

STATE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR EMPLOYMENT FIRST

THE MANUAL

ABSTRACT

Every state has an initiative to increase Competitive Integrated Employment for people with disabilities. Yet not all states have a strategic process to implement the initiative. This manual will give states the strategies and tools needed to create a state strategic plan to implement Employment First and increase Competitive Integrated Employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

employment^{1ST}

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*“The relevant question is not simply
what shall we do tomorrow, but rather
what shall we do today in order to get
ready for tomorrow”*

– Peter Drucker

EFSLMP OVERVIEW

*A critical priority for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), is to invest in systems change efforts that result in increased community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. This priority reflects growing support for a national movement called Employment First, a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that **all** citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.*

Under this approach, publicly-financed systems are urged to align policies, service delivery practices, and reimbursement structures to commit to integrated employment as the priority option with respect to the use of publicly-financed day and employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. ODEP defines integrated employment as work paid directly by employers at the greater of minimum or prevailing wages with commensurate benefits, occurring in a typical work setting where the employee with a disability interacts or has the opportunity to interact continuously with co-workers without disabilities, has an opportunity for advancement and job mobility, and is preferably engaged full-time. Many states have formally committed to the Employment First framework through official executive proclamation or formal legislative action.

ODEP recognizes that many states desire to align their efforts to support individuals with disabilities toward an Employment First approach, but may not yet possess the capacity, experience or technical resources necessary to lead and facilitate such change. To address this need, ODEP has initiated the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP), a cross-disability, cross-systems change initiative. EFSLMP is providing a platform for multi-disciplinary state teams to focus on implementing the Employment First approach with fidelity through the alignment of policies, coordination of resources, updating of service delivery models, to facilitate increased integrated employment options for people with the most significant disabilities.

*– Overview of ODEP's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program
(Source <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/EmploymentFirst.html>)*

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The efforts of ODEP are assisting states to bring together stakeholder groups to identify and solve some of the greatest barriers facing people with disabilities who want to work. This manual represents a broadening of the commitment of ODEP by recognizing that through implementing a thoughtful and intentional strategic planning process, including through aligning strategically the policy and practice of multiple state agencies and programs, the collaboration and success of states committed to Employment First will increase.

This manual is a guide for state leadership teams and facilitators working to create a Statewide cross-systems Employment First strategic plan designed to align their policy and programs to further Competitive Integrated Employment as the first priority for all individuals with disabilities. The process described in this manual has been specifically designed to assist states interested in creating a plan to increase such outcomes for people with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities. Cross system collaboration, engaging employers, and assisting providers in transformation and building capacity are all lofty goals on an individual basis. Attempting them simultaneously takes careful planning and tremendous stakeholder buy-in. However, launching a thoughtful process directed by dedicated leaders and a skilled facilitator increases the opportunity for success.

This manual is broken down into two sections. The first section will walk the facilitator and onsite leadership team through the eight phases of strategic planning. Each section describing a phase will include an introduction, suggested strategies and tools that can be used in the process as well as milestones to be achieved. The second portion of the manual describes five strategic priorities and potential focus areas which are aligned with the ODEP Provider VOICE (Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment) technical assistance and Vision Quest supports. These five strategic priorities address the breadth of issues states will review as they conduct gap analyses and create goals. While there are five strategic priorities, each state will likely choose five to six focus areas as they go through the strategic planning process. A process for narrowing the focus areas down will be described throughout the manual. Figure 1 is a visual of the strategic priority areas and three possible focus areas to be described later.

FIGURE 1. FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POTENTIAL FOCUS AREAS

Cross System Collaboration	Capacity Building	Provider Transformation	School to Work Transition	Employer Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Service Frameworks •Public Policy Alignment and Development •Funding paradigms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data Collection Tools and Processes •Communication and Marketing •Technical Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Organizational Structure •Program Service and Models •Workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Service Alignment •Philosophy •Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Incentives and Awareness •State as a Model Employer •Employer Collaborations

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Successful Employment First states merge and align multiple government systems, provide technical assistance efforts, engage stakeholders, and align resources. Accomplishing these complicated and demanding tasks requires a grand plan or strategy that is carefully organized and executed. States wanting to increase Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) outcomes should not only embrace the process of strategic planning but see it as an opportunity to move the needle – and employment – forward. In addition, for states that already have a strategic plan, targeting one population or strategic area can use this process to broaden the scope of an existing plan. Strategic planning is a process for creating a path forward, aligning stakeholders, and assessing a state’s current progress. In addition, strategic planning creates a community to support the changes needed to achieve goals.

When state leadership commits to the process of strategic planning, it demonstrates a commitment to building a different future for people with disabilities. Dedicating time to the process of strategic planning puts commitment into action. The length of time to complete the strategic planning process may vary depending upon the complexity of the tasks and the context in which planning happens. Single issue strategic plans can be done quickly whereas multi-faceted plans with a large stakeholder group will take much longer. Figure 2 displays the broad steps and timeframes for completing a strategic plan. This timeline may serve as a reference as the leadership team goes through the phases of strategic planning (see Section I).

FIGURE 2. STEPS AND TIMEFRAMES FOR COMPLETING A STRATEGIC PLAN



SECTION I: THE EIGHT PHASES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

This manual uses an eight-phase strategic planning process as shown in Figure 3, which should culminate into a strategic plan that will span three to five years. The time needed for each phase will vary depending upon multiple variables. Implementing the plan will understandably be the longest phase. Each phase of the strategic planning process offers a significant opportunity for stakeholders to create partnerships and build more efficient methods to increase Competitive Integrated Employment for people with disabilities. In addition, each phase has milestones to help the leadership team gauge progress and prepare statements to begin the next phase.

