

OPWDD Employment Services Directors Meeting

June 23, 2026

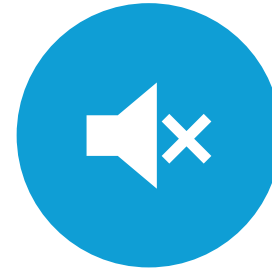
Welcome



3 HOUR BILLABLE
SESSION



INNOVATIONS
CREDITS



PLEASE MUTE
YOUR LINE



UTILIZE CHAT FOR
QUESTIONS

Capturing Attendance

This session will run from 1:00 – 4:00 and you need to stay for the full session to receive credit.

Attendees must be registered with Eleversity for this session to receive credit.

If you are sharing a device, be sure to add the names of all attendees to the chat box to receive credit.

If you are using a phone and you do not have a name displayed, you will not receive credit.

Agenda

Employment First Updates

EMCA Updates

OPWDD Employment Data and Outcomes

New Innovations Trainings

Employment Tracking System

Leadership Conference

Employment First Updates

Executive Order 40

Employment First Overview

Employment First is a national systems change framework centered on the premise that all people, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and community life.

In practice, this means that CIE is considered as the first option and preferred outcome in the planning and delivery of services and supports to New Yorkers with disabilities who are of working age.

NYS now has an Employment First (E1st) Executive Order that includes concrete agency responsibilities, funding, and a dedicated staffing infrastructure.

E1st is not a new program or project, it's how we do business from now on.

E1st implementation is not limited to employment programs, it encompasses our entire public health system for people with disabilities.

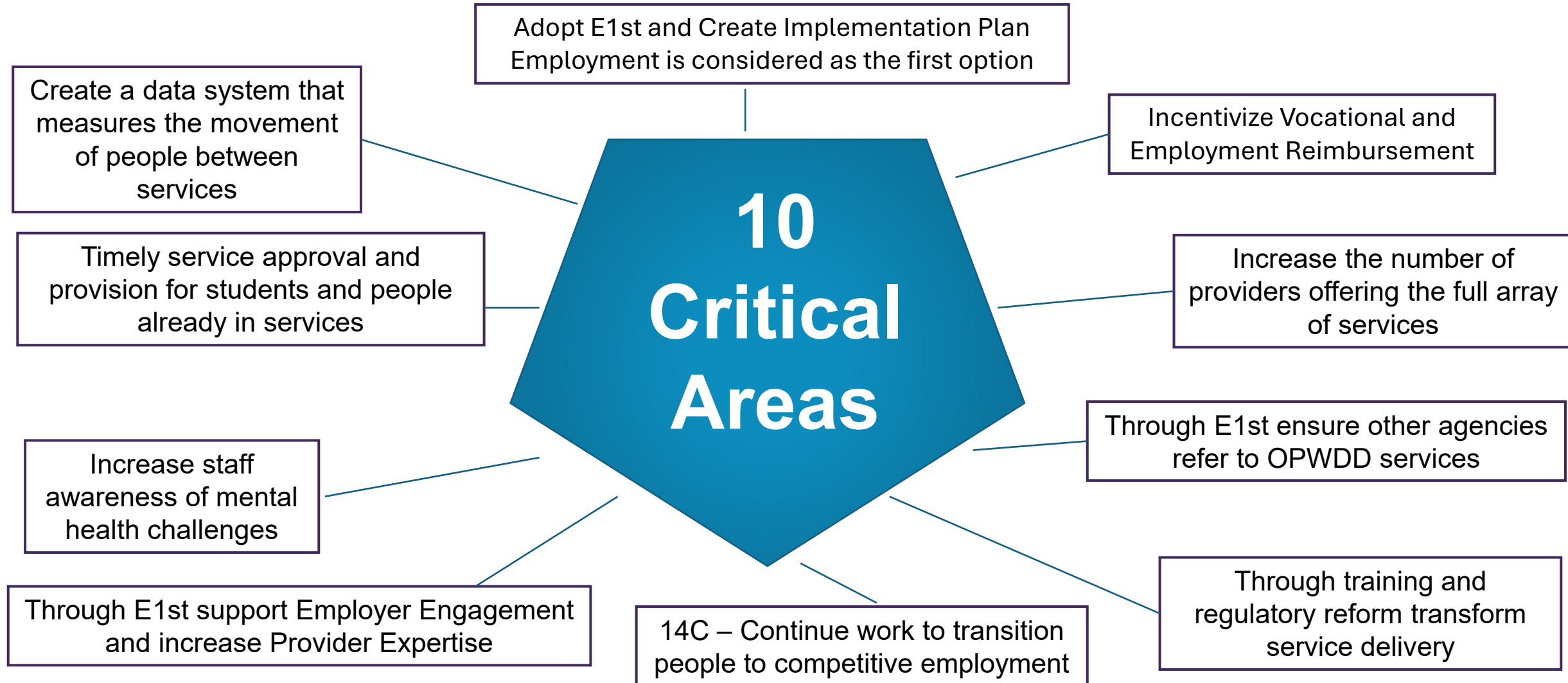
State Agencies With Primary Responsibility for Executive Order 40

1. Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
2. Department of Health
3. Office of Mental Health
4. Office for Addiction Services and Supports
5. Office for Children and Family Services
6. Department of Labor
7. Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
8. State Education Department (ACCES-VR and Office of Special Education)

OPWDD E1st Update

Timeline	Activity
June 2025	OPWDD leadership attend the first official E1st task force meeting
June 2025	E1st overview for OPWDD regional field office directors
July 2025	E1st overview for OPWDD leadership
September 2025	OPWDD submits E1st Self-Assessment to CDO
October 2025	E1st overview for OPWDD internal unit and division representatives
November 2025 - Present	Individual E1st meetings with OPWDD unit and division representatives
February 2026	Monthly E1st meetings with Commissioner Baer and Executive Deputy Commissioner Barbuto commence
March 31, 2026	Internal leadership review of E1st Implementation Plan
May 29, 2026	OPWDD E1st Implementation Plan Submitted to CDO

OPWDD CRITICAL AREAS TO INCREASE COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT



Employment First Listening Session Summary

- Eleversity hosted an Employment First Listening Session during the 2025 Leadership Conference held November 5-6. Providers of employment and vocational services had the opportunity to weigh in on topics pertaining to Executive Order 40, Employment First and Systems Change.
- Attendees discussed the following critical areas: Service Access, Policy Change, Training and Workforce Development, Data and Capacity Building.
- Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) Leadership and representatives from the Chief Disability Office (CDO) had the opportunity to hear directly from providers their perspective regarding barriers to employment, their role in improving outcomes and recommendations for state agencies responsible for implementing Executive Order 40.
- OPWDD considered the provider perspective when developing its implementation plan and incorporated provider recommendations to the extent possible.

The Provider Perspective – 5 Key Takeaways

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Culture Shift on Employment Expectations |
| 2 | Streamline Service Authorization and Access |
| 3 | Stabilize Workforce to Strengthen Capacity |
| 4 | Modernize Data & Technology Infrastructure |
| 5 | Address Transportation Barriers |

The Provider Perspective – 5 Key Takeaways

1 Culture Shift on Employment Expectations

Goal	Align Policy, Practice, and Operations Around Employment Outcomes
Provider Challenges	• Employment conversations start too late • Leadership buy-in at provider agencies • Employers lack understanding employment services • Silos across state agencies • Care Manager lack of understanding of employment services
Provider Input	• Mandate early employment planning discussions (ages 12–14) • Educate executives and boards on Employment First principles • Strengthen corporate-level engagement with major employers • Provide cross-agency training (OPWDD, ACCES-VR, DOL) • Standardize training for Care Managers on employment services

