

Innovations in Employment Services Leadership Series

May 22, 2024
Innovations in Employment Supports



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About Today

- Today's event is scheduled from 1:00-4:00
- You must be present for the entire event to receive credit
- Please submit your questions in Chat box. Questions will be prioritized and answered at scheduled times.
- Review of Zoom features



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Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Elements of a High-Performing Employment System
- National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) Projects and NYS Projects
- Examples of State Systems Changes that Lead to Increased Employment Outcomes
- Tennessee Provider's Experience with Systems Change & Outcomes
- Wrap Up



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Objectives

Learn about national initiatives to increase and advance employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Learn how other states have increased employment outcomes through braiding and connecting funding to provide a full array of services.

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Stakeholder Engagement

OPWDD has developed regular forums and opportunities to collect feedback and engage stakeholders, which is key to strategic planning.

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



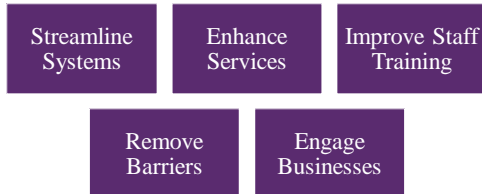
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Recommendations



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OPWDD Strategic Plan for Employment and Community Services (2023-2027)

1. Change the culture and business model with provider agencies to create a more flexible, responsive, employment-focused service system.
2. Identify new and innovative program models that are community-based and move people toward employment.
3. Increase career specific training for people with I/DD.

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OPWDD Strategic Plan for Employment and Community Services (2023-2027)

4. Improve processes to allow people to move easily and quickly into new services.
5. Improve and incentivize staff training for all employment, vocational and day services to improve employment, career development and community engagement outcomes.
6. Increase business engagement and education.

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OPWDD Employment, Vocational and Day Services

Employment and Vocational Services

- Supported Employment (SEMP) including the Employment Training Program (ETP)
- Community-Based Prevocational (CBPV)
- Pathway to Employment

Meaningful Community Activities

- Day Habilitation (DH)
- Community Habilitation (CH)

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Clear Leadership and Commitment

- 1 Top-Down Commitment**
State and local leaders visibly champion employment as the preferred outcome, setting the tone and expectations across the system.
- 2 Empowered Champions**
Administrators at all levels, from state agencies to service providers, are identified and empowered as champions for integrated employment.
- 3 Accountability and Oversight**
Clear performance measures and data tracking ensure leaders are held accountable for making progress on employment goals.

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Aligning Policies and Financing

<p>Policy Priorities</p> <p>Employment is the preferred outcome stated in state developmental disabilities policy, with clear goals and operating practices designed to achieve this objective.</p>	<p>Funding Mechanisms</p> <p>Resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices emphasize and support the outcome of employment in integrated community jobs.</p>	<p>Incentivizing Outcomes</p> <p>Financing structures incentivize service providers to prioritize and deliver on integrated employment supports and outcomes.</p>
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Building a Skilled Workforce

- 1 **Core Competencies**
Comprehensive training equips job coaches, developers, supervisors, and case managers with the skills to effectively support integrated employment.
- 2 **Capacity Building**
Ongoing professional development and technical assistance ensure the workforce maintains and strengthens their employment support capabilities.
- 3 **Family Engagement**
Families and individuals with disabilities are engaged as active partners, with training and resources to support employment goals.

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Fostering Collaboration

Cross-Agency Partnerships
Robust partnerships are built with vocational rehabilitation, education, mental health, and other key state and local agencies to coordinate employment supports.

Community Engagement
Meaningful relationships are cultivated with advocates, businesses, civic groups, and other community stakeholders to enhance employment opportunities.

Barrier Removal
Systemic barriers to employment are identified and proactively addressed through interagency collaboration and policy change.

Shared Accountability
Cross-agency data sharing and joint performance tracking enable collective responsibility for employment outcomes.

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Leveraging Data and Evaluation


Performance Tracking
Comprehensive data systems measure progress, benchmark performance, and document employment outcomes.


Cross-System Integration
Data is shared across agencies to report results, identify trends, and inform policy and program improvements.


Continuous Improvement
Data-driven evaluation informs changes to provider contracts, service agreements, and overall system design.

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Prioritizing Youth Transition

- 1 **Early Career Exploration**
Career development and work-based learning opportunities are integrated into the educational experience for youth with disabilities.
- 2 **Seamless Pathways**
Collaboration between education, vocational rehabilitation, and adult service systems ensures a smooth transition to employment.
- 3 **Family Engagement**
Families are empowered with resources and support to help their children plan for and achieve competitive, integrated employment.

