

A Few National Updates: Employment and Disability Policy

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Recent federal grant awarded to support DD Networks with employment

- From Administration for Community Living (ACL) [Press Release](#) TASH and the Lewin Group have created a new national Technical Assistance (TA) Center funded by the ACL's Administration on Disabilities (AoD). The new Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center will provide AoD grantees with the tools and resources they need to more effectively help individuals with disabilities achieve meaningful employment with competitive wages in integrated settings. The Employment TA Center will provide training on innovative, promising, and emerging practices. The five years grant starts on October 1, 2020. Georgia has 4 Subject Matter Experts on this initiative: Ruby Moore at the GAO, Doug Crandell at IHDD, Nancy Brooks-Lane and Beth Keeton with Griffin-Hammis!

Where do we stand with sub-minimum wages?

- Two bills: Raise the Wage ACT and Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment ACT.
- The phase out of subminimum wages would have been included in the Covid Relief bill but the \$15 minimum wage was not attached to the bill.
- Senator Romney's bill keeps subminimum wages. Senator Cotton and others are supporting it.
- California and South Carolina have recently addressed phasing out the practice, joining a handful of states that ban the use of subminimum wages.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

- 2021 marks five years of implementation
- The Government Accountability Office will review its effectiveness
- Are state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies implementing key parts? Counseling on subminimum wages, Customized Employment, Employer Engagement, Transition from school-to-work, and Evidence-Based Practices?
- Does a state have a unified plan that includes MH, VR, IDD/DD, Workforce, Special Education? Does it deliver?

Some good news from states!

- Wisconsin is using co-workers as paid supports for job coaching.
- More than a dozen states are using Fidelity tools to measure provider effectiveness in person-centered career planning, customized job development and co-worker supports.
- Tennessee's ECF CHOICES waiver focuses on a broad range of employment supports. TN's VR state agency has trained over 400 staff in person-centered career planning.
- Rhode Island's DD Council is operating a self-employment project that is inclusive and innovative. The Rhode Island ID/DD state agency is using a fidelity scale to measure outcomes.
- Texas VR has established "Supported Self-Employment" services and standards.
- Virginia VR and the state ID/DD agency are collaborating with providers to deliver customized employment.

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- **Newsletter**
- **Resources for job seekers, employers, providers and families.**
- **Opportunities for assistance proposals**

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