FIGURE 3. EIGHT PHASES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING



PHASE I: PRE-PLANNING

Three significant activities take place during the pre-planning phase. Often, one department in a state initiates the strategic planning process. The pre-planning phase gives other departments an opportunity to assign resources and become supportive to the idea of collaboration and make a commitment to participate in a strategic planning process. During pre-planning, the members of the onsite team, or Strategic Planning Leadership Team (known as the **leadership team**), will be identified and a group will be formed. A **facilitator** will be identified or hired, and an initial scan to determine the status of Competitive Integrated Employment for people with disabilities will be

completed. Taking the time for each of these activities in the pre-planning phase will ensure a solid foundation for the overall process.

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase I

Identifying a Leadership Team

The leadership team will spearhead the pre-planning and planning process. Existing groups such as an Employment First workgroup or an EFSLMP Provider VOICE core team could serve in the capacity as the leadership team. Members of the leadership team can be representatives from the Behavioral Health system, Developmental Disability system, Workforce system, Vocational Rehabilitation and Education. Additional members can come from departments unique to each state such as a Department of Disabilities, the Governor's Office on People with Disabilities or Medicaid. Having people who are considered decision makers from the representative departments will allow the team to cut through red tape throughout the process. Members of this team must be committed to attending meetings and sharing information during the strategic planning process for at least a year or more. Ensuring logistics such as scheduling meetings, taking notes and facilitating smaller workgroups are some of the responsibilities members of the leadership team will be responsible for. Besides the logistics mentioned above, the leadership team will also help the facilitator to identify stakeholders, draft the final plan and guide implementation of the strategic plan once it is approved.

Choosing a Facilitator

The facilitator can be a subject matter expert from EFSLMP Provider VOICE or someone with strategic planning experience hired directly through the state. It is highly recommended the facilitator have previous experience in leading a planning process that requires collaboration between multiple stakeholders. Facilitators should feel free to use their own activities, agendas and forms or the resources listed in this manual. Facilitators are encouraged to use group-building activities, brainstorming techniques, and technology when possible. These techniques aid in building trust and consensus that result in greater collaboration and buy-in when the final plan is being implemented. The facilitator will work closely with the state's onsite leadership team.

Conducting a Scan of the State

Once the leadership team is formed and the facilitator has been identified, the final activity in pre-planning is to conduct a cursory scan of the status of Competitive Integrated Employment for residents with disabilities using the five strategic priorities (to be detailed in the second section of the manual). This scan will lay the groundwork to identify which focus areas should be shared with a larger stakeholder group described in this manual. An example of something discovered during the initial scan may be the significant percentage of students with behavioral health support needs that transitioned from high school without a job or supports to get a job. After learning critical information during the scan, the leadership team may recommend reviewing the school to work

transition. Policy, service framework and funding as focus areas in the planning process. See Appendix A for a sample form to use in conducting the scan.



PHASE II: FORMULATING THE VISION

The second phase of the ODEP Criteria for Performance Excellence is setting the vision. Beginning strategic planning without identifying a vision is like taking a trip without a destination in mind. How will you know which route to take or who needs to be with you if you do not have a destination in mind? The vision statement is that destination.

In any organization, the vision should come from the top. The facilitator should work with the leadership team to determine which state leaders need to approve the vision statement. It is highly recommended that states have buy-in from authorities who have decision making authority to give the process validity. Each state has a unique chain of authority, so facilitators should understand this hierarchy. Once the vision has been created, the facilitator and leadership team should also create a plan for sharing this vision with the broader stakeholder group. It may be beneficial to create a logo and communication plan.

Once top decision makers approve the vision, then policies and practices based on that vision will not need a heightened level of scrutiny. If there is no buy-in, or if leadership has not been engaged, it is worth taking the time to slow down the process and engage them. Strategies for engaging leadership include sharing articles or EFSLMP Provider VOICE webinars, taking a tour and meeting people with (significant) disabilities who are employed, or bringing together a stakeholder group of people to share stories of systemic barriers.

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase II

The Vision Statement

Creating a vision is a great way to bring stakeholders together and lay the foundation for the future. It offers an opportunity to educate people on best practices. However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel if the vision already exists and has been vetted or endorsed by leadership. Facilitators will want to review documents including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan, Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan, executive orders or legislation to identify any visions that have already been vetted by leadership. A new vision statement should not be created if a current statement expresses the desired direction for the plan. All 50 states have some type of Employment First action, so it is likely that a base for a vision statement already exists in each state. To review the public policy in any state, including each state's WIOA State Plan, see the DRIVE website at <http://DriveDisabilityEmployment.org>.

After a vision statement has been identified, ensure that leadership continues to support this vision. As many people in leadership positions are political appointees, or work for them, there may be a change in leadership during the process. Therefore, a briefing may need to be conducted to bring new leadership up to speed. Additionally, briefing leaders along the way through the process ensures they are never surprised or caught unaware of the status of the planning process.

One organization transforming from a center-based service model to Competitive Integrated Employment took a full year to engage the organizational leadership in the transformation process. The board, tasked with setting the direction and vision of the organization, were not practitioners in the disability field and relied on staff to keep them up to date with best practices. Below are some of the strategies used by the agency leadership team to ensure their board had enough information to guide the strategic plan. Agency leadership:

- *Shared articles about the benefits of CIE and highlighted important sections of articles,*
- *Provided recorded articles for board members to listen to,*
- *Identified mentors from organizations that had successfully completed transformation and paired these mentors with board members,*
- *Visited two other organizations that had already gone through transformation, and*
- *Hired a consultant to help the board move from a dialogue of best or aspirational practices to create a concise vision statement.*

Because advanced work was done to educate the board, when it was time to craft a strategic plan, the process went smoothly.

As Arkansas began to work on their strategic plan to build capacity to increase Competitive Integrated Employment, the subject matter expert reviewed all the documents focused on Employment First.

