



**Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities**

OPWDD State of the State Employment and Vocational Services

**NY STATE APSE
EMPLOYMENT FIRST TRAINING INSTITUTE
November 8, 2023**



OPWDD's goal is to increase the number of people gaining and retaining competitive integrated employment.

Acknowledgement

OPWDD would like to acknowledge the following stakeholders for offering their input and recommendations:

- self and family advocates
- provider associations
- provider agencies
- policy makers
- state partners
- national consultants

Recommendations

Streamline
Systems

Enhance
Services

Improve
Staff Training

Remove
Barriers

OPWDD Strategic Goals and Projects

Increase	the number of people competitively employed
Change	culture and business model to provide the full array of vocational and employment services
Develop	new and innovative models that are community-based and move people toward employment
Increase	career specific training for people with developmental disabilities and help people build careers

OPWDD Strategic Goals and Projects

Partner

with state and federal agencies to advance and increase employment for people with developmental disabilities

Reduce

administrative barriers and streamline processes

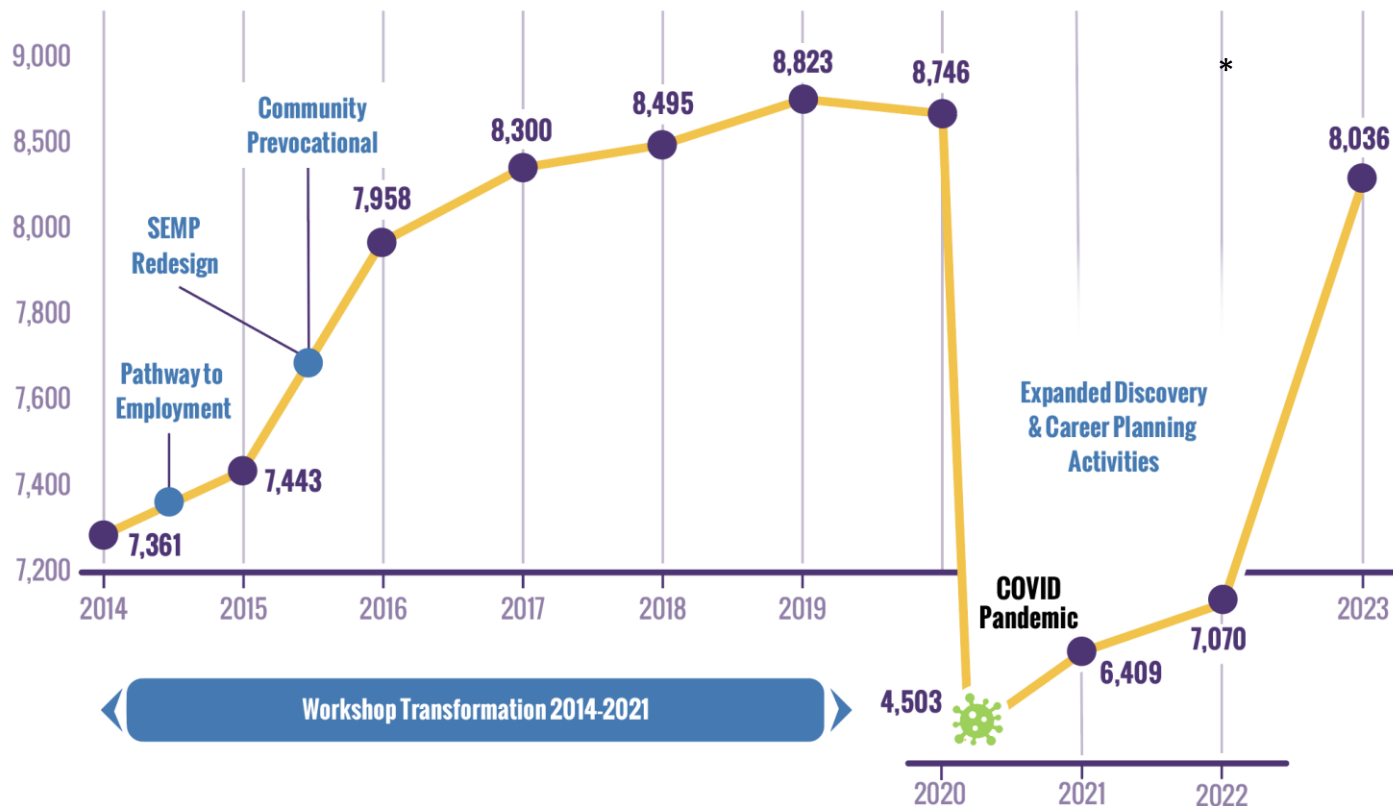
Improve

processes to allow people to move easily and quickly into and between services

Increase

engagement with NYS businesses

OPWDD Supported Employment Number of People Employed



All data points are based on December 31st annually unless otherwise indicated.
*2023 currently represents March 2023 and will be updated throughout the year.

Funding to Implement the 2022 State of the State Initiatives

\$27.76 million from Governor Hochul's State of the State Workforce Development Initiative

- Change business models and culture to provide the full array of services for people to gain employment and build careers
- Career-Specific Vocational Training for people with developmental disabilities
- Training Direct Support Professionals in providing more person-centered and individualized services to increase independence
- Develop more community-based services and reduce dependence on site-based models
- New York State as a Model Employer

Reduce Administrative Barriers and Streamline Processes

- Revise policies to make services more individualized and responsive
- Improve outcomes by allowing SEMP Managers to bill for planning and managing service delivery
- Relieve administrative burden by streamlining programmatic requirements and documentation
- Braid services to improve flexibility so people experience continuity of service
- Increase accountability with less prescriptive requirements and documentation

Proposed Supported Employment Regulations and ADM