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Driving System Transformation

<p>Comprehensive Approach</p> <p>Achieving meaningful employment for individuals with developmental disabilities requires a multifaceted strategy that addresses leadership, policies, financing, workforce development, partnerships, and data-driven decision making.</p>	<p>Collaborative Change</p> <p>Transforming the system to prioritize integrated employment is a collective effort, engaging stakeholders at all levels to drive sustainable change.</p>	<p>Continuous Improvement</p> <p>Ongoing evaluation, data analysis, and a willingness to adapt and innovate are essential for continuously improving employment outcomes over time.</p>
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Innovating Service Delivery

- 1 **Flexible Service Definitions**
Service definitions and support strategies are structured to facilitate employment for individuals with a wide range of support needs.
- 2 **Skill-Building Activities**
Non-work services, such as community engagement and volunteering, are intentionally designed to build employment-related skills and experiences.
- 3 **Individualized Supports**
Innovative, person-centered approaches ensure employment supports are tailored to the unique needs and goals of each individual.

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National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON)

A FEDERAL INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT

Abby Cooper & Rachel Pollock

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Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) is Not For The Weak of Heart



That is why for the last twelve years the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has been investing in States & Providers to expand CIE.

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Overview of ODEP's Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Initiatives



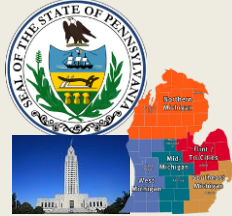
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Provider Transformation through Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program

Provider Transformation

- Bootcamps
- Site Visit and Self-Assessment
- Report with Recommendations
- Action Plan



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ODEP Provider Transformation Manuals

PROVIDER TRANSFORMATION MANUAL Pilot Version U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy

https://leadcenter.org/employment_first/provider-transformation-manual-pilot-version-and-webinar-series-1-0/

Provider Transformation Manual 2.0 Task 2 Deliverable: Federal Policy Product U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy

<https://leadcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Provider-Transformation-Manual-2.0.pdf>

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NEON: National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network

NEON partners with national disability service provider organizations, state intermediary organizations and core state agencies to meet their needs in the field and to offer the best employment options for all individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

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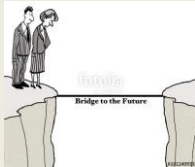
National Provider Organizations (NPOs)

NEON selected five National Provider Organizations (NPOs) to work with ODEP as part of a provider organization network. The five NPOs are:

- ACCSES
- ANCOR
- APSE
- SourceAmerica
- The Arc US

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Effective Change & Progress Depends on Trust, Innovation & A Willingness to Risk

Examples

- Learning new best practices: e.g. customized employment, apprenticeship, models for school transition
- Best practices for transitioning from 14C Programs
- Creating pathways from day habilitation to CIE
- Understanding funding opportunities: how to braid and blend resources
- Redesign of programs to implement best practices: utilization of day and prevocational programs to advance employment goals
- Developing workforce capacity
- Solving specific problems: transportation
- Developing employer engagement capacity
- Stakeholder engagement: addressing family concerns including government benefits

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NEON Core State Initiative

In 2023 NEON Core States received between 100 – 300 hours of hands-on Subject Matter Expert support in order to accomplish multiple goals that support the expansion of CIE:

California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee

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NEON Core State Initiative

In 2024 the following states continued to get or began to 100 – 300 hours of hands-on Subject Matter Expert support in order to accomplish multiple goals that support the expansion of CIE:

- California
- Colorado
- District of Columbia
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Missouri
- New York
- Oregon
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee

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Core State Policy Initiatives: Examples

Delaware: Support for Employment First Implementation Plan including development of updated Memorandum of Understanding and Recommendations on VR and Waiver Funding and Service Definitions

District of Columbia: State as Model Employer Strategic Planning

Missouri: Expansion of Benefits Planning through certificate education

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Core State Policy Initiatives: Examples

Kentucky: Improving interagency collaboration

Tennessee: Development of Employment First accreditation program for direct support professionals

Rhode Island: Alignment of mental health agency goals with those of developmental disability agencies.

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New York Core State Participation

Developing Employment First Principles and MOU

Supporting State as Model Employer Initiatives

Developing state specific benefit modules

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New York Provider Participation in NEON

Individual Agencies have received support to build capacity through provider associations (through the ARC, APSE and ACCSES)

- ❖ Self-assessments and action plans
- ❖ Technical assistance to build up capacity including customized employment, PROs, communications strategy

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New York Provider Participation- New York Alliance

New York Alliance as a state association has received technical assistance over the last two years to support the field of employment providers.

- Assigned a lead SME who helped them conduct a needs assessment
- Developed a strategic plan
- Offered webinars for members with NEON SME's including 1) overview of state employment first initiatives; 2) training, supervision and mentoring of employment staff 3) employer engagement strategies and innovation
- Upcoming webinars include: 1) use of technology to support employment; 2) IPS strategies
- Provided input to NEON core state team

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State Strategies to Promote Employment

Wesley E. Anderson & Rachel Pollock

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An Array of Strategies in Four States

- Exploration Services
- Customized Employment Strategies
- Flexible and Expanded Use of Day Habilitation/Community Prevocational Services



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Tennessee

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Exploration Services –For People who Don't Know Yet That They Want to Pursue Employment.

