Employment First Task Force Meeting: Workgroup Updates

# Transportation Workgroup Update (Lauren Pearcy & Seth Pedigo)

* Current members of the workgroup include: TN Council on Developmental Disabilities, DIDD, TennCare, Dept. of Transportation, VR, Metro Nashville Transit Authority (“WeGo”), Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Trainers
* The workgroup continues to expand; most recently by adding a representative from the Clarksville American Job Center, Sharyn Hancock, and from the TN Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD), Anna Lea Cothron.
* Highlights from the most recent meeting:
  + [Statewide Transportation map](https://www.tn.gov/aging/resources/transportation-map.html) published by TCAD
  + Federal transportation law up for reauthorization, which is an opportunity for public comment
  + Connection between DRT and Transportation for referrals about Title 3 violations (non accessible transportation in taxis, other transportation providers)
  + In rural counties, [Human Resource Agencies](https://swhra.org/about-swhra/tennessee-association-of-human-resource-agencies) will pick you up if you call

# Policy Workgroup Update (Elise McMillan & Wanda Willis)

* The Policy Workgroup worked with Cara Kumari and Seth Pedigo, the Task Force and TennesseeWorks to develop this year’s Expect Employment Report to the Governor. The report will be presented to Gov. Bill Lee Sept. 18 in Jackson and will have an emphasis on employment in Tennessee’s rural counties. For the first time, the Report to the Governor does include information and the graphic about Tennessee’s Statewide Employment Goal of reducing the employment gap by 5 percent by 2023.
* The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities has convened and will continue to convene and facilitate a monthly Employment Roundtable that bolsters cross-agency communication and collaboration across nine state agencies that serve people with disabilities and the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Network. Most recently the group had a presentation about the website, jobs4tn.gov, and possible ways we can provide more information and resources for people with disabilities accessing the website.
* Efforts to educate on Supported Decision Making (SDM) continue. The Council on Developmental Disabilities, The Arc TN and Disability Rights TN “divide and conquer” the requests for trainings, which number approximately a dozen since the last Task Force meeting. A highlight is tailoring presentations for a healthcare audience, focusing on decision-making in a healthcare setting.
* The Tennessee Inclusive Higher Education Alliance continues work to broaden funding opportunities and financial assistance for students in higher education. The six inclusive higher education programs in the Alliance, Next Steps at Vanderbilt, IDEAL at Lipscomb University, EDGE at Union University, Tiger Life at the University of Memphis, FUTURE at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, and the new program at ETSU are always looking for internship and employment opportunities for their students and graduates. To connect with any of the programs, go to the Alliance website, tnihealliance.org, for contact information for each of the programs. To be added to the meeting notices for the Alliance, contact Laurie Fleming at [laurie.fleming@vumc.org](mailto:laurie.fleming@vumc.org). The IDEAL Program at Lipscomb University is hosting the next meeting Friday, Oct. 4, from 9 am to noon, and attendance by Zoom is also available. Inclusive higher education celebrates its tenth anniversary in Tennessee in 2020.
* This group will follow legislation that was introduced earlier this year (SB1343/HB1038) State as a Model Employer. The bill would launch a program in state government to model practices for recruiting, hiring, retaining people with disabilities as government employees.
* A small workgroup convened by the Council on Developmental Disabilities will start work on technical assistance materials about disability for American Job Centers.
* The Policy Workgroup, along with TennesseeWorks, is helping promote the first of planned regional Think Employment Summits in Knoxville at the UT Conference Center on Dec. 3. The group is working with UT CLEE the Knoxville Area Employment Consortium and other groups on the summit. Regional Summits are planned in the Memphis area in Spring 2020 and in Murfreesboro Summer 2020.