- Added two new allowable services Managing and Planning
- Changes 45 days of unemployment to 120 days. This relieves administrative burden on providers and allows for more individualized employment services
- Aligns staff training dates with calendar year
- Adds rounding to incentivize employment services. If the provider spends at least 10 minutes, they can round to 15 minutes at the end of the day of services

Proposed Supported Employment Regulations and ADM

- Allows OPWDD to approve more hours in one request. Reduces administrative burden
- Language has been clarified in many areas based on questions and input from providers.
- Sections were reordered to provide clarity and organize the regulations in a more coherent manner. For example, all paragraphs that related to Intensive SEMP were moved into one section with a separate section for Extended SEMP to assist providers.

Changing Business Models that Offer the Full Array of Services to Build Careers

- OPWDD is working with provider agencies to offer the full array of employment and vocational services to everyone interested in obtaining employment.
- People with access to the full array of employment and vocational services may utilize the combination of services needed to help them enter the workforce and advance their careers.
- Training and technical assistance for agencies adding, implementing or redesigning their services to develop models that are sustainable and prepare people for employment and careers.

Career Specific Vocational Training (CSVTV)

CSVTV Project design completed in March 2023 and projects commenced in April 2023.

The combination of CSVTV developed and delivered through the grant and community vocational experiences funded through the HCBS Waiver is intended to:

- Increase the marketable skills of people enrolled in HCBS Waiver services
- Provide job-specific skill training
- Increase the number of people with developmental disabilities in competitive integrated employment

Career Specific Vocational Training (CSVV)

- People participate in industry-specific vocational skill training classes for up to 5 months no more than 75 hours. Classes may be offered in various locations over the next 3 years.
- Classes are targeted for people who are projected to start job development immediately following the class completion.
- Referring agencies provide community vocational experiences through CBPV, Pathway to Employment or ETP at the same time people are participating in the classes.
- After class completion, students are fast-tracked to the referring agency's Employment Training Program (ETP) which offers paid internships that lead to jobs.
- Required documentation is streamlined to allow for quick movement through the process.

