023 is due October 15



# Requests to Bill Intensive & Extended SEMP Hours

- Updated Request to Bill Intensive SEMP and Request to Bill Additional Extended SEMP will be available on the Eleversity Website when the new SEMP ADM & Regs are released.
- Central Office and ETP Supervisors will continue to notify providers of changes, always return to website to get updated form.
- Once new forms are released, outdated forms may be returned to providers. Grace period will be communicated clearly through [SEMP.PE.Billing.Requests@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:SEMP.PE.Billing.Requests@opwdd.ny.gov) mailbox.



# Requesting SEMP After COVID Job Loss

## Options listed on the Request to Bill Intensive SEMP form:

Individual was recently approved for job development hours and provider is requesting additional hours for job development. (50-125 hours)

Individual has **several years of positive and continuous work history, has been employed within the last** year and has previously completed ACCES-VR or ETP.(50-125 hours)

 **NEW YORK**  
STATE OF OPPORTUNITY

**Office for People With Developmental Disabilities**

Last Name of Individual: \_\_\_\_\_  
TABS #: \_\_\_\_\_

### CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BOXES AND COMPLETE AS DIRECTED:


- Individual has a completed OPWDD Discovery, and provider is requesting job development. (Complete Sections I, II, III)
- Individual was recently approved for job development hours and provider is requesting additional hours for job development. (Complete Sections I, IV)
- Individual has several years of positive and continuous work history, has been employed within the last year and has previously completed ACCES-VR or ETP. (Complete Section I, III)
- Individual is starting a job within 6 weeks. (Complete Sections I, V)

Requested Hours Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Hours Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

- Intensive SEMP is Time Limited.
- Providers may be directed to speak with ETP Supervisors or Apply to ETP due to an extended gap in employment.
- It may be beneficial to review and update the person's career plan if Job Development has not been successful.



# Requesting Additional Extended Hours

 **Office for People With Developmental Disabilities**

Last Name of Individual:   
TABS #:

**Requested Additional Extended SEMP Services:**

Are there any prior approvals for Additional Extended SEMP hours, after the initial 200 hours of SEMP services during this SEMP enrollment year? Yes  No

If Yes, how many total hours were approved?  How many total hours were provided?

Requested Hours Start Date:  Number of Hours Requested:   
(After the initial 200 hours, list the total number of hours needed for the remainder of the SEMP enrollment year.)

Check the reason(s) for requesting Additional Extended SEMP hours:

- Individual requires on-going, significant disability-related supports to meet job task standards
- Individual requires on-going, significant disability-related supports to meet job interpersonal skills
- Person requires temporary assistance to meet job standards
- Individual is interested in pursuing a 2<sup>nd</sup> job
- Individual is interested in pursuing a new, different job
- Individual is having difficulty meeting job requirements and staff will begin Discovery/job development
- Changes in job responsibilities or work routines
- Individual obtained a new job this year
- Individual needs ongoing assistance with travel to/from job
- Other (Describe):

Projected total number of hours that will be needed for the entire SEMP Enrollment Year to be requested on one form.



Hours should be calculated after initial 200.  
Additional form may be submitted if needed.





# Prevocational Services Larger Multiple Group Request Form

- The EMCA unit continues to identify opportunities to streamline documentation
- We recently merged the *Request to Provide Site Based Prevocational Services in a Larger Group* and the *Request to Provide Community Based Prevocational Services in a Larger Group or Multiple Groups* forms
- The revised form is titled the *Request to Provide Prevocational Services in a Larger Group or Multiple Groups* form and it's available on the Eleversity website
- Changes include, but are not limited to:
  - Questions concerning 14(c) and contracts
  - Questions to assess levels of integration
  - Questions concerning people's weekly schedule and utilization of other services



# Request to Provide Prevocational Services in a Larger Group or Multiple Groups Form

Provider ID #

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**REQUEST TO PROVIDE PREVOCATIONAL SERVICES IN A LARGER GROUP OR MULTIPLE GROUPS**

Complete this form to obtain prior approval if either or both conditions apply.  
A separate request must be submitted for each of type of Prevocational Services.