The Provider Perspective – 5 Key Takeaways

2 Streamline Service Authorization and Access

Goal	Create a “No Wrong Door” Employment-Focused System
Provider Challenges	• Fragmented processes (Front Door, CAS, SART, ACCES-VR Transition) • Silos between Day Habilitation, Prevocational, and Supported Employment • Complex billing and unit structures / heavy documentation • Slow and confusing transitions (School → OPWDD), (ACCES-VR → OPWDD)
Provider Input	• Develop a true “No Wrong Door” intake model • Streamline eligibility and reassessment processes • Reduce duplicative forms and reporting requirements • Smoother transitions (School → OPWDD), (ACCES-VR → OPWDD), and between OPWDD services

The Provider Perspective – 5 Key Takeaways

3 Stabilize Workforce to Strengthen and Build Capacity

Goal	Address Turnover, Burnout, and Skill Gaps
Provider Challenges	• Low wages compared to self-direction and typical entry level positions • Large caseloads across multiple services • Excessive documentation burden • Lack of supervisory and middle management training
Provider Input	• Advocate for rate increases tied to wage stabilization • Support career ladder models in employment services • Reduce administrative requirements that divert time from services • Develop additional supervisory and middle management training

The Provider Perspective – 5 Key Takeaways

4

Modernize Data & Technology Infrastructure

Goal	Shift from Compliance Reporting to Outcome-Driven Decision Making
Provider Challenges	• Duplicative systems that do not communicate • Inconsistent data collection across agencies and services • Paper-based documentation / lack of field technology (laptops, Wi-Fi access) • Using data in reactive rather than proactive way
Provider Input	• Explore a Statewide Universal Electronic Health Records (EHR) • Standardize core employment and service outcome metrics • Fund technology and Wi-Fi grants for providers • Improve interoperability across OPWDD, Medicaid billing, and VR systems • OPWDD & VR compile and share data on employment and service trends

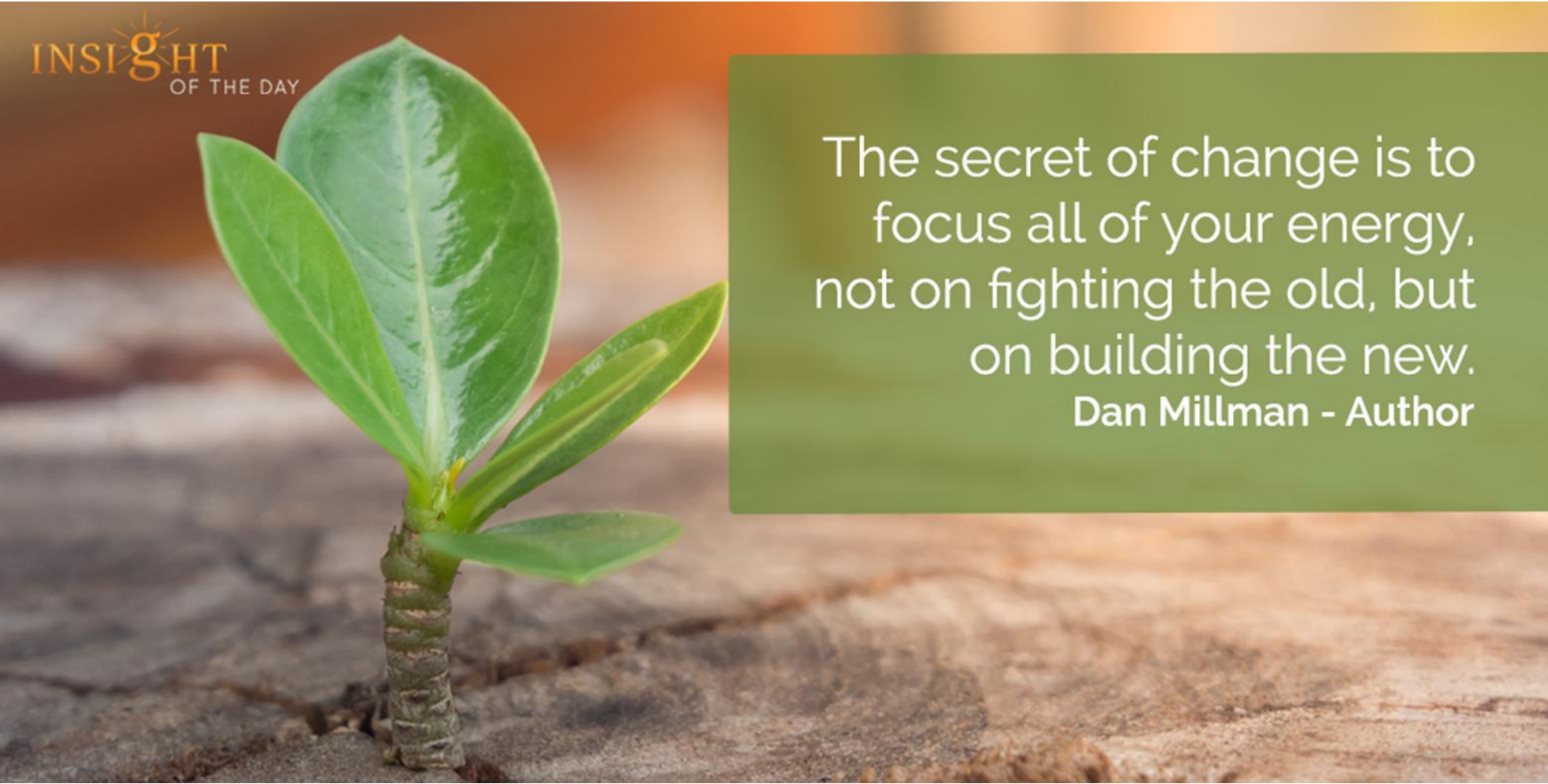
The Provider Perspective – 5 Key Takeaways

5 Address Transportation Barriers

Goal	Develop Transportation Resources for Employment
Provider Challenges	• Major barrier to obtaining and maintaining jobs • Impacts staff ability to support community employment • Transportation not consistently included in rates • Limited rural and regional access
Provider Input	• Create / advocate for transportation grant programs • Explore partnerships with rideshare and regional transit systems • Include transportation flexibility within all vocational services • Analyze employment rates vs. public transportation availability

What do the Employment First principles mean for OPWDD?

- A **CULTURE CHANGE** for state and voluntary staff where they believe that people with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities can work and that it is an important aspect of their lives.
- A **SYSTEMS CHANGE** that removes administrative barriers; delays in service authorization and access.
- A **COMMITMENT** to examine options such as value-based payments, rate incentives, or policy flexibilities that will incentivize provider agencies to achieve quality employment outcomes.
- An **UNDERSTANDING** that to increase the number of people in employment, OPWDD must assure that basic life skills and community participation are key components of Day Habilitation services.



INSIGHT
OF THE DAY

The secret of change is to
focus all of your energy,
not on fighting the old, but
on building the new.
Dan Millman - Author

What We Can Do

The Employment and Meaningful Community Activities (EMCA) unit is partnering with employment and vocational services providers to build capacity through the following activities.

- Train staff and management on best practices
- Work with agencies to hire and train Supported Employment (SEMP) staff
- Develop roles for planning and managing services
- Offer customized employment options
- Develop creative employment options
- Braid services for safety nets
- Continue to provide policies and resources in support of Employment First initiatives

What You Can Do

- Discuss Employment First with your Board of Directors, Leadership Team and other key stakeholders.
- Re-examine internal policies and procedures through the lens of Employment First.
- Address Employment First principles in New Employee Orientation.
- Consider introducing or expanding employment and vocational services to provide the full array of services.
- Ensure Employment Support Professional's wages are competitive; offer advancement opportunities to retain talent and support planning and managing the delivery of Supported Employment (SEMP).
- Train staff in Customized Employment and develop creative employment models that offer employment opportunities for people with varying skills and abilities.

What You Can Do

- Ensure intake staff are well versed in employment and vocational services and offering the full array of services.
- Regularly review people's progress in each service to support transition to employment.
- Highlight employment success stories in agency newsletters, websites and social media.
- Promote innovation through external and internal agency collaboratives and Communities of Practice.
- Ensure Employment Support Professional's link people to credentialed benefits advisers.
- Research and utilize all available transportation options (within the agency and in the community).