Arkansas had been working on Employment First for over 10 years and had a wealth of documents and statements to pull from when creating a vision statement. Ultimately, the vision statement that was agreed upon was found in the governor's executive order created by one governor and endorsed by the next.

The vision statement was well written, clear and aspirational. Rather than spending time working on a new vision statement, the existing statement was shared as an opening exercise in strategic planning gatherings to gain stakeholder approval.

In addition, buy in was much greater from the beginning once the source, the governor's executive order was identified.

Creating a New Vision Statement

If a vision needs to be created, several exercises can be used. Facilitators should work with the leadership team and bring together a few additional stakeholders to be involved in this process as editing a vision can distract from larger tasks.

Phases to creating a vision statement:

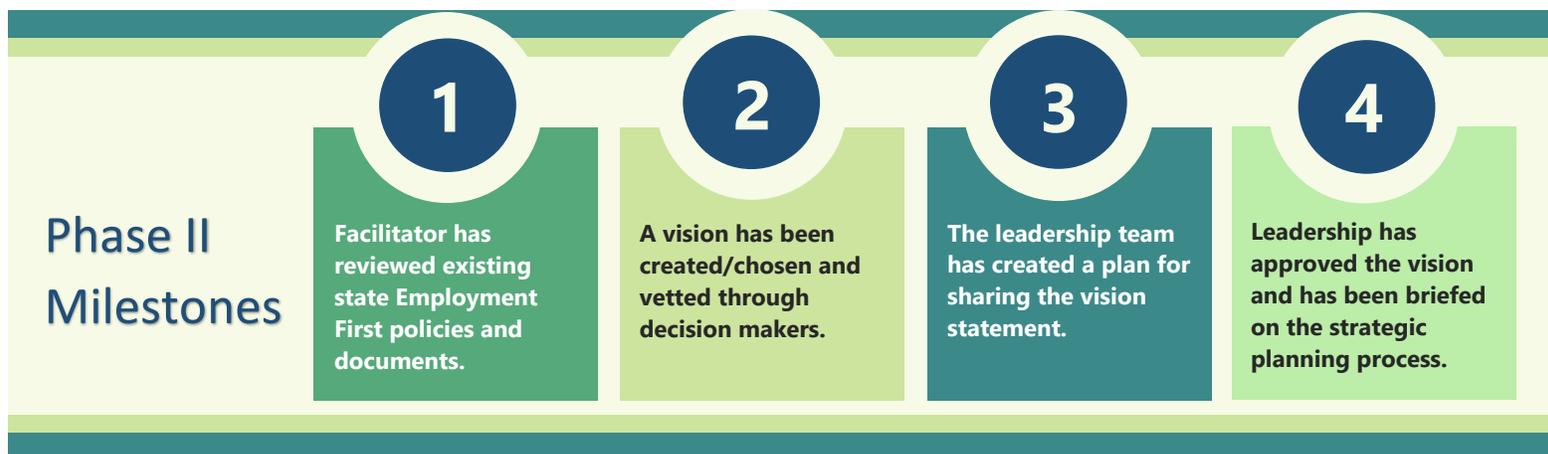
1. Stakeholders brainstorm which outcome they see 10 years in the future
 - a. Use flip charts to document ideas
 - b. Use a word cloud program, to gather everyone's thoughts onto one document (search for [articles](#) on reviews of online polling software)
2. Facilitator drafts a one sentence vision statement for the group to edit
 - c. Keep the statement short and concise
 - d. Do not use jargon or acronyms
3. Stakeholders and the Facilitator create a plan to share the statement and get buy-in from leadership
 - e. Create a messaging plan and logo to share with the vision statement
 - f. Communicate the vision on all materials such as invitations, presentations and communications.

Examples of Employment First Vision Statements:

- **Tennessee:** People with disabilities have the same opportunities for employment as anyone.
- **Maryland:** Every working age Marylander with a disability, including those with the most significant disabilities, must have access to opportunities which lead to employment in competitive integrated settings.
- **Minnesota:** Employment First is the vision of making employment the first and preferred

outcome of people with disabilities.

- **Arkansas:** Arkansans with disabilities, who wish to work and become more self-sufficient, should be supported to do so.



PHASE III: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Identifying stakeholders is the next phase in strategic planning. **Stakeholders** are people who have a vested interest in the plan outcome because it will impact them in some meaningful ways.

Stakeholder engagement can be the difference between a strategic plan that sits on a shelf and one that is put into action.

"When trust is high the dividend you receive is like a performance multiplier, elevating and improving every dimension of your organization and your life. In a company, high trust materially improves communication, collaboration, execution, innovation, strategy, engagement, partnering and relationships with stakeholders."

- Steven Covey

Trust and collaboration are more easily built when leadership and stakeholders move through the phases of strategic planning as a cohort. In reviewing several states' Employment First strategic plans, it is evident that the plans with significant stakeholder involvement during development have had the greatest success during implementation. Plans that were developed by a diverse group of stakeholders which include job seekers with disabilities and their family members, front line employment staff, decision-making state personnel and advocacy organizations are richer and more likely to have ongoing success.

One of the benefits of including a variety of stakeholders in strategic planning is to eliminate the need to "sell" the plan after it is developed. Secondly, involved stakeholders will also be thoughtful about ensuring their work is continued, and will persevere to keep state leadership accountable.

They serve as ambassadors when policies need to be created or amended or when funding needs to be modified. Below are criteria to use when engaging stakeholders:

- Stakeholders are anyone whose work or life will be impacted by the outcome of the plan
- They must be invited and allowed to participate before any implementation decisions are made
- Their input must be solicited, organized and preplanned
- They should share both the risks and benefits of the plan

In the past, a state once spent a year creating a strategic plan for implementing Employment First. The authors of the plan were leaders from several state agencies. However, no external stakeholders were involved in the creation of the plan. When the plan was shared with their stakeholders, the stakeholders expressed their disapproval about not being involved. As a result, the proposed plan, developed without stakeholder input, was not implemented.