CSVT Project Overview

Region	Training Topic(s)	Lead Agency	OPWDD Liaison
1	Hospitality	Community Services for Every1	Lynne Thibdeau
2	Janitorial Food Service	Access CNY Upstate Caring Partners (UCP)	Kristine Snyder
3	Hospitality Retail	Access: Supports for Living Jawonio	Bryan Bischoff
4	Janitorial	AHRC NYC	Lynne Thibdeau
5	Office Skills Custodial	FREE	Julia Kelly

CSVT Lead Agency Contacts

Lead Agency	Name	Email
Community Services for Every1 www.csevery1.com	Mindy Cervoni Arnecia Delk	MCervoni@csevery1.com ADelk@csevery1.com
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FREE www.familyres.org	Nicole Wolf John Gallagher	NWolf@familyres.org Jgallagher@familyres.org

Day Habilitation Initiatives

- COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Unwinding Guidance
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance/covid-19-public-health-emergency-unwinding-guidance>
 - New ADM coming to address telehealth and rolling back in home services through DH
- New Day Habilitation program codes; Site Based and Without Walls
 - Updated Administrative Memoranda in process to clarify definitions and other updates.
- Provider work groups and statewide program visits to develop long-term strategies for improvements and to address barriers
- Day Habitation Staff Training (in development)

Day Habilitation Initiatives

- Transition from site-based to without walls programs
- Staff training (OPWDD curriculum in development)
- Designing programs in collaboration with the Regional Field Office that support an array of services
 - Movement and in support of employment
 - Supporting retirement (New: In-Residence CH-R)
- Expanding or redesigning services
- Contact: day.community.services@opwdd.ny.gov

Increasing Engagement with NYS Businesses

- OPWDD is expanding upon the initiatives of the Employment First Commission, which consisted of several state agencies and stakeholder representatives to make competitive, integrated employment the first option when considering supports and services for people with disabilities.
- The EmployAbility Toolkit and EmployAbility Pledge created by the Employment First Commission are both located on OPWDD's website, in addition to information and resources designed to make it easier for employers to expand their workforce and effectively incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into their policies and hiring practices.

The EmployAbility Pledge

To date, over 150 businesses and organizations have pledged to embrace a philosophy of inclusivity by declaring:

“We support the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities and seek to provide customers and patrons of our business/organization with an environment that meets their needs for accessibility in structure, communication and interaction with our staff. We encourage other businesses and organizations to join us in taking this pledge and are proud to join NY State in creating communities that seek to include individuals with all abilities.”

EmployAbility Trainings

- Assembly Member Chris Burdick and Senator John Mannion proposed legislation that Governor Hochul signed the legislation into law in 2022 for OPWDD and partners to establish a training for businesses about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.
- OPWDD partnered with Adult Career & Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) and New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID) to develop and deliver these trainings.
- September/October 2023 – over 175 businesses and organizations have attended live, virtual trainings that addressed:
 - Benefits of hiring people with disabilities
 - Strategies to hire and support employees with disabilities
 - Reasonable accommodations
 - Website accessibility
 - Workplace Inclusion
 - Disability sensitivity
 - Supply Chain Diversity

EmployAbility Next Steps

- OPWDD and its partners are developing a self-directed training and a 2024 marketing plan for expanding the reach of the new training.
- Employers can find information on resources on OPWDD's website, here: www.opwdd.ny.gov/community-involvement/about-employability
 - EmployAbility Toolkit
 - EmployAbility Pledge and Honor Roll
 - Top 5 Reasons to Employ Ability
 - The Business Case for Inclusive Hiring
 - Financial Incentive and Tax Credits
 - Improve your Inclusivity
 - How to Find Qualified Workers
 - EmployAbility Handbook
 - EmployAbility Success Stories

Partnerships with State and Federal Agencies

- Disability Rights & Employment Awareness Month-DREAM Symposium
- National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON), Employment First and Most Integrated Settings Coordinating Council (MISCC)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Interagency Committee
- Adult Career & Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR)
- Department of Labor & Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network
- New York Employment Services System (NYESS)
- State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)

National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON)

- March 2023 - OPWDD announced it is participating in a new cross-agency technical assistance opportunity support of competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities.
- The multi-agency group has drafted a set of Employment First principles intended to prioritize employment services for people with disabilities and increase employment rates statewide.
- Future work will include developing a cross systems resource/service matrix and updates to OPWDD's Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with state agency partners.

Contacts

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Sign up to receive updates and information from OPWDD:

www.opwdd.ny.gov/form/email-sign-up

Technical Assistance Emails:

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