This is a time-limited and targeted service designed to help a person make an informed choice about whether s/he wishes to pursue individualized integrated employment or self-employment, as defined above. (40 hours of individual service)

- Each person receiving this service should participate in business tours, informational interviews and/or job shadows uniquely selected based on his or her individual interests, aptitudes, experiences, and skills most transferable to employment.
- This service also includes **introductory education on the numerous work incentives** for individuals receiving publicly funded benefits (e.g. SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.)
- This service further includes **introductory education on how Supported Employment services work**

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Discovery Services –Customized Employment

This is a time-limited and targeted service for an individual who wishes to pursue individualized integrated employment or self-employment but for whom more information is needed to determine the following prior to pursuing individualized integrated employment or self-employment:

- **Strongest interests toward one or more specific aspects of the labor market;**
- **Skills, strengths and other contributions likely to be valuable to employers or valuable to the community if offered through self-employment;**
- **Conditions necessary for successful employment or self-employment.**

Discovery profile should be shared with VR counselor to expedite employment services

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Benefits Counseling

A service designed to inform the individual (and guardian, conservator and/or family, if applicable) of the multiple pathways to ensuring individualized integrated employment or self-employment results in increased economic self-sufficiency (net financial benefit) through the use of various work incentives. **The service provides information to the individual (and guardian, conservator and/or family, if applicable) regarding the full array of available work incentives for essential benefit programs including SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, ECF, housing subsidies, food stamps, etc.**

This service is provided by a certified Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC)

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Ohio



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An Array of Career Planning Services

-  Benefits education and analysis
-  Career Discovery
-  Career Exploration
-  Employment/Self-Employment Plan
-  Situational Assessment
-  Job Development

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Career Discovery –Customized Employment

- Career discovery is an individualized, comprehensive process to help an individual, who is pursuing individualized integrated employment or self-employment, reveal how interests and activities of daily life may be translated into possibilities for integrated employment.
- Career discovery results in identification of the **individual's interests** in one or more specific aspects of the job market; the individual's skills, strengths, and other **contributions likely to be valuable to employers or valuable to the community if offered through self-employment**; and **conditions necessary for the individual's successful employment** or self-employment.
- **Discovery Profile** is the outcome

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Career Exploration to Learn about Options

Career exploration. Career exploration assists an individual to interact with job holders and observe jobs and job tasks. **Career exploration may include informational interviews with and/or shadowing persons who are actually performing the job duties of the identified occupation.**

When possible, the individual shall will be given an opportunity to perform actual job duties as well.

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Employment/Self Employment Plan

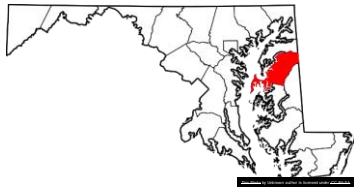
Employment/self-employment plan is an individualized service to **create a clear plan for employment or the start-up phase of self-employment and includes a planning meeting involving the job seeker and other key people who will be instrumental in supporting the job seeker to become employed in competitive integrated employment.**

This service culminates in development of a written employment plan directly tied to the results of career exploration, if previously authorized, situational observation and assessment, and/or career discover

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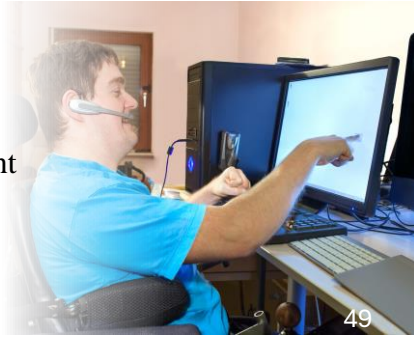
Maryland



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Employment First Page



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A Spectrum of Meaningful Day Services

Discovery including development of an employment plan

Community Development Supports

Self-employment development supports

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Discovery

A time-limited, comprehensive, person-centered, and community-based employment planning support service designed to assist the person to identify **his/her abilities, interests and ideal conditions of employment.**

Milestone 1: Home visit including visit to the community

Milestone 2: An individualized skill assessment, learning and teaching style identification through **community-based task trials with at least 3 community skill observations or information interviews.**

Milestone 3: Compilation of information including summary, **visual resume, team meeting;**

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Community Development Supports

Promoting positive growth and developing general skills and social supports necessary to gain, retain, or advance:

- **Competitive integrated employment opportunities;**
- Learning socially acceptable behavior;
- Learning self-advocacy skills; and
- Building and strengthening relationships with others in local community.
- **Support provided in groups of 2-4 to promote community interaction and skill development.**
- Authorizations when justified for 1:1 or 2:1 service

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Self-employment development supports

Services include:

- **Assistance in the development of a business and marketing plan,** including potential sources of business financing and other assistance in developing and launching a business; and
- Supports to assist a person whose Discovery activities and final Discovery profile recommendations indicate a specific skill or interest that would benefit from resource ownership or small business operation.