# Communications Workgroup Update (Rachael Jenkins & Krystyne Brown)

* Next meeting scheduled for September 10th via Zoom
* At last meeting, group developed two communication goals to work on over the next year:
  + We will use communications strategies to **increase early work experiences for transition-age youth with disabilities in TN**. We will help more Tennesseans understand and believe that young people with disabilities need early work experiences to prepare for long-term employment success.
  + We will use communications strategies to **increase our outreach to employers and the business community** (*this goal will be developed further after we invite members from VR Business Unit to share during one of our next meetings*).
* We have developed a collective impact document identifying these goals, key audiences, messages, influential “messengers,” and key messaging considerations.
* Developing initial plans for NDEAM/Hire My Strengths
* New DIDD Employment Stories:
  + Alicia in Project SEARCH: [https://youtu.be/ZaqVwjLZjak](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FZaqVwjLZjak&data=02%7C01%7Crachael.jenkins%40vanderbilt.edu%7C5cd0b1bbf6a54c9882ca08d72ce19332%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637027219668091882&sdata=JauNmdamkLrgTrBr%2BcQIpoHsama9hXv968wMIXt1tnM%3D&reserved=0)
  + Morgan’s Internship at DIDD: [https://youtu.be/XCl2ijbmcbg](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FXCl2ijbmcbg&data=02%7C01%7Crachael.jenkins%40vanderbilt.edu%7C5cd0b1bbf6a54c9882ca08d72ce19332%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637027219668101876&sdata=zuyiDxNDi1leF2yW5TBg4pgjqRev2TY0XZiL5ZU2yb0%3D&reserved=0)
* Expect Employment Report Presentation

# Mental Health Workgroup Update (Mark Liverman)

* **Group shared updates since previous meeting, some of which included:**
  + IPS sites across the state are now listed on the TN Disability Pathfinder website
  + IPS sites will soon start reporting their data to TDMHSAS through Formstack, a web-based data reporting system which will allow much more flexibility with reporting and data analysis.
  + 983 people were served through IPS in FY19, with a 43% placement rate and 23% retention rate.
  + TANF IPS pilot is scheduled to begin on 10/1/19 and IPS Medicaid Pilot workgroup will have monthly calls until pilot begins.
  + Seth and I are still working to finish out reporting for the EFSLMP VQ grant year.
* **EFSLMP – VQ updates** 
  + Vision Quest – IPS Expansion:
    - IPS Medicaid Pilot is being planned - we have an agency and MCO identified and a meeting is planned to discuss the particulars of the pilot
    - IPS BHSN Pilot – TDMHSAS are in discussions to create pilot in FY21 pilot to fund IPS with support from BHSN dollars
  + IPS TANF Pilot – an agency and area has been determined. We are working through the details of the pilot. The start date is 10/1/19
  + Employment Works TN – SAMSHA grant application, no one in TN was approved for the grant
* **Dual diagnosis pilot update** 
  + Frontier staff provided an update about clients served, placement rates, place of employment, etc.
    - Four people currently seeking employment and one who is employed
  + Mark, Seth, and Ruth have a couple of visits scheduled with two providers in the state who support people with dual diagnosis to discuss piloting IPS at their agencies.
* **Supported Employment promotion**
  + Discussion about whether a one-pager would be helpful
  + Shared ideas about best marketing mediums:
    - Facebook
    - Job Accommodations Network
    - Social media outlets
    - Make needed updates to the DMHSAS’ supported employment webpage
    - Invite Matthew Parriott to the next workgroup meeting
* **Creating Jobs Initiative - DMHSAS**
  + Umbrella by which supported employment programs will fall
  + CJI will address some of the following concerns:
    - Employment for people being released from state mental health institutions
    - Employment for people reentering society from incarceration
    - Expansion of current IPS services
    - Interacting with the community who visits an American Job Center

# Employers and Providers Workgroup Update (Pam Hollingsworth)

* Reviewed the Employer/Provider sections of the Task Force Strategic Plan. Ideas and areas of need:
  + QuILTSS – spoke about the progress for the QuILTSS program and when one would expect the community college training of DSP’s to begin? The group believes this will open the access for people to receive DSP training and help providers fill position openings.
  + Work with schools to identify retiring teachers that could be DSP’s to give back to the community.
  + Recognition of businesses that employ people with disabilities – radio ad with business and person with a success story to filter to other businesses. Power of social media.
  + Holiday Inn - Gena provides tours to people transitioning from school to work. These students have the opportunity to see the many hotel jobs and see people with disabilities working.
  + School community-based programs increasing opportunities in the hospitality industry.
  + Tennessee Project SEARCH Face Book page.
  + Add business and employee success stories to TennesseeWorks - #hiremystrengths
  + Success story - Kevin at Holiday Inn won the Young Professionals Emerging Leaders award – this award was for all people in the hospitality business.