Let's Chat

**Share how your
agency has
started to
implement
change in line
with the
Employment First
principles**



The Path Forward: E1st Opportunities for Change

**Service Planning
and Employment
Expectations**

**Misaligned
Incentives &
Funding
Structures**

**Data Gaps &
Movement
Tracking**

**Rebalance and
Modernize Day
Services**

**Service
Education, Equity
& Financial
Independence**

**Transportation &
Infrastructure
Barriers**

**Timely Service
Authorization and
Access**

**Provider Capacity
& Readiness**

**Communication &
Public Awareness**

EMCA Updates

Interagency Partnership, Pathway to Employment, CSVT, and more.

Interagency Partnership Update

OPWDD, ACCES-VR and NYS Commission for the Blind leadership have been meeting regularly since fall 2024 to coordinate services and leverage resources with the shared goal of increasing employment for people with disabilities.

To date this collaboration has resulted in the following.

- Regional trainings with OPWDD, ACCES-VR and NYSCB staff to share information about vocational and employment services.
- Coordination of non-duplicative OPWDD, ACCES-VR and NYSCB resources and concurrent services to increase employment outcomes. Requests are now tracked in a shared database. The goal is to "braid" services to allow for more effective, efficient, and seamless service delivery to increase employment outcomes.
- Development of a new Memorandum of Interagency Agreement (MOIA).
- Identification of a gap in the seamless transition from ACCES-VR to OPWDD Extended SEMP funding when a person is employed. Several strategies were developed to address this gap.

ACCES-VR Stabilization

As listed in the ACCES-VR Core Rehabilitation Services (CRS) Program Guide (2024-2028):

Stabilization is identified when the customer, employer (when the customer has disclosed disability information), the vendor, and the ACCES-VR counselor agree the customer is able to perform the essential functions of the job (with or without reasonable accommodations), that natural supports as needed in and outside of the job have been developed, and the customer has sustained their lowest level of supports required to maintain current employment.

The date of stabilization marks the end of Supported Employment Intensive Services and the start of Supported Employment Extended Services.

Transition from ACCES-VR to OPWDD Extended SEMP

ACCES-VR's Core Rehabilitation Services (CRS) Program Guide (2024-2028) has new language addressing Supported Employment Extended Services.

- Once stabilization has been achieved, vendors are expected to utilize the appropriate supported employment extended funding source.
- **NEW UPDATE:** OPWDD eligible people that are authorized for SEMP may seamlessly transition to OPWDD Extended SEMP. It is no longer necessary to wait 90 days from the date of ACCES-VR stabilization.
- ACCES-VR Extended Supported Employment Services may be approved for customers who are not eligible for or are awaiting eligibility determination for another extended funding source. Please discuss with the ACCES-VR Counselor to request more time if needed.

Transition from ACCES-VR Extended Supported Employment to OPWDD Extended SEMP

- Vendors that document and bill ACCES-VR Extended Support Employment Services after the person has stabilized in a job, must wait until the first day of the new month to transition the person to OPWDD and begin billing OPWDD Extended SEMP.
- ACCES-VR Extended Supported Employment funding is a monthly service fee that requires at least 2 monthly contacts, whereas OPWDD Extended SEMP is billed hourly.

ACCES-VR 90 Day Outcome Payment

ACCES-VR issues a 90-day outcome payment to vendors if the customer they served completed intensive supported employment services, transitioned to extended services, and maintained stable employment for a minimum of 90 days after the date of their stabilization.

ACCES-VR's current Core Rehabilitation Services (CRS) Program Guide (2024-2028) states:

- This is an outcome-based service that provides a milestone payment to the vendor when the customer has achieved a minimum of 90 days of employment post stabilization. Vendor must continue to have on-going contact with the customer and, where it is not contraindicated, the employer.
- The vendor must provide ACCES-VR verification of the Supported Employment extended funding source and the documentation needed by ACCES-VR to record a successful employment outcome (Employment Outcome Policy) for the customer.

Key Takeaways

The Supported Employment section on the SART indicates that *“The person is enrolled in ACCES-VR and their supports and funding will transition to OPWDD SEMP.”*

Timely service authorization and access is among the Employment First priorities identified.

In most cases, people transition from Intensive Supported Employment to Extended Supported Employment with the same agency.

It is an agency’s responsibility to monitor the details of the person’s transition to ensure that claims are properly submitted based on the person’s status.

The EMCA unit will be providing additional training on this topic with Employment First implementation and the release of the updated Memorandum of Interagency Agreement between OPWDD and ACCES-VR.

Please let us know if you have questions in the interim.

New Update: Verification that Job Meets SEMP Criteria



Updated version
is coming and will
be shared on
Eleversity

Aligned with
SEMP ETS

Updated ACCES-
VR language

Verification that Job Meets SEMP Criteria



Supported Employment (SEMP) ADM-2023-09 *January 2, 2024*

A. SEMP Services

SEMP is a person-centered employment support service that assists individuals in obtaining, maintaining, or advancing in self-employment or competitive, integrated employment in the general workforce, for which the individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage. The goal of SEMP services is sustained, paid, integrated employment in a job or self-employment that meets the individual's personal and career goals. SEMP services may be provided as either Intensive or Extended SEMP. SEMP may be provided to a single individual, or to a small group of two to eight (2-8) individuals. ***When a job that meets the individual's personal and career goals is obtained, providers must either complete and keep Attachment #1, Verification that Job Meets SEMP Criteria or maintain all the information required on this form in their records for auditing.***

Verification that Job Meets SEMP Criteria



Supported Employment (SEMP) ADM-2023-09 *January 2, 2024*

B. Minimum Wage Requirement for Hired Employment

Individuals enrolled in SEMP who are earning a wage must be compensated at or above the applicable county, state or federal minimum wage. The SEMP service provider must obtain wage documentation verifying that the individual is earning at least minimum wage. Where the individual is earning less than the highest minimum wage available, the provider must provide documentation that a lower wage is legally permissible (e.g., waiter who receives tips). ***Wage verification from the employer must be obtained when the individual is initially employed and attached to the verification on Attachment #1 Job Meets SEMP Criteria form prescribed in Section A SEMP Requirements.***

If the individual obtains a new job, the service provider must complete a new Attachment #1, Verification that Jobs Meets SEMP Criteria form or maintain all the information required on this form in their records for auditing and obtain written verification that the wage for the new job is at least minimum wage.

Career Specific Vocational Training

- **Increased Opportunities**
 - New CSVT training topics being offered in all Regions
- **Are you providing services to...**
 - Students with school to work experience starting your programs in the summer/fall?
 - Someone who recently lost their job or has been in job development for a long time?
 - An ETP participant who would benefit from additional training?
 - Someone in your CBPV or Pathway to Employment program whose employment goal is aligned with a training topic?