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase III

Identifying Stakeholders

The facilitator and leadership team should use an intentional process to ensure every group is represented. Tools such as the attendance lists from Employment First webinars or trainings can be used to identify which stakeholders have already shown interest. Letters and newsletters can be used to inform potential stakeholders of upcoming opportunities to participate and have their voice heard in the creation of the strategic plan. There is no prescribed number of stakeholders needed for this process; however, it is recommended that each of the workgroups have at least ten members. Facilitators and leadership teams must also plan for attrition of members. Consideration should also be given to geography in large states, to ensure that stakeholders across regions have been included. In larger states, it may be necessary to use technology to meet. Therefore, the leadership team should have access to video conferencing and conference call lines.

Regardless of which strategies are used to bring stakeholders together, Employment First stakeholders should include representation from the following groups:

- **State Government agencies** (primary leadership team)
 - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Agency
 - Behavioral/Mental Health Agency
 - Workforce System
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
 - Education and Transition Agency
 - Medicaid Agency
- **Providers/provider associations**

- Executives
- Middle Management
- Agency Employment professionals
- **Advocates**
 - Self-Advocates and Self Advocacy organizations
 - Family members of job seekers
 - Protection & Advocacy organizations
 - University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
 - Developmental Disabilities Council
 - State Advocacy Organizations
 - State APSE chapter
- **Employers**

When engaging stakeholders, be clear with them about their role in the process and the anticipated time commitment. As stated earlier, the strategic planning process could take nine months to a year for the leadership team and up to six-months for stakeholder groups. Hosting kick-off and culmination gatherings gives structure to the process and may help attract busy stakeholders with limited free time.

Including Stakeholders with Diverse Perspectives

While legislation, regulations and policies are leaning toward Employment First as policy and best practice, there are still stakeholders who do not agree with this direction of employment supports. These stakeholders should be heard in the process, as all voices have value. The leadership team may not agree with their position, but it is always good practice to meet with these stakeholders face to face to hear from them. Information may be discovered that can be addressed to promote success. The leadership should be encouraged to hear opposing points of view and find common ground. If a stakeholder group believes their voices are not being heard, they may obstruct the plan through political will. Taking the time to listen to their concerns may be critical for moving the plan forward. Always find a way to include diverse perspectives in the process and learn from these differing perspectives.

1

Phase III Milestone

Stakeholders representing key groups have been identified to participate in the strategic planning process and/or kick-off event.

PHASE IV: GETTING ALL STAKEHOLDERS ON THE SAME PAGE

After stakeholders have been identified, the leadership team must ensure everyone collaborating in the strategic planning process has the same information, so they are prepared to participate. Planning an in-person kick-off event is a great way to bring stakeholders together and generate excitement. Generally, government leadership is aware of most initiatives in a state, whereas advocates may only be aware of initiatives in which they are involved. Planning and implementing a large group gathering of all stakeholders has many advantages.

When planning a kick-off event, many variables must be considered. The location, length of event, and funds needed for refreshments are some of the decisions that need to be coordinated by the facilitator and leadership team. If people are coming from far away, holding a single day-long event may be the best way to ensure that non-traditional stakeholders can be included. Funding may need to be secured to pay for travel and refreshments. The leadership team should have people register so the facilitator can plan activities for the right number of participants.

Primary objectives for a kick-off event include:

- Demonstrating government leadership's commitment to the strategic planning process and Employment First
- Ensuring everyone has the same critical information
- Preparing for the next phases of the strategic planning process

Maryland gathered stakeholders for an Employment First kick-off event. Over 175 people including self-advocates, industry leaders, provider leadership, government leadership, advocacy agencies and family members attended the kick-off event.

The Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Disabilities opened the event with a welcome and commitment to the process. After their opening, leaders of employment projects within the state were asked to use a four-slide template and share information about the initiatives they were involved in. Working from the same slide template allowed for similar information about all projects to be shared and cut down on the number of questions attendees had as they could compare projects. Most people in the room were surprised that there were so many initiatives relating to the employment of people with disabilities happening within the state, many of which they were unaware of.

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase IV

Below are two possible activities to do with a large group of stakeholders during a kick-off event to ensure everyone has the same basic information about current Employment First initiatives and policies in the state. Either method is effective and can be altered to meet the circumstances in any state.

State of the State Activity

- Ask groups leading projects and initiatives that have been or are being conducted in the state to present about their initiative. Consider creating a PowerPoint template with a few slides that everyone uses such as:
 1. a description of the initiative,
 2. a description of who is participating in the initiative,
 3. a description of the current status, and
 4. a description of the next phases for the initiative.

Keep in mind people may lose attention if there are too many presentations. Thus, in respect of people's time, no more than 3 hours should be spent on this event. Limit each presentation to no more than 15 minutes each. Ensure no one stakeholder monopolizes the day.

- Below are examples of possible presentation groups:
 - Agencies or school systems participating in Project SEARCH
 - Federal grants and initiatives such as EFSLMP Provider VOICE, Partnerships in Employment (PIE), or PROMISE
 - Promising practices by a specific provider or consortium

- Partnerships between state agencies
- People with disabilities that have started small businesses
- Pre-Employment Transition Services models that are in use
- State department initiatives (VR, Medicaid, Education etc.)
- Provider transformations examples
- Workforce System initiatives for people with disabilities
- Focus areas for the state APSE chapter, DD Council, or other committees focusing on employment of people with disabilities
- Job development or staff training collaborative

OR...