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Pennsylvania

Community Participation Supports requires small ratios and specifically includes activities, like discovery, that will promote employment



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Questions



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Agency Transformation Q & A

Troy Allen, Regional Director of Community Services, SRVS in Memphis, Tennessee

- SRVS Transformation
- Tennessee's "Employment and Community First"

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Wrap Up

- Summarize

June 5: Learn how NY provider agencies have increased employment outcomes by providing the full array of employment, day and vocational services.

Panel presentation and Q & A.

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Presenter's Information

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Troy Allen —

Troy Allen has been dedicated to disability services for over thirty-five years with a strong commitment to the SRVS mission "Providing the services that people with disabilities need to live meaningful lives as members of their communities". Prior to his appointment as SRVS Regional Director of Community Services, Allen was the project manager in developing a new service model to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving full community integration, inclusion and employment. He has served in multiple leadership roles within this organization that provides services in Middle and West Tennessee. Allen has provided consulting to several state-agencies, provider organizations and national advocacy groups to train on the power of employment, while promoting full inclusion. He served on the project team to credential SRVS for Tennessee's "Employment and Community First" service model and is a National Subject Matter Expert on "Organizational Transformation."

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Wesley E. Anderson

Wesley E. Anderson is the Director of Employment and Community Services for NASDDDD (National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services). In this position, he co-directs the State Employment Leadership Network in partnership with the Institute for Community Inclusion UMASS Boston to oversee a consortium of state I/DD agencies collaborating to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Wesley has been providing support to individuals with I/DD and the systems that support them for over 15 years.

Mr. Anderson's work on employment equity and adult learning has taken many forms, from speaking at national conferences to providing in-depth change management assistance to agencies trying to overcome shifting priorities, staff capacity, and systemic overhauls.

As a certified Master Trainer and Traumatic Brain Injury Specialist, Mr. Anderson specializes in delivering interactive, multimodal training and materials based on the best practices in knowledge transfer and universal design. Wesley also sits on the national board of directors for NADSP, the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals.

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Abby Cooper, MA

Abby Cooper started the first supported employment agency in Washington. She implemented one of the seven RSA Informed Choice grants for Washington State. As a Statewide Administrator for Washington Vocational Rehabilitation, created a team of seven certified benefits planners and established a process to integrate benefit information and financial literacy into counseling and guidance. She has worked nationally and internationally for the last 15 years, training providers on Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE), Customized Employment, 14(c) transformation, creating a pathway from Day Habilitation to CIE. Provided technical assistance to states on various issues, from implementing system change to creating a practical Memorandum of Understanding, the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, and states as a model employer, utilizing the waiver to support discovery and employer outreach. Co-author of an Employer Guide for Inclusion, this guide unites disability law and inclusion approaches. Abby has provided support in 45 states and knows that our issues are complex and require careful strategic thinking that brings all the players to the table. She is a subject matter expert for the NEON project and Marc Gold and Associates.

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Rachel Pollock, J.D.

Rachel Pollock, J.D., is a Technical Assistant Consultant, and formerly Chief Operating Officer, at Job Path Inc, a not-for-profit provider agency in New York City (NYC) that provides competitive integrated employment and a range of individualized day and residential supports services for people with developmental disabilities. She launched and oversaw the development of a customized employment program that now services over 200 people with significant developmental disabilities. She has extensive experience, in the implementation of employment and day services, with a particular focus on innovative program development and the effective use of funding streams to develop quality programming. Through federal and state initiatives, Ms. Pollock has provided technical assistance to states and individual providers, in the areas of customized and supported employment strategies, job development, community-based day supports, and stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, braiding and blending funding, staff restructuring, workforce development, and recruitment, and State as Model Employer. Ms. Pollock also is the parent of a young man with autism who is working in a job in New York City.

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Contact Information

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- **Wesley Anderson**, Director of Employment and Community Services for NASDDDS (*National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services*), wanderson@nasddds.org
- **Abby Cooper**, Statewide Administrator for Washington Vocational Rehabilitation, abbylindmancooper@gmail.com
- **Rachel Pollock**, Technical Assistance Consultant, Job Path Inc., rpollock@jobpathnyc.org

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Questions for OPWDD

Web:

- www.opwdd.ny.gov

Sign up to receive updates and information from OPWDD:

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

Technical Assistance Emails:

- EmployAbility@opwdd.ny.gov (for businesses)
- employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov
- day.community.services@opwdd.ny.gov



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