Region	Provider	Training Topics	Class Locations	Contact
1	Community Services for Every1	Hospitality & Culinary, Janitorial, Retail	Buffalo, Canandaigua	Arnecia Delk Adelk@csevery1.com
2	Access CNY	Janitorial, Food Service, Retail, Hospitality	TBD	David Devendorf David.Devendorf@accesscny.org
2	Upstate Caring Partners	Food Service, Janitorial, Hospitality, Retail	Clinton	Dawn Gentile Dawn.Gentile@upstatecp.org
3	Jawonio	Retail, Janitorial	Rockland & Westchester counties	Courtney Burnham Courtney.Burnham@jawonio.org
4	AHRC NYC	Janitorial, Food Service	5 boroughs NYC	Francklin Morose Francklin.Morose@ahrcnyc.org
5	FREE	Custodial, Clerical, Culinary	Oakdale, Brentwood	John Gallagher Jgallagher@FamilyRes.org

Pathway to Employment

6 New Agencies for Reporting Period 10/01/2025 – 04/30/2026! 🎉

If your agency is interested in returning to or adding Pathway to Employment as a new service, please contact your local Employment and Vocational Services Liaison

EMCA/ETP Directory

<https://eleversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/ETP-EMCA-AT-A-GLANCE-EXTERNAL-Eleversity-copy-6.26.pdf>

Pathway to Employment

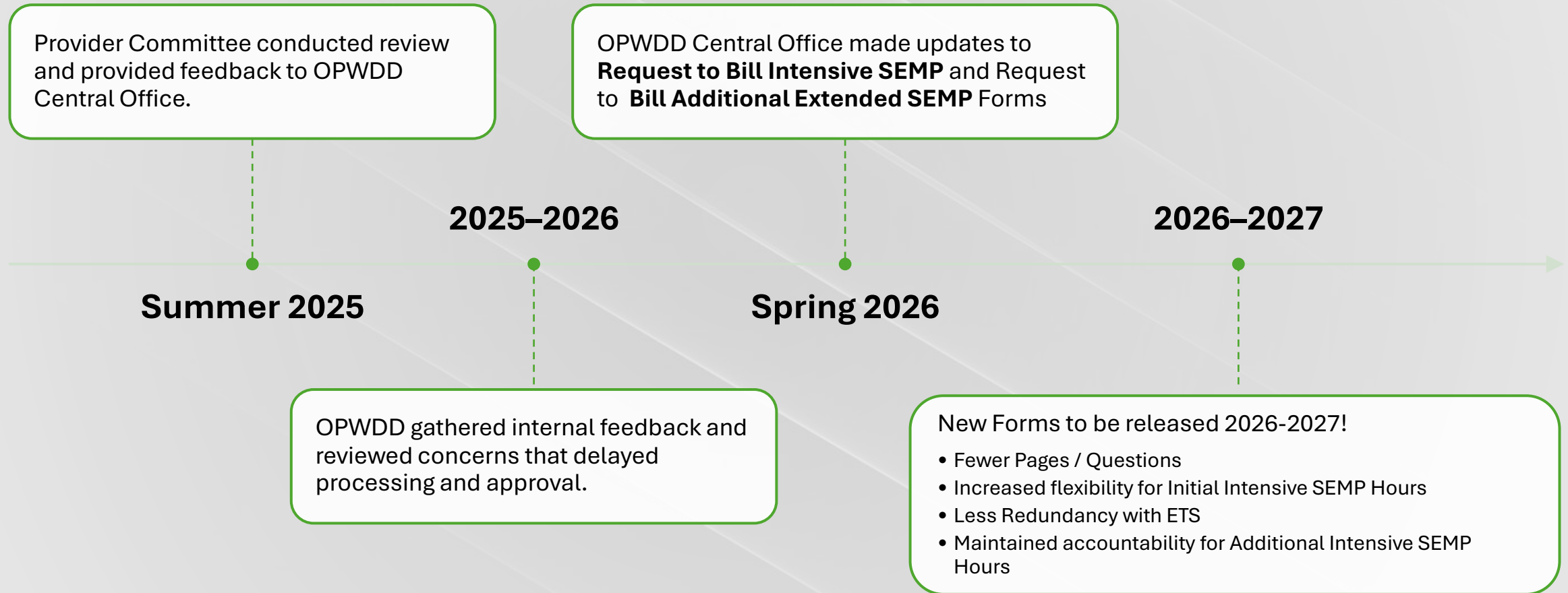
Reminders for ADM Requirements (25-ADM-01):

- Service providers must complete and submit the Career, Vocational and Transition Plan for every person enrolled in Pathway to Employment services regardless of the number of hours of Pathway to Employment they have received.

Service providers must upload each person's Career, Vocational and Transition Plan to CHOICES, no later than 90 days after the person has been disenrolled from Pathway to Employment services.

- If the person enrolls with a provider and receives 100 or more hours of Pathway to Employment services from that provider and there are exceptional circumstances where the person **has not received** three (3) separate community-based vocational experiences and/or 30% of their Pathway to Employment service delivery hours as community-based vocational experiences, the provider may complete **Request to Waive the Community-Based Vocational Experience Requirements** Form.

Request to Bill SEMP Services Forms



Updated forms will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Prior Approval to Bill for Intensive SEMP



A provider **MUST OBTAIN PRIOR APPROVAL** from OPWDD's Central Office Employment Unit to bill for all Intensive SEMP services per 14 NYCRR 635-10.4(j)(5)(e) using the **Request to Bill OPWDD Intensive SEMP Services form.**

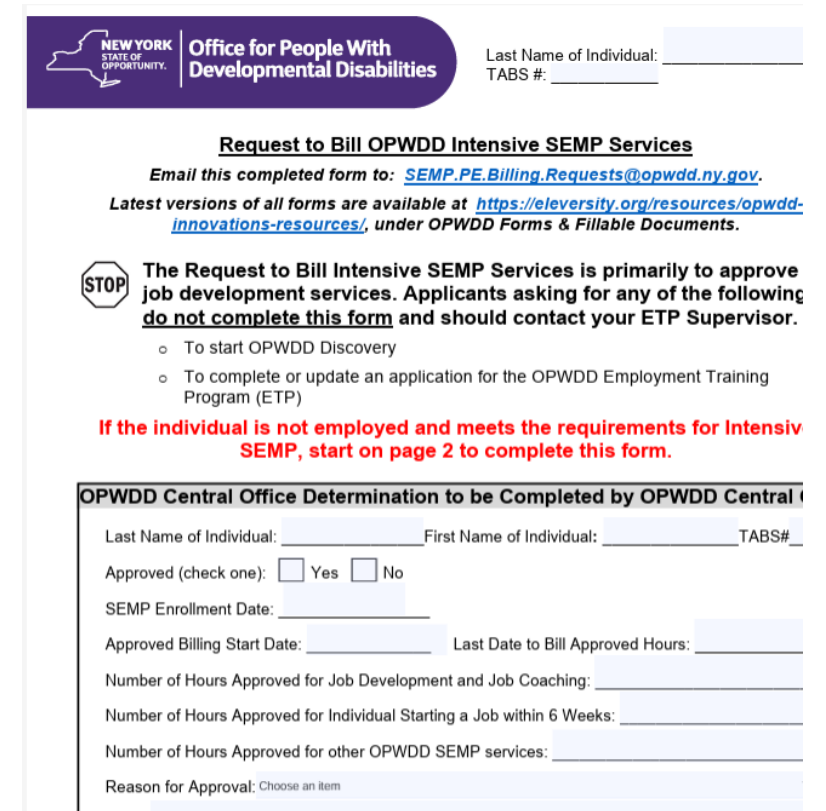
Form is located  here on the Eleversity website

Retroactive approvals may only be granted by OPWDD under extenuating circumstances per 14 NYCRR 635-10.4(j)(5)(i)(g).

*ETP Supervisors will submit Requests to Bill OPWDD Intensive SEMP for an ETP Participant.

SEMP ADM: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/adm-2023-09-supported-employment-semp-0>

Form: <https://eleversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2.-Request-to-Bill-OPWDD-Intensive-SEMP-Services-01-02-24.pdf>



NEW YORK
STATE OF OPPORTUNITY

Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

Last Name of Individual: _____
TABS #: _____

Request to Bill OPWDD Intensive SEMP Services

Email this completed form to: SEMP.PE.Billing.Requests@opwdd.ny.gov.

Latest versions of all forms are available at <https://eleversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>, under OPWDD Forms & Fillable Documents.

STOP The Request to Bill Intensive SEMP Services is primarily to approve job development services. Applicants asking for any of the following **do not complete this form** and should contact your ETP Supervisor.

- To start OPWDD Discovery
- To complete or update an application for the OPWDD Employment Training Program (ETP)

If the individual is not employed and meets the requirements for Intensive SEMP, start on page 2 to complete this form.