Current Status of Strategic Priority Areas

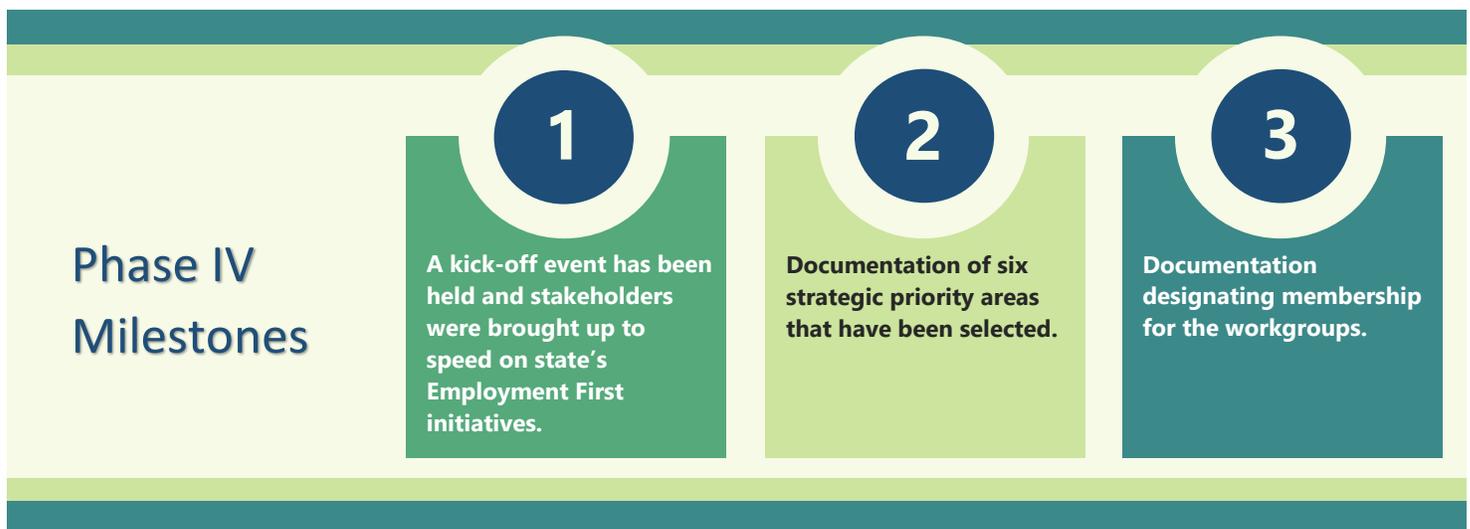
- Identify stakeholders to share their challenges and successes within a specific strategic priority area. This technique will create an opportunity for leadership to hear of any glaring issues they may not have been aware of.
 - Ask a variety of stakeholder groups to share a success and challenge
 - Limit the time for each group to no more than 15 minutes each
 - Allow stakeholders to choose their own success and challenge – with the caveat that both be presented
 - Use a slide template for the presentations
 - Definition of the strategic area
 - Challenge within the area
 - Success within the area

Preparing for the Next Phase

The final objective in creating a kick-off event is to prepare for the next phase of strategic planning. The facilitator can use any technique for sharing the strategic priorities. For example, the leadership team and facilitators can choose the strategic priorities prior to the meeting, or the facilitator can lead the group in an activity to choose the strategic priorities for the state's plan. Below is one suggested exercise to use if the priorities will be chosen at the kick-off event.

- Share all the strategic priority areas to be included in the strategic plan
 - Facilitator or leadership team describes the five strategic priority areas and focus areas through a brief status in the state.
- Stakeholders self-select into groups representing each strategic priority
 - Facilitator instructs groups on a task to complete during a break-out session
 - Workgroups work for a specified amount of time on their task

- Each workgroup reports out their findings to the whole group
- The facilitator leads an activity for the whole group to vote on the top priority areas. Voting can be done by putting checks on a flip chart or using technology like [Poll Everywhere](#).
- Facilitator uses voting data to identify the final strategic priority areas to use in the exploration phase
 - Allow people to self-select into groups they want to work within the next 4-6 months around a strategic priority area
 - Each priority area should include a member of the leadership team who can set up an email group, secure meeting locations, take notes, share any questions or barriers with the leadership team
 - Share instructions for the groups through the next phase



PHASE V: CONDUCTING EXPLORATION

Knowing the current status and creating a destination for the future is the heart of a strategic plan. In the exploration phase, workgroups will complete a gap analysis by conducting research, surveying stakeholders, and reviewing policies. This will educate workgroups and aid in setting a destination or direction for the future. There are three primary steps to conducting a gap analysis during this phase:

- Review policies, practices and the personal experiences of stakeholders to gain insight into the current status
- Conduct a national scan on best and emerging policies and practices
- Review trends in federal policies, including funding related to supporting people with

disabilities in employment.

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase V

The Gap Analysis

A gap analysis simply provides a way to measure where you are versus where you want to be. Conducting a gap analysis lends itself to creating the strategic plan as you will define a starting point (current performance) and ending point (potential performance), and the plan will detail the journey in between the two.