# Individuals and Families Workgroup Update (Carrie Guiden & Janet Shouse)

* **Family Coalition Meetings**
  + June
    - Memphis– Carolyn Somerville from Children’s Special Services shared information on their programs
    - Nashville– did not meet
  + July
    - Memphis– Disability Rights Tennessee staff members Gina Brady and Courtney Marshall shared information on their Beneficiaries with Rep Payees Program and TennCare Beneficiary Support Services Programs
    - Nashville– did not meet
  + August
    - Memphis – did not meet
    - Nashville– Blake Shearer from the DOE Division of Special Populations was guest speaker; Blake shared information about the new Transition Courses that high schools could offer as part of their curriculum
* **Other**
  + DIDD//DOE/The Arc TN Rural Community Family Forums
  + Topics: Engaging in your son/daughter’s special education services and Introduction to adult services
  + Locations:
    - June:
      * Gainsboro
      * Celina
      * Tiptonville
      * Ripley
      * Huntsville
      * Jamestown
      * Wartburg
      * Coalmont
      * Pikesville
      * Spencer
    - July
      * Sneedville
      * Newport
      * Linden
      * Bolivar
      * Selmer
* Members from the DD Council and Disabilities Rights Tennessee attended several of the forums and assisted in presenting about the services their organizations offer to families supporting people with IDD. In addition to the presentations, resource materials from STEP, The Arc TN, the DD Council , DRT and Pathfinder were shared with attendees.
* **Rise to Work Blog** 
  + June 19: [New ECF CHOICES Director Has Served Many Roles in Provider Agencies](http://www.tennesseeworks.org/new-ecf-choices-director-has-served-many-roles-in-provider-agencies/)
  + July 16: [Let’s Move the Subminimum Wage, Sheltered Workshops to History Books](http://www.tennesseeworks.org/lets-move-the-subminimum-wage-sheltered-workshops-to-history-books/)
  + August 6: [See How High-Tech Gadgets Can Boost Independence](http://www.tennesseeworks.org/see-how-high-tech-gadgets-can-boost-independence/)
  + August 19: [Please Share Your Comments on Proposed Katie Beckett Waiver](http://www.tennesseeworks.org/please-share-your-comments-on-proposed-katie-beckett-waiver/)
  + September 3: [Improving Transition to Adulthood Through High School Credit-Bearing Coursework](http://www.tennesseeworks.org/improving-transition-to-adulthood-through-high-school-credit-bearing-coursework/)
  + Top Blogs:
    - Let’s Move the Subminimum Wage, Sheltered Workshops to History Books (252 pageviews)
    - The Dignity of Risk (214 pageviews)
    - New ECF CHOICES Director Has Served Many Roles in Provider Agencies (203 pageviews)

# Data Workgroup Update (Erik Carter & Jessica Awsumb) **UPDATES**

* Our application for technical assistance the 2019-2020 school year has been released. The purpose of the technical assistance is to support districts striving to improve the quality of their transition services for students with disabilities. All applications are due September 30th, 2019. Visit [www.transitiontn.org](http://www.transitiontn.org) for more information or <https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=NTCERHLP7X> to directly link to the application.
* Transition Tennessee’s Pre-ETS Blueprint has been launched and currently includes the first two courses for providers of Pre-ETS: The Power of Early Work Experiences and An Overview of WIOA and Pre-ETS. We are currently working on three additional courses: Connecting with Employers and Families, Work-Based Learning, and Instruction in Self-Advocacy. We have 5 more courses planned as well as the Student Blueprint.
* The TennesseeWorks “By The Numbers” page (<http://www.tennesseeworks.org/data-dashboard/>) has been updated to reflect employment numbers on DRIVE (Data and Resources to Inspire a Vision of Employment). In addition, we have added the Statewide Employment Goal document. We continue to welcome suggestions for additions and revisions to this dashboard.