OPWDD Central Office Determination to be Completed by OPWDD Central Office

Last Name of Individual: _____ First Name of Individual: _____ TABS# _____

Approved (check one): ☐ Yes ☐ No

SEMP Enrollment Date: _____

Approved Billing Start Date: _____ Last Date to Bill Approved Hours: _____

Number of Hours Approved for Job Development and Job Coaching: _____

Number of Hours Approved for Individual Starting a Job within 6 Weeks: _____

Number of Hours Approved for other OPWDD SEMP services: _____

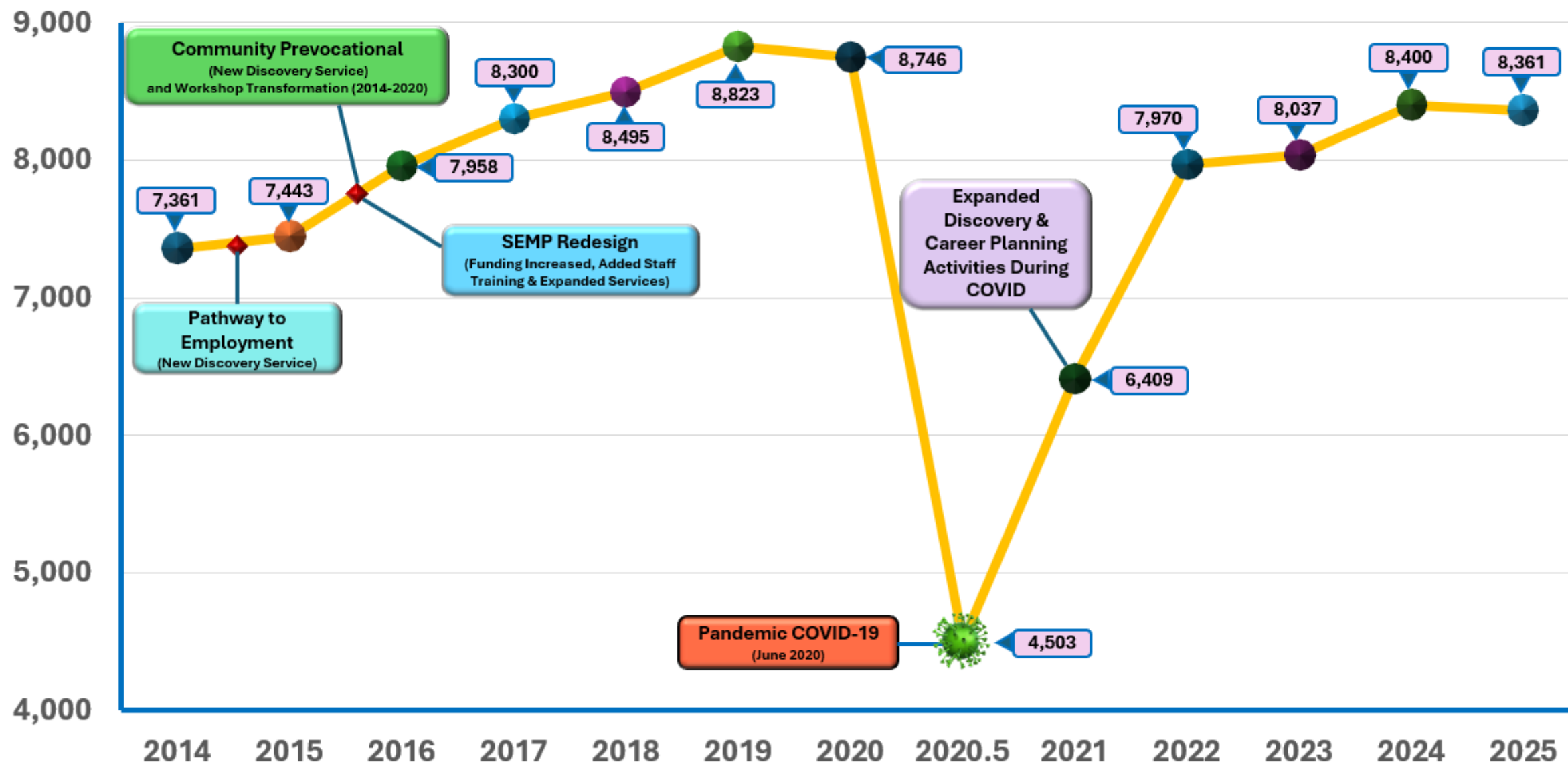
Reason for Approval: Choose an item

OPWDD

Employment Data and

Outcomes

Number of People Working in OPWDD Supported Employment



**Current Challenges Providers are
Facing to Increase Job Placements**

**Share your
current job
development
challenges.**



Current Roadblocks to Boosting Job Placements

Feedback we've collected:

- Internal job matching and hiring staff with business acumen.
- Quality Discovery and job matching with job seekers.
- Allocating sustained and concentrated job developer hours to increase the probability of job placements.
- Planning and managing services with the job developer regularly to troubleshoot , support and motivate staff.
- Business engagement to develop longer term relationships with businesses.
- Dedicated staff/management who will sustain relationships with businesses when staff are job coaching.
- Family and support team engagement to assure supports outside of work are available.
- Limited transportation options.
- Labor market changes.

Solutions for Expanding Opportunities

- Employment First initiatives have been developed to improve employment services systemically.
- New Job Development trainings through Eleversity.
- Business partnerships – OPWDD Partnering with CDO Business Liaison and creating business campaigns
- Customized Employment training
- Eleversity management trainings
- Job Development survey for best practices in current labor market
- Staff retention (*starting to hear about pockets of improvement!)

Quality Job Development

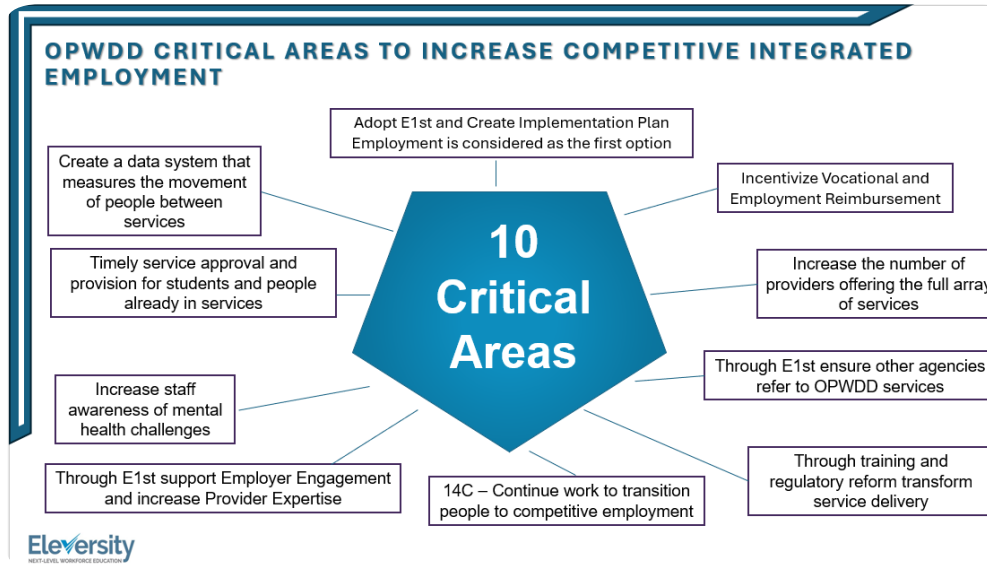
OPWDD's EMCA unit plans to survey top-performing job developers statewide.

The goal is to identify proven methods and best practices for successfully securing and maintaining competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities in the current labor market.

Interested agencies please reach out at employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov



Training



• Through training and regulatory reform transform service delivery

• Through E1st support Employer Engagement and increase Provider Expertise

Eleversity Offerings

Total class offerings - 24

Series 1 – 4 Offerings

Assessment and Planning – 4 Offerings

Worksite Supports – 3 Offerings

Business Relationships – 4 Offerings

Program / Services – 3 Offerings

Skills for Managers – 5 Offerings

Additional Course – 1 Offerings

Innovations in Employment Supports Data

6/1/25-5/30/26

Class
offerings: 386

Total
registrations:
10,039

Total
attendees:
7,737

Day Habilitation Events

6/1/25-5/30/26

Class
offerings: 38

Total
registrations:
1,278

Total
attendees:
663

All Events – 6/1/25-5/30/26

Total Events:
427

Total
registrations:
11,602

Total
attendees:
8,634



**New Name, Same Mission.
Strong Job Matches
And... 6 Training Credits!**



Join us for
Connecting Talent to Business Needs



Register today,
Seating is limited!