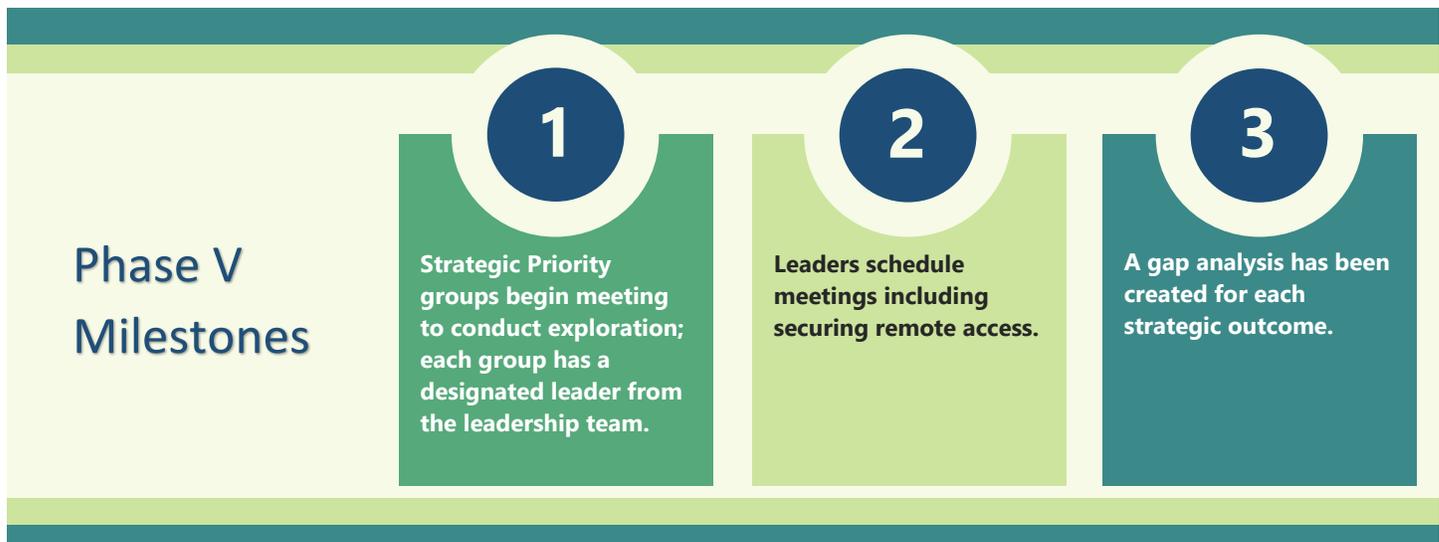
During the gap analysis, the strategic priority workgroups (referred to as workgroups going forward) will gather information about the current status of the strategic priority areas in the state, making use of the information presented during the kick-off event, and explore trends and promising practices for the future. They can employ methods such as a national scan to learn what other states are doing, review best practices defined in literature, review current policies and practices within their state and other states, including future funding trends, and gather information on experiences of job seekers and providers.

Stakeholder engagement is critical in this phase. The first steps of exploration should occur during the kick-off meeting using the strategies listed above. Stakeholders will trust the process more if they are involved in deciding the strategic priority areas, and the kick-off event is an ideal time to start this step. Support for each of the workgroups to accomplish their tasks should be available through a leadership team member who will ensure logistics are handled and serve as a liaison for the workgroup back to the leadership team and facilitator.

Choosing a Gap Analysis Tool

States may have a standard assessment tool or may want to use a technique such as a SWOT analysis. By assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the workgroups can get a comprehensive view of where the state currently stands and what the possible future looks like in each of the strategic priorities. Another format shown in the Appendix B guides the workgroup to review the focus area through accomplishments, challenges, barriers and opportunities. See the sample format in Appendix C and a completed version in Appendix D. Using these four areas allows for a review of what is and what could be in one step. Also, information can be gathered through a variety of techniques and as a result takes into consideration people's personal experiences, as well

as research, policies, and experiences in other states. Regardless of which tool is used, each of the workgroups should use the same tool.



PHASE VI: CRAFTING THE OUTCOMES AND GOALS

Proposing an outcome statement and supporting goals is the primary objective in this phase. Once the gap analysis is concluded during exploration, the workgroups will have identified the current status within the state and learned about best practices supported by research and future trends in their strategic priority area. By identifying the possibilities and barriers, workgroups will have the information needed to craft an outcome statement and a list of supporting goals for their strategic priority area.

The outcome statement and goals are the framework for creating the implementation phase. The creation of a proposed outcome statement and goals is the last task for each of the workgroups. The outcome statements and goals should be submitted to the leadership team for final revision and drafting of the plan document.

Specific Strategies and Tools for Phase VI

Writing the Outcome Statement and Goals

The outcome statement should be aspirational but realistic. Outcomes statements should describe what needs to happen after your goals are achieved. They should be generic enough that goals can be created as action phases to achieve the outcome. It is suggested that no more than three goals per outcome should be created. To cut down on the amount of wordsmithing the drafters of the strategic plan must do, each group should use the same format for writing the outcome statements

and goals. A commonly used format is the SMART goal technique as shown in Figure 4. When a format like SMART is used, there will be consistency between workgroups as they share their outcomes and goals. See Appendix E for a format to capture outcomes and goals from each workgroup.

FIGURE 4. SMART GOALS



Workgroups may elect to have one member be the writer while other members give feedback and edit the outcomes and goals. To cut down on the number of meetings people are required to attend, the drafting and finalizing of the outcome and goals can happen over email or on a conference call. The final draft of each workgroup's outcome statement and goals should be formatted on the same template for ease of editing once the final plan is being drafted. See Appendix F for an example of an outcome and goal document.

Presenting the Outcomes and Goals

A face to face meeting to share the process used and proposed outcomes and goals for each workgroup is the most desirable way to present the outcomes and goals. Depending on available timing, a gathering with just a member or two of each workgroup may be sufficient, or there may be resources to schedule a meeting to include all stakeholders. As this meeting is primarily to share the process, findings, outcome statements and goals from each workgroup the task may be accomplished in as little as three hours. The date of such a meeting should be set well in advance so workgroups have a deadline to work towards. Video conferencing for those from around the state who can't be present should be available.

Examples of Outcomes and Goals:

Tennessee – Goal II: Build shared community commitment to “Employment First” for individuals with disabilities.

