



WHAT IS EMPLOYMENT FIRST?

- ★ Employment as the primary day activity for *all working age adults*, including adults with disabilities
- ★ Informed choice
- ★ Supports in place for success
- ★ More than employment only



WHY EMPLOYMENT FIRST?

- ★ Focus efforts on employment outcomes
- ★ Change state agency policy and practice
- ★ Support community integration for all
- ★ Increase income beyond poverty level
- ★ Promote quality of life



CATALYSTS

★ Federal rulings

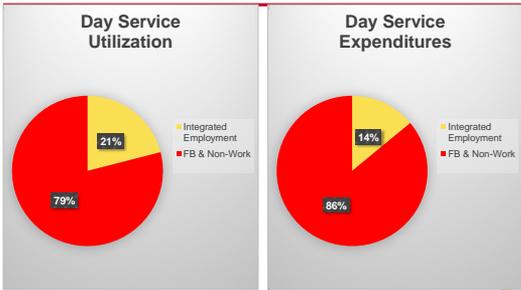
- ★ ADA settlements
- ★ Department of Justice settlements
- ★ Medicaid (AHCCCS) HCBS regulations
- ★ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

★ National priorities

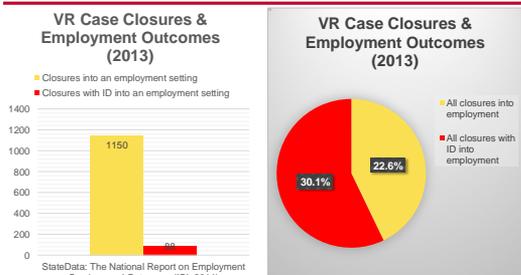
- ★ National Governors' Association "Blue Print for Governors"
- ★ Office of Disability Employment Policy/Department of Labor
- ★ Promoting the Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE)/ASPIRE Project
- ★ The ABLE Act



STATE OF THE STATE (DDD)

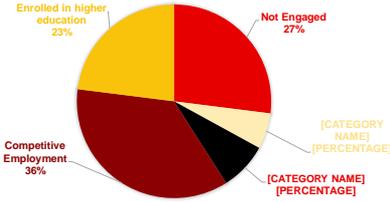


STATE OF THE STATE (VR)



STATE OF THE STATE (ADE)

POST-SCHOOLS OUTCOMES FOR 2013-14 SCHOOL YEAR EXITERS (5,409 RESPONDENTS)



ARIZONA'S BUILDING BLOCKS

- ★ Broad stakeholder support
- ★ Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment Grant (ASPIRE, a PROMISE Grant)
- ★ AZ Community of Practice on Transition (AZCoPT)
- ★ AZ Disability Benefits 101(DB 101)
- ★ Project SEARCh
- ★ AZ Youth Leadership Forum
- ★ State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)
- ★ Untapped Arizona
- ★ Work Incentive Information Network (WIIN)



STRATEGY

Engaged the impacted community

- ★ Webinars
- ★ On-line survey
- ★ Community forums
- ★ Community presentations
- ★ Develop a Strategic Plan



CORE PLANNING TEAM

Broad stakeholder commitment from:

- ★ Advocates
- ★ Educators
- ★ Employers
- ★ Employment Service Provider Agencies
- ★ Family Members
- ★ Future and Current Employees
- ★ State Agencies
- ★ University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ★ All working age people with disabilities can participate in meaningful work and should have support as needed
- ★ Policies and practices should support the employment of all people with disabilities
- ★ Everyone should have the right to pursue a range of employment opportunities based on skills and interests
- ★ Benefits counseling should be available



STRATEGIC PLAN

- ★ Foster and maintain **COLLABORATION** to increase the competitive employment of people with disabilities
- ★ Increase **AWARENESS** of the potential of people with disabilities and **ADVOCATE** for their competitive employment
- ★ Prepare **YOUTH** for competitive employment, including in high potential employment sectors and self-employment
- ★ Foster **JOB** creation, hiring, retention, promotion, and self-employment
- ★ Create and promote **POLICIES** that lead to successful employment of people with disabilities
- ★ Foster the development of employment- focused **SUPPORTS**



HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

- ★ Set higher expectations for your child
- ★ Start transition planning EARLY
- ★ Talk about employment, education and independent living with your child
- ★ Know the transition partners who can help; build relationships and collaborate
- ★ Understand the aspects of "career development"
- ★ Investigate and engage in resource options in community & schools
- ★ Educate others



HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

- ★ Learn about and utilize DB101 www.DB101.org
- ★ Ask about a Person-Centered Plan or Student-Led IEP
- ★ Attend trainings and conferences offered by AZ Parent Information and Training Center/Raising Special Kids
- ★ Empower your family member to get involved and engage in community activities and opportunities
- ★ Look into Project SEARCH options
- ★ Network in your community for opportunities and partnerships with local businesses
- ★ Join your Local Community of Practice (LCoPT). To find out if there is one in your area azcopt@azed.gov



REMEMBER....

★ Efforts to change the post-school landscape must include a heavy investment in equipping families to hold high expectations from an early age, to aspire toward and advocate for enviable outcomes after high school, and to share this vision with every person whose life intersects with the lives of their sons and daughters.

Erik W. Carter



HOW PROVIDERS CAN HELP

- ★ Educate and work with DDD staff, consumers and families on the benefits of employment and the resources to support employment
- ★ Support, guide and assist consumers to make informed decisions/choices regarding employment options
- ★ Engage in more employment related services, to include: self-employment, customized employment, providing the DDD funded Transition to Employment (TTE) curriculum
- ★ Be aware of resources and the options that help consumers to understand the benefits of being employed:
 - ★ Ticket-to-work, PASS plans, DB101, AHCCCS Freedom to Work



HOW PROVIDERS CAN HELP

- ★ Investigate and engage in resources & partnerships in the community, families, schools
- ★ Educate yourselves on the HCBS & WIOA requirements
- ★ Engage more employers:
 - ★ to consider a more diversified work force
 - ★ to create opportunities (i.e. job shadows, internships, mentoring, work-based learning opportunities)
 - ★ to build partnerships
- ★ Be innovative, creative and use best practice models
- ★ Educate others



HOW EDUCATORS CAN HELP

- ★ Educate yourselves about available employment supports and services
- ★ Promote and facilitate agency collaboration at the IEP team table
- ★ Encourage every student and their family to plan for employment
- ★ Provide diverse work experiences for students as early as possible
- ★ Connect and support families as they navigate the next phase of their children's lives after high school



HOW EDUCATORS CAN HELP

- ★ **Partner with Agencies that Provide Services to Youth:**
 - ★ *Understand and learn how to integrate the newly required WIOA/VR pre-employment transition services*
 - ★ Job exploration counseling
 - ★ Work based learning experiences
 - ★ Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational program at institutions of higher education
 - ★ Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills
 - ★ Instruction in self-advocacy



HOW EDUCATORS CAN HELP

- ★ *Connect eligible students to DDD Transition to Employment Services (TTE) and other employment related services; summer work, career prep readiness:*
 - ★ TTE: A service that provides a DDD member with individualized instruction, training, and supports to promote skill development for integrated and competitive employment
- ★ *Inform and connect students to Independent Living Centers and other advocacy agencies that can provide:*
 - ★ Training in self advocacy, self-determination, independent living skills, youth leadership skills (e.g. AZ Youth Leadership Forum)
- ★ *Make students and families aware of what Raising Special Kids (AZ Parent Information and Training Center) can offer:*
 - ★ Workshops on variety of topics (e.g. Getting and keeping your first job, Guardianship)
 - ★ Young Adult Advisory opportunity (partnership with OCSHCN)



HOW EDUCATORS CAN HELP

- ★ Understand and utilize Person-Centered Plans and Principles
- ★ Utilize Student-Led IEP models
- ★ Assure all assistive technology has been considered to assist in leveling playing field
- ★ Look at career and technical education options
- ★ Integrate DB101 into your curriculum/classroom activities
- ★ Investigate Project SEARCH options for youth

Empower and Connect, don't do all the work yourself!