Next Session:

June 24, 2026 & June 25, 2026
1:00pm – 4:00pm

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

All Employment Support Professionals
helping connect people with jobs that
align with their goals.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- How to use key information to create a Job Development Plan.
- Complete research of local businesses to support the strong job match.
- Connect to businesses and demonstrate the value of partnering with your SE Program.



To fully participate in this course, please have completed:
All Series 1 trainings AND
Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities

Rebrand: Connecting Talent to Business Needs

Elevate your job development approach by learning how to translate job seeker strengths into measurable employment outcomes.

Learn how to harness information from the Discovery Report to develop a strategic Job Development Plan to align candidate capabilities with real business needs.

It is time to move beyond “applying online” and move towards proactive engagement—building connections, accessing hiring managers, and positioning candidates to stand out in a competitive labor market.

Engaging Employers: From Strategy to Action



Please have completed all of Series 1 and Basics of Business Engagement

Participants move beyond responding to job postings and learn how to build partnerships based on shared goals and problem-solving. Through discussion, reverse brainstorming, and small-group scenarios, learners practice identifying unmet business needs, explaining their services as valuable supports, and starting conversations without pressure. The training focuses on practical language, strong listening skills, and repeatable conversation frameworks that participants can immediately use in their work.

Attendees will:

- Differentiate between reactive job development and proactive, partnership-based employer engagement.
- Identify employers in their communities and suggest meaningful partnership opportunities based on business needs.
- Recognize common employer challenges and explain how employment supports can help address them.
- Respond to employer questions or concerns using clear, value-focused language.
- Apply a simple, repeatable conversation structure to communicate confidently and effectively with employers.

BREAKOUT: REWRITE THE OUTREACH

STARTING POINT

“Hi, I’m a job coach and I have a candidate who might be a good fit for your business...”

YOUR TASK

Rewrite this opening using the **Low-Pressure Outreach Framework**.

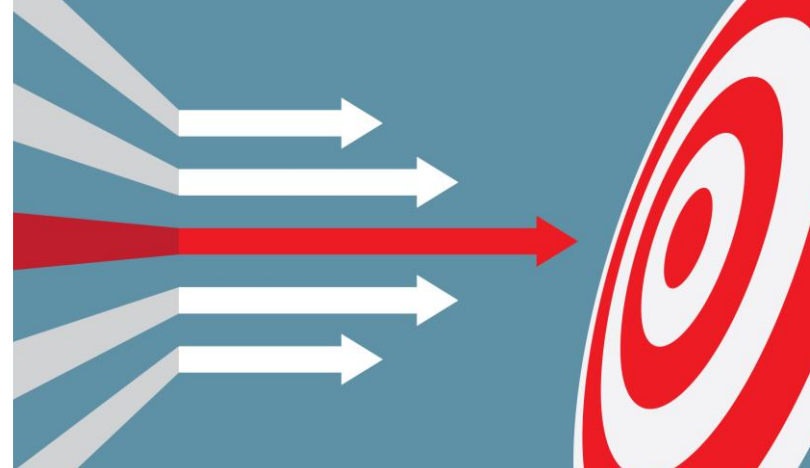
- Lead with a **business challenge**
- Reference a **business support**, not a person
- Invite **conversation**, not commitment

CHOOSE AN EMPLOYER TYPE

Warehouse • Hotel • Landscaping Company • Childcare Center • Manufacturing • Grocery • Call Center • (or another!)

NEED IDEAS? TRY THESE OPENINGS

- “We work with businesses who are dealing with...”
- “Many employers tell us the hardest part is...”
- “We support teams who are managing challenges like...”



Purpose

Better conversations create opportunity.
For people with I/DD, stronger job development starts before the opening exists.

1 Shift focus

Openings → business needs

2 Lower pressure

Curiosity before pitch

3 Build trust

Useful employer conversations

4 Improve fit

Strengths + workflow needs

Create opportunity — don't just wait for openings.

BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

CRAFT BETTER OPENINGS

EACH GROUP WRITES:

ONE OPENING
for an employer who **IS HIRING**

ONE OPENING
for an employer who is **NOT HIRING**

USE THE FRAMEWORK:

Open → **Purpose** → **Value** → **Permission**

Who you are → Why you're reaching out → How you support businesses → Ask to continue the conversation

KEEP BOTH OPENINGS:

- employer-centered
- low-pressure
- conversational
- realistic

ACTIVITY HANDLING EMPLOYER CONCERNS

Practice the Structure

1 ACKNOWLEDGE

Show you heard the concern.

- No correcting.
- No defending.

2 REFRAME WITH EMPLOYER VALUE

Reconnect to what matters to them.

- Workflow
- Reducing pressure
- Stability
- Team support

3 OFFER A LIGHT NEXT STEP

Keep the next step:

- Small
- Optional
- Low-pressure

YOUR GROUP PROMPT

Each group has one assigned employer concern. In your group, write a short response that includes all three parts.

GROUP 1

“We’re not hiring.”

GROUP 2

“We’ve tried this before.”

GROUP 3

“We can’t risk the liability.”

GROUP 4

“We don’t have time for extra training.”

Engaging Employers: From Strategy to Action

This practical, interactive training empowers Employment Support Professionals to engage employers more confidently and effectively, resulting in highly targeted and successful connections.

A promotional graphic for a manager training opportunity. It features a purple header with a red starburst containing the word 'NEW' and the text 'MANAGER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY'. Below this, the title 'SUPERVISING JOB DEVELOPERS' is in large blue letters, followed by 'FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES' in green. A calendar icon indicates the date 'June 24, 2026' and time '8:30 AM - 11:30 AM'. A text box describes the training's focus on supervision, expectations, and coaching. Three colored buttons at the bottom list the goals: 'STRENGTHEN OUTCOMES FOR JOB SEEKERS' (purple), 'BUILD HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS' (green), and 'ALIGN WITH PERSON-CENTERED AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES' (blue). Three photos of professionals in collaborative settings are shown on the right side of the graphic.

NEW MANAGER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

SUPERVISING JOB DEVELOPERS

FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

June 24, 2026
8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Strong job development outcomes are built through intentional supervision, clear expectations, and consistent coaching. This training equips vocational managers with practical strategies to support employment professionals, strengthen person-centered job development practices, build high-performing teams, and improve employment outcomes for job seekers.

- STRENGTHEN OUTCOMES FOR JOB SEEKERS
- BUILD HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS
- ALIGN WITH PERSON-CENTERED AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

Supervising Job Developers for Successful Employment Outcomes

- This course is intended for those who hold leadership positions in SEMP programs. This includes titles such as director, manager, coordinator, team leader, and the like. Registrants who are not leaders should select trainings that pertain to their job function. If you are pending a leadership position, please have your supervisor reach out to info@eleversity.org*
- Effective job development does not happen by chance—it is the result of intentional supervision, clear expectations, and ongoing coaching. This training is designed for vocational managers who supervise employment support professionals and want to strengthen outcomes for job seekers, build high-performing teams, and ensure job development practices align with person-centered services and evidence-based employment strategies.

Business Engagement : What's Working?

**What strategies have
proven most effective in
fostering long-term
business relationships?**

Share in the chat!