Three-year Metrics:

- Number of stakeholders and geographic origin of contacts on TN Works and other partner and state agency websites.
- Family expectations as measured by TN Works Family Expectation Survey
- General public attitudes as measured by Conversations that Matter
- Employer perceptions
- Number of Home and Community Based Providers (HCBP) supporting Employment First

New York – Outcome: Employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- Goal: Register 100 businesses as having formal policies to hire people with disabilities as part of their workforce strategy.



PHASE VII: FORMULATING THE PLAN

There are a multitude of strategic planning document templates. Some formal products include The Balanced Score Card or Benchmarking that a state can choose to use. Alternatively, the strategic plan facilitator may have a specific layout they prefer. Since many disability professionals have been creating annual plans for people they support, they are well versed in what goes into a quality plan. Each plan is unique, and the primary stakeholder group or leaders can decide how much information should be included. If there is controversy around increasing Competitive Integrated Employment in a specific state, the more information and transparency about the process, the better.

Items to include in a Strategic Plan Document:

1. The narrative: The narrative may include information about why the planning process was initiated, and a description of the processes used. A summation of the gap analysis for each strategic priority area and the names and organizations represented in planning process are also good information to include. If the plan document is not too long, a summation of trends and the history of employment for people with disabilities can be a positive addition.
2. Outcomes and goals: The outcomes and goals are derived from the work done by each of the workgroups. The plan author may need to rewrite outcomes and goals, so they are concise and not repetitive. If there are substantial changes from the draft to the final product, gather the workgroup for a final meeting to review the changes before any presentation to a larger group.
3. The implementation plan: The implementation plan should include time frames and additional resources needed to implement the plan. Examples of resources include funds to pay for a subject matter expert in a specific area, technical assistance for providers, or the cost of training for employment professionals. The greater the detail about what will be needed to implement the plan, the more likely it will be successful.

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase VII

Writing the Plan Document

Many formats used by states can be adapted to express a state's strategic plan. Use the link to The LEAD Center's [DRIVE](#) website, to find examples of other state plans. Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, and others have examples of comprehensive plan documents. Many states have also used the same plan format to report on annual updates to the state's plan. The [Massachusetts Blueprint](#) is an example of a plan and annual update that can be used. While writing a comprehensive plan may seem like a daunting task, using the process, outcomes and goals will give your team a good roadmap for drafting the plan. For additional templates used to create a strategic plan, please review those provided through the free templates at <https://www.smartsheet.com/>.

Sharing the Plan

A strategic plan should not be considered complete until it has been shared with both leadership and the stakeholders who were involved in the planning process. After briefing leadership and having the plan approved, the leadership team should share the plan with stakeholders. Stakeholders who participated in the kick-off meeting and workgroups should all be invited to a presentation of the completed strategic plan. A possible strategy to increase stakeholder buy-in is to use workgroup

members to present their portion of the plan. If they have not done so yet, they can share their findings during the exploration phase.



PHASE VIII: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Implementation of the plan is the longest phase. A plan may cover a period from three to five years. The longer the plan, the more critical it is to set short-term benchmarks that can be achieved in a year or less. Reaching these benchmarks signals to stakeholders that there is movement, the plan is viable, and it is being used to increase Competitive Integrated Employment outcomes. Tracking the outcomes and sharing stories about their impact are critical in the implementation phase. If these two steps are not followed, there is a good chance that the strategic plan will just gather dust on the shelf. **Keeping up the momentum created during the initial phases of the strategic planning process is critical.**

Suggested Strategies and Tools for Phase VIII

Maintaining the momentum and focus on the strategic plan must be intentional. Collecting the data and telling the stories about people obtaining Competitive Integrated Employment creates momentum and healthy competition between providers, and it spurs creativity to create even more outcomes. Sharing success helps move the plan from a single action into a movement.

Employment First Tennessee stays vigilant in maintaining momentum by using social media to share stories of successful employment outcomes. High quality videos are produced and shared on the website, and on their Facebook page on a regular schedule. They share information about upcoming trainings, and policy changes on a regular basis.

Below is a chart of some activities to use during implementation.

Measuring success through employment outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data on employment outcomes including wages, hours worked, movement from sheltered workshops to CIE • Use the data to make changes to the implementation plan • Share data from providers to create a competitive component to outcomes
Measuring status of the strategic plan outcomes and goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and disseminate a quarterly report on the implementation of the strategic plan • Create a report card on the progress being made annually and share through a newsletter or presentation
Sharing success stories about people obtaining CIE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media postings • Monthly Employment First Newsletters • Awards ceremonies during National Disability Employment Awareness Month • Record employers sharing their testimonials about employees with disabilities and their impact within their company
Continuing the momentum started by the planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host an annual employment conference • Create communities of practice • Share articles about best practices • Host subject matter experts to bring best practices to the state • Partner with a commerce department or local chamber to celebrate employers during National Disability Employment Awareness month
Increasing the impact of the strategic plan document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the show on the road- share the plan with other stakeholders who could not participate • Host regional events and bring along stakeholders who participated to share the stories of the process and successes that have occurred since the plan was created • Post stories of successful employment outcomes on websites and on social media • Gather employers who have successfully hired someone with a disability and invite employers who may be interested in doing so

Phase VIII Milestones

1

A plan for sharing the strategic plan with stakeholders who were involved in the process as well as general stakeholders.

2

A plan for keeping the plan's momentum going by providing outcome updates and resources.

3

A plan for sharing success stories about people with disabilities obtaining and maintaining CIE.

Ohio has an Employment First website that has been able to keep the momentum going since its inception. By using a progressive marketing strategy and making resources available, the Ohio Employment First website has become a resource for the Ohio Employment First community and those around the country.

The website is kept up to date and is very easy to navigate. The logo is now identified with Ohio Employment First. Every stakeholder benefits from this website. A few of the hundreds of ways people use the website include:

- *Employment Professionals can link to training*
- *Families can view a document outlining a trajectory for transition from student to adulthood*
- *Policymakers can review the history of the strategic plan*

Employers can learn about hiring someone with a disability and be linked to resources.