**Type of Prevocational Services**

Community Based Prevocational Services

If requesting a larger group size of more than eight (8) individuals at the same location and time, INCLUDING GROUPS AT A COMMUNITY BASED HUB, complete sections 1, 2, 4 and 5.

If requesting multiple groups of eight (8) individuals at the same location and time, INCLUDING GROUPS AT A COMMUNITY BASED HUB, complete sections 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Site Based Prevocational Services

If requesting a larger group size of more than eight (8) individuals, at the same location and time, complete sections 1, 2, 4 and 5.

**Note:** Per regulation, Site Based Prevocational Services for more than 1 group of (8) at the same location and time is allowable as long as the agency continues to maintain acceptable integration levels.

**SECTION 1**

Name of Agency:

Provider ID #  DDRO:

Agency Contact Person:

Email Address:  Telephone Number:

Date of Request:  Prevocational Services Code(s):

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Prevocational Group Request Page 1 Revised 7/2/23

[https://eiversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Prevocational-Larger-Group-size\\_multiple-group-Request-Form-July-2023.pdf](https://eiversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Prevocational-Larger-Group-size_multiple-group-Request-Form-July-2023.pdf)



# Pathway to Employment

ADM, Regulation and documentation currently under final review for approval.

Once released, Central Office will hold focused Directors' Meetings.

Updated Trainings & Resources will be available through Eleversity for managers and staff.



# Pathway to Employment Workbook

## Summary of Changes

1. Guidance and Instructions included for agencies new to Pathway to Employment
2. Table of Contents to navigate through sections/pages
3. Color coding throughout workbook of foundational skills
4. In-depth Activity Plan to prepare for provision of services
5. Job Readiness and Career Exploration resources with assessment tool
6. O\*Net Career Research after assessments
7. Guided agenda for career planning meeting
8. Transition Guidance
9. Links to the Appendix for resources
10. ADM for increase in time, less limitations \*if approved




# How will changes impact staff providing Pathway to Employment Services?

- Increased pages provide more **resources** available for activities, not more work to do
- Streamlined formatting & larger spaces for information make document more readable
- PDF is fillable with no need to print / scan
- All worksheets needed are included in the workbook
- Click Icons allow for quick navigation throughout workbook
- Familiarity with document alignment, similar to ETP Discovery packet



# INNOVATIONS TRAININGS

- Tell staff why they're going to training
- Make sure staff read the class descriptions
- New staff should take Series 1 classes first



**What**  
**Who**      **Why**  
**When**      **Where**  
**How**



## SERIES 1- TAKE THESE FIRST

- Vocational Services: Then and Now
- Roles and Responsibility of a Vocational Support Professional
- Career Assessment: Foundations of Discovery
- Foundations for Vocational Success

## SKILLS FOR MANAGERS

- Management Skills
- Supervision Skills for SEMP Leaders
- Hiring and Onboarding Skills for SEMP Leaders

## PROGRAMS/SERVICES

- Community Based Prevocational Services
- ETP 101

## ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

- Career Assessment: Informed Choice
- Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities
- Vocational Assessment
- A Case Study in Discovery
- The Vocational Development Plan
- Effective Job Coaching

## BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

- Basics of Business Engagement
- Job Development
- Demonstrating the Benefits of SEMP to Businesses

## ADDITIONAL COURSES

- Technology for Virtual Vocational Services
- Public Benefits and Financial Literacy: What do you need to know?



# Questions

**Web:** [www.opwdd.ny.gov](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov)

**Technical Assistance Email:**

[employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov)

**Contacts:**

Julia Kelly, Acting Director of Employment and Meaningful Community Activities (EMCA) [julia.a.kelly@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:julia.a.kelly@opwdd.ny.gov) (518) 473-7030

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