SEMP Employment Tracking System (ETS)

ETS Training Session

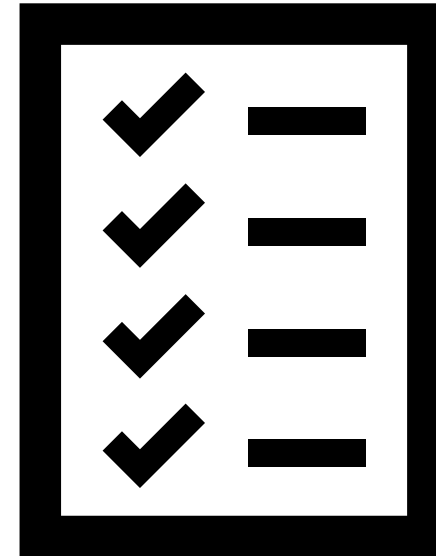
- Planned for late July/early August
- Email will be sent with details ahead of time.
- Staff who are new to ETS or would benefit from a refresher should plan on attending.

ETS Access – Plan Ahead!

- Make sure you have identified backup staff who have access to ETS.
- Email supported.employment.data@opwdd.ny.gov if you have questions concerning User Access Request (UAR) forms and/or ETS.

ETS Recent Updates

- Added to Job Termination Reason options:
 - “Moved”
 - “Medical – Not Expected to Return”
- Added to Type of Business Setting:
 - “Administration”
 - “Warehouse/Order Processing”
- Added remote work options:
 - “Individual Job – Primarily Remote”
 - “Self-employment – Primarily Remote”



2026 Minimum Wage Increase

Please review and update wages, if applicable.

General Minimum Wage Rate Schedule	01/01/2026
NYC – Big Employers (of 11 or more)	\$17.00
NYC – Small Employers (10 or less)	\$17.00
Long Island & Westchester	\$17.00
Remainder of NY State Workers	\$16.00

Source: <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-states-minimum-wage/new-york-states-minimum-wage>

For additional information, check: <https://dol.ny.gov/minimum-wage>

ETP Update Q1 (April-June 2026)

- ETP Internship is no longer considered an Employed status.
- New status: “ETP – Internship on ETP Payroll.”
- You no longer need to enter Job Details for someone in an ETP Internship.
- When they get hired by the business, you will change status to Employed and enter Job Details.



The screenshot shows a web interface for updating status. At the top is a grey header with the text "Quarterly Status". Below it is a dropdown menu. The selected option is "ETP - Internship on ETP Payroll", which is highlighted in a light blue box. Below the dropdown, there is a list of other status options: "Select Quarterly Status", "Employed (works 6 months or more pe", "Employed and Currently Working Seas", "ETP - Internship on ETP Payroll" (which is the selected option and has a dark blue background), "ETP - Not in an Internship Yet", "Not Employed and Continues to Recei", and "Not Serving Temporarily".

Quarterly Status

ETP - Internship on ETP Payroll

Select Quarterly Status

Employed (works 6 months or more pe

Employed and Currently Working Seas

ETP - Internship on ETP Payroll

ETP - Not in an Internship Yet

Not Employed and Continues to Recei

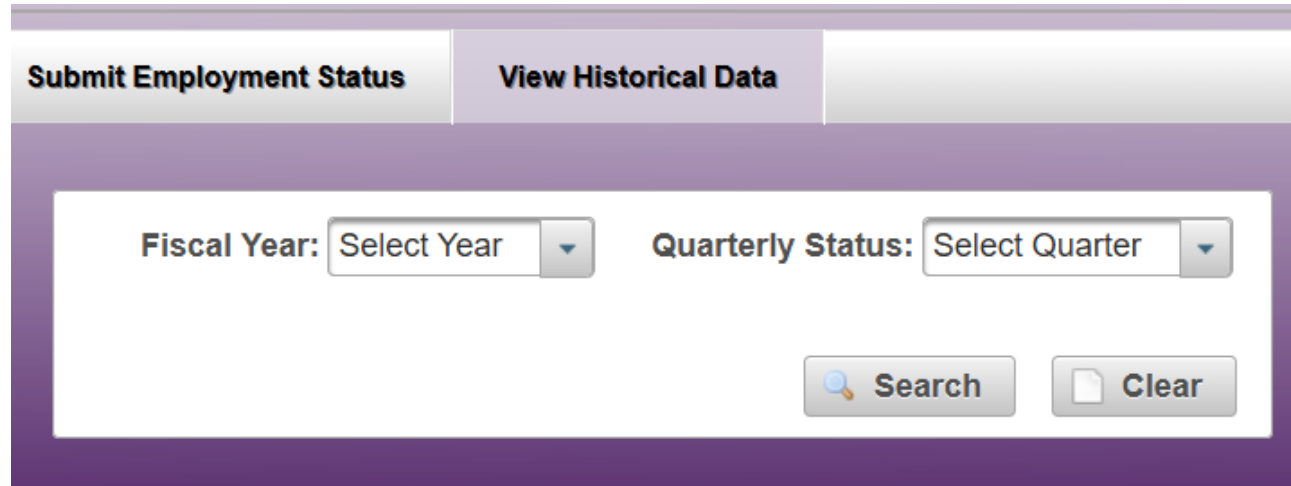
Not Serving Temporarily

What about existing ETP Internships?

- **If the Intern was hired by the business:** update job details and select “Employed” status.
- **If the Internship was terminated:** enter job termination details.
- **If the Intern was not hired, but continues Internship:**
 - 1) Enter a Termination Date of 4/1/2026.
 - 2) Select “Service – other Program” as the Job Termination Reason.
 - 3) Enter the following in the Comments section: “Termination is being reported due to a change in ETS protocol and is not an actual job termination.”

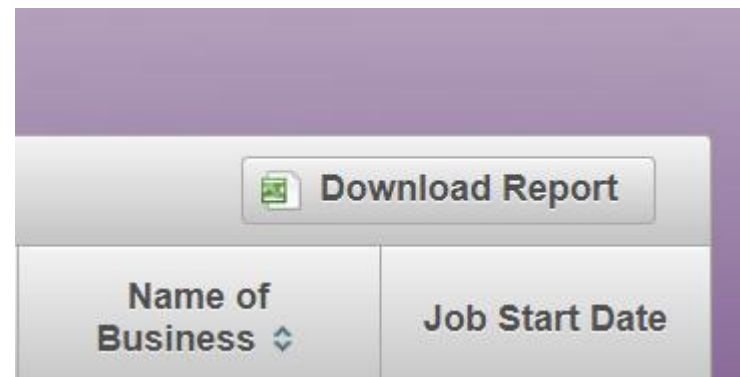
**Job details will remain in person’s Individual Profile for future reference.*

Are you utilizing Historical Data Reports?



The screenshot shows a web interface with two tabs: 'Submit Employment Status' and 'View Historical Data'. The 'View Historical Data' tab is active. Below the tabs is a search form with two dropdown menus: 'Fiscal Year: Select Year' and 'Quarterly Status: Select Quarter'. Below these are two buttons: 'Search' (with a magnifying glass icon) and 'Clear' (with a document icon).

1) Select “View Historical Data” from the dashboard.



The screenshot shows a button labeled 'Download Report' with a green Excel icon. Below the button are two columns of a table: 'Name of Business' with a dropdown arrow and 'Job Start Date'.

2) Download the Excel Report.

Historical Data Reports for SEMP Billing Criteria

- *You can use the Historical Data Report to track the need for Intensive SEMP Approval after job loss.*
- *The job termination date will ONLY show up in the quarter it was reported in.*
- *Plan ahead!*
- *Live demonstration...*



Utilizing Historical Data Reports in ETS



Program analysis - numbers, progress, averages, outcomes



Reporting – internal and external discussions/presentations



Record Keeping – save important information, history, past participants



Staffing – Planning, hiring, case load management



Job development – managing/tracking business relationships, are there industries where you are lacking connections



***What have you used
Historical Data
Reports for?
Share in the chat.***

ETS Technical Assistance

EMPLOYMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (ETS) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

supported.employment.data@opwdd.ny.gov



Elleversity Updates

Are You Wondering What Classes You Need to Take?

Use this guide to support course selection, registration, and professional development planning.

Support & Guidance

Eleversity Customer Service can assist with registration, course credit, and account support. For guidance on required or recommended classes, consult your supervisor.