**CURRENT DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS**

* We concluded data collection of the statewide needs assessment addressing employment and pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS) for young people with disabilities (ages 14-22). We have completed data collection for nearly 1,000 providers of Pre-ETS and educators and over 300 parents. Topics addressed include: views related to Pre-ETS, local employment outcomes for youth with disabilities, local employment barriers, local collaborations, and personal demographics. We are in the process of producing more formal articles to document the results of the assessments nationwide.
* We were recently given access to the Tennessee Education Research Alliance’s Educator Survey for 2018. We will be exploring and analyzing this data in the coming months.
* We continue to develop ways to track the reach of transition-related professional development efforts across the state, as well as the extent to which that training is leading to changes in actual practices.
* As an ongoing effort, we are collecting video/stories/examples of Pre-ETS in the classroom and community. If you know of anyone that we should connect with, please share their contact information with us.

**DATA-BASED PUBLICATIONS FROM THIS PARTNERSHIP**

* All of these papers have been crafted as part of the work we have all done on the TennesseeWorks Partnership. You can download the article by clicking on the included links.
  + [Family perspectives on the appeals of and alternatives to sheltered employment for individuals with severe disabilities](https://www.dropbox.com/s/r8pjnue3pzwm6f4/2018%20Carter%20Bendetson%20Guiden%20RPSD.pdf?dl=0). *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*
  + [Community conversations on inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disability.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/52xzoeucwjgapmd/IN%20PRESS%20Bumble%20Carter%20Bethune%20Day%20McMillan%20CDTEI.pdf?dl=0) *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals.*
  + [Community conversations on integrated employment: Individualization and impact.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/hcehughcl8cgzon/2018%20Bumble%20Carter%20McMillan%20Bethune%20Manikas%20JDPS.pdf?dl=0)  *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*.
  + [The TennesseeWorks Partnership: Elevating employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/2yjd8orb5h6msbj/2017%20Carter%20McMillan%20Wills%20TennesseeWorks%20Partnership%20JVR.pdf?dl=0) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.
  + [Parent perspectives on integrated employment for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/0yd5vhmxqewlyi2/IN%20PRESS%20Gilson%20Carter%20Bumble%20McMillan%20RPSD.pdf?dl=0) *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*
  + [Using community conversations to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities in rural and urban communities.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/33f1aaa1unustt0/2017%20Bumble%20Carter%20McMillan%20Manikas%20JVR.pdf?dl=0) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.
  + [The promise and possibilities of community conversations: Expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/739ksnl9yhgr8zi/2018%20Carter%20Bumble%20JDPS.pdf?dl=0) *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*.
  + [Informing and equipping parents of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/wb3gfxj65pvyg0h/2017%20Gilson%20Bethune%20Carter%20McMillan%20IDD.pdf?dl=0) *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*.
  + [The voices of parents: Post–high school expectations, priorities, and concerns for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/wu6infa7xsjy0w7/2016%20Blustein%20Carter%20McMillan%20JSE.pdf?dl=0)*The Journal of Special Education.*
  + [Engaging communities in identifying local strategies for expanding integrated employment during and after high school.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/pdby2zmojp3knqx/2016%20Carter%20Blustein%20Bumble%20McMillan%20Harvey%20Henderson%20AJIDD.pdf?dl=0)*American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.*
  + [School-business partnerships and students with intellectual and developmental disabilities: Listening to employers.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/9y3ngk1fmn1gd3m/Valentini%20Carter%20Bumble%20Hill%20-%20Employer%20Interviews%20Revisions%2010%2018%202017%5B1%5D.docx?dl=0) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation.*
  + [Supporting strong transitions for students with autism spectrum disorder.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/qrng6qwy8v01xsc/IN%20PRESS%20Autism%20and%20Transition%20Chapter.docx?dl=0) In Gelbar, N. (Ed.), *Adolescents with autism spectrum disorder.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**RECURRING REMINDER**

* All of the reports and papers emerging from this work are freely available to our members; some are posted on the TennesseeWorks website and some are copyrighted and need to be sent individually. These are your data. If there are any ways we can support agencies and other partners in answering important questions through strong research or data analyses, we would love to talk more about possibilities. Likewise, if agencies and other partners are pursuing grant applications, we would love to support this work by providing relevant research, helping with evaluation, or other avenues of support.