Course Planning

Review course descriptions carefully before registering to understand learning objectives, prerequisites, and intended audience.

SEMP Training Requirement

Employees must complete 24 credit hours of training no later than December 31st two years after their date of hire and 6 hours of continuing education for each subsequent calendar year.

Registration Reminders

After registering, retain your confirmation email, which contains the Zoom link and important course details.

Transcript Review

Review your Eleversity transcript regularly to monitor completed coursework and identify additional training needs.

Class Protocols

Zoom opens 30 minutes before class. Please log in early to test technology. Late arrivals must reschedule. Use a laptop, desktop, or tablet with microphone, speakers, and camera enabled. Cell phones are not permitted during the video portion of training.

Eleversity Professional Development Guide

Recommended - Start with Series 1

Series 1 classes will give you a foundational understanding and prepare for the other classes you will take in your professional development journey. It is recommended that Series 1 classes are taken in the order they are listed in the chart.

- ☐ Vocational Services: Then and Now
- ☐ Roles and Responsibilities of an Employment Support Professional
- ☐ Career Assessment: Foundations of Discovery
- ☐ Foundations of Vocational Success

After you have completed Series 1, select courses that align with the function of your responsibilities. Connect with your supervisor for guidance.

Assessment and Planning

Assessment, Discovery Activities, Career Planning

- ☐ Career Assessment: Informed Choice
- ☐ Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities
- ☐ Vocational Assessment
- ☐ The Vocational Development Plan

Worksite Supports

Teaching and training in Discovery activities, Community Prevocational Services, Internships, and competitive integrated employment.

- ☐ Coaching for Retention and Advancement
- ☐ Coaching Workplace Challenges
- ☐ Strategies and Techniques for Vocational Success

Business Relationships

Connecting and building relationships with businesses to develop opportunities for the targeted job match, community vocational experiences, and volunteer.

- ☐ Basics of Business Engagement
- ☐ Connecting Talent to Business Needs
- ☐ Disability Resources and Incentives
- ☐ Engaging Employers: From Strategy to Actions

Program/Services [2-day events]

Select program/services to understand processes, purpose, and OPWDD expectations. ETP 101 is a higher-level learning; do not take this as your first class.

- ☐ Community Based Prevocational Services
- ☐ ETP 101
- ☐ Pathway to Employment

Skills for Managers

The Management Series is intended for those who are SEMP leaders [Manager, Coordinator, Director, etc.] Staff who are being groomed for leadership, should have their supervisor contact info@eleversity.org for registration.

- ☐ Management Skills for SEMP Leaders: Data Driven Decision Making
- ☐ Management Skills for SEMP Leaders: Strategies for Programmatic Success
- ☐ Hiring and Onboarding Skills for Vocational Leaders
- ☐ Supervision Skills for Vocational Leaders: Supporting Teams
- ☐ Supervising Job Developers for Successful Employment Outcomes

Additional Courses

It is important that employment support professionals understand how wages may impact someone benefits. This class will give foundational information and resources. This class does not qualify an ESP to provide Benefits Counseling.

- ☐ Public Benefits & Financial Literacy: What do you need to know?

Eleversity
NEXT-LEVEL WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Updated Resources

Eleversity Professional Development Guide

Find these and more on the Eleversity Website

ELEVERSITY ACCOUNT AND ZOOM SUPPORT RESOURCES

ELEVERSITY ACCOUNT RESOURCES

+

ZOOM SUPPORT RESOURCES

+

LEARNER RESOURCES

-

Innovations in Employment Supports - Course Descriptions

Innovations Course Checklist - 05/2026

What Classes Do I Need To Take?

Innovations Training Engagement Protocol

ELEVERSITY

Innovations in Employment Supports

Training Catalogue • Class Offerings • Descriptions & Learning Objectives

Empowering employment professionals through practical strategies, innovative approaches, and person-centered learning experiences.

Before Registering

Review each class description and learning objectives to ensure the course aligns with your role, responsibilities, and recommended prerequisites.

info@eleversity.org
585-340-2051

Building Stronger Employment Supports Across New York State



Innovations in Employment Supports

Series 1 – Start here if you are new to Innovations Training or Vocational Services

Vocational Services: Then and Now [3-credits]

This required course will help you understand the progression of vocational services and the basic knowledge to deliver OPWDD services.

1. Be able to recognize and utilize the language of vocational services and related legislation.
2. Be able to describe the opportunities to explore and obtain competitive integrated employment.

Roles and Responsibilities of an Employment Support Professional [3-credits]

Come learn what Vocational Support Professionals need to know to support quality services for people exploring the world of employment.

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of providing person-centered services for individual success.
2. Explore the benefits of competitive integrated employment through ethical service provision, social capital, and informed decision-making

Career Assessment: Foundations of Discovery [3-credits]

This course is an introduction to career assessment as directed by OPWDD in the discovery activities and processes.

1. Understand the mindset and skills necessary to complete a thorough vocational assessment.
2. Review the possible outcomes of discovery assessments and the next steps in career planning.

Foundations for Vocational Success [3-credits]

This course will present the purpose and expectation of a Vocational Support Professional when supporting a new hire. We will showcase a variety of tools and strategies to promote successful placements and retention.

1. Be able to recognize and demonstrate the professional expectations of the Vocational Support Professional that will elevate perceptions of people with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.
2. Will be introduced to the tools and strategies utilized by Vocational Support Professional during the different activities of the employment process.

Innovations in Employment Supports

Series 1 – Take These First

Vocational Services: Then and Now
Roles and Responsibilities of an Employment Support Professional
Career Assessment: Foundations of Discovery
Foundations for Vocational Success

Assessment and Planning

Career Assessment: Informed Choice
Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities
Vocational Assessment
The Vocational Development Plan

Worksite Supports

Coaching for Retention and Advancement
Coaching Workplace Challenges
Strategies and Techniques for Vocational Success

Business Relationships

Basics of Business Engagement
Connecting Talent to Business Needs
Disability Resources and Incentives
Engaging Employers: From Strategy to Actions

Program / Services

Community Based Prevocational Services
ETP 101

Pathway to Employment

Skills for Managers

Management Skills for SEMP Leaders – Data Driven Decision Making
Management Skills for SEMP Leaders – Strategies for Programmatic Success
Hiring and Onboarding Skills for Vocational Leaders
Supervision Skills for Vocational Leaders – Supporting Teams
Supervising Job Developers for Successful Employment Outcomes

Additional Courses

Public Benefits & Financial Literacy: What do you need to know?

Updated Resources

Eleversity Training Catalogue

Find these and more on the Eleversity Website

ELEVERSITY ACCOUNT AND ZOOM SUPPORT RESOURCES

ELEVERSITY ACCOUNT RESOURCES



ZOOM SUPPORT RESOURCES



LEARNER RESOURCES



Innovations in Employment Supports – Course Descriptions

Innovations Course Checklist – 05/2026

What Classes Do I Need To Take?

Innovations Training Engagement Protocol

Leadership Conference

Eleversity Leadership Conference
for OPWDD Employment and Vocational Services

Spring 2027

**Eleversity Leadership Conference for OPWDD
Employment and Vocational Services is moving to the
Spring!**

**Contact info@eleversity.org OR
employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov for
conference suggestions**

OPWDD Contacts

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Director of Employment and Meaningful Community Activities

Julia.A.Kelly@opwdd.ny.gov

Kristine Snyder, LMSW

Statewide Employment and Vocational Services Coordinator

Kristine.Snyder@opwdd.ny.gov

Technical Assistance

EMCA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MAILBOXES

employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov

day.community.services@opwdd.ny.gov

EMCA/ETP DIRECTORY

<https://eleversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/ETP-EMCA-AT-A-GLANCE-EXTERNAL-Eleversity-copy-6.26.pdf>

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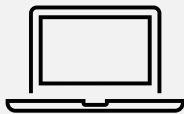
NEXT-LEVEL WORKFORCE EDUCATION



info@Eleversity.org



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