(Source: <https://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/>)

SECTION II: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS

The five strategic priorities are aligned with ODEP’s Provider VOICE technical assistance and Vision Quest supports. ODEP has provided guidance on these five strategic priorities through multiple formats. On-site technical assistance, communities of practice, monthly webinars, transformation manuals, briefings and other documents provided by ODEP through the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program have aided states as they address and eliminate barriers to Employment First. Topics in these technical assistance supports areas can be categorized according to each of the strategic priority areas. Using these same strategic priorities, facilitators, leadership teams, and workgroups will identify focus areas within the strategic priority to review. Information gathered from the gap analysis will help teams identify which strategic priority and focus area to address in the state’s strategic plan.

This document describes the five strategic priorities and features three focus areas for each priority. The leadership team and workgroups should not limit their gap analysis to the focus areas described in this manual, but use them as a guide. As each state is at a different place in their Employment First journey, no two states will choose the same focus areas to concentrate on during their strategic planning process.

Each of the following pages will focus on one of the strategic priorities. The focus areas are in the first column, the second column frames the issue related to the specific priority. The third column suggests ideas for workgroups to use when examining their state’s current status during the gap analysis. The fourth column provides recommended research and activities to identify best practices and a description of what other states have done. Early on in the strategic planning process, these recommended focus areas can also be used as a starting point for the leadership team to determine where to guide their strategic plan.

FIGURE 5. FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POTENTIAL FOCUS AREAS

Cross System Collaboration	Capacity Bulding	Provider Transformation	School to Work Transition	Employer Engagment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Service Frameworks •Public Policy Alignment and Development •Funding paradigms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data Collection Tools and Processes •Communication and Marketing •Technical Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Organizational Structure •Program Service and Models •Workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Service Alignment •Philosophy •Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Incentives and Awareness •State as a Model Employer •Employer Collaborations

CROSS SYSTEM COLLABORATION

Cross system collaboration is a way for states to share resources such as time and money by streamlining employment related services that occur in different systems. Cross system collaboration occurs in every state to some extent. While each state department has its own public policies, funding paradigms, service framework and specialized professionals, collaboration would increase efficiency and effectiveness in helping people with disabilities to become and stay employed. For years these systems have worked autonomously with little expectation for collaboration. A change in federal policy and best practices has brought about similar change in the philosophy of systems collaboration. By sharing resources, expertise and practices, states can collaborate as they address the ongoing and persistent unemployment and underemployment of people with disabilities.

Focus Area	Framing the Issues	Evaluating the Current System	Research Possibilities
Service Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job seekers enter a system with a host of assessments and documents from previous systems where they have received supports. Because each system uses different language, processes and techniques, job seekers often have to re-enter any new system and repeat work that has already been done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review systems that support job seekers in finding jobs. Start from the intake and go through job support in each system. Identify barriers job seekers have experienced by conducting focus groups and surveys. Identify resources and professionals that job seekers can access in each of the systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review other states' systems of services/service frameworks through reading HCBS waivers to determine how they implement services. See examples: Alabama, Hawaii, Ohio, Tennessee, and Utah. Review MOU's and state strategic plans to understand how systems interact. See examples: Delaware, Iowa, Maryland, District of Columbia.
Policy Alignment and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State departments share common goals, but frequently do not share common policies. Many state departments focus on employment for residents within different departments and funding streams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify departments within states which have employment supports for people with disabilities. Review each of the departments to see how they can be aligned. Review the data collection techniques in each department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review other states MOU's that align policies and practices. See examples: Arizona, Utah and Georgia Review WIOA state plans to identify how other states created systems collaboration.
Funding Paradigms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments receive funding from different sources. Due to state and federal regulations, funding may be for a specific population or it may be used in combination with other sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the funding models for supporting employer engagement and job seeker assessment in various systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how other states have used braided, blended or stacked funding. Review Ohio's Funding overview including review of other systems' funding paradigms.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building in this manual refers to a combined effort for all systems to meet the needs of people with disabilities who want to work but are unemployed or underemployed. While each separate system

has its own capacity challenges, a statewide strategic plan should address the ability of the combined systems to meet the needs of today's job seekers as well as to anticipate future needs. Understanding the role of each system in the employment of people with disabilities may help identify those systems that may be underutilized, or those with lengthy waiting lists. Evaluating each system separately will give a more comprehensive picture of what the current capacity is, what capacity will be needed to meet the needs of job seekers, and where collaboration will benefit the outcomes.

Focus Area	Descriptions	Evaluating the Current System	Research Possibilities
Data Collection Tools and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a starting point and measuring progress is critical to determining whether the correct course has been set. Creating a mechanism to measure the baseline is a first step. Identifying a tool that can be used across systems allows for equal comparison. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify tools that exist for collecting data in each system. Determine baseline employment data. Determine where people are accessing services in more than one system and the unmet needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data collection tools other states use. See examples: Washington, Maryland Review the State of the State in Employment Outcomes annual document.
Communication and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to request and access employment services, as well as stories of people who are successfully working must be shared to create demand and therefore capacity for jobseekers to access to services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review whether the values of Employment First are clearly stated on all partners' websites, mass communications and publications. Determine whether case managers share information about employment services and benefits of employment in annual planning meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review websites and social media of states who excel at telling stories. See examples: Ohio and Tennessee Competency-based curriculum for case managers to share information about employment outcomes and benefits. See examples: Maryland, Ohio
Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many states receive technical assistance from a variety of sources. Each department may access multiple types of technical assistance, even possibly the same subject matter experts. Collaborating on the use of technical assistance and even streamlining it within any single system should be a goal of the strategic plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What technical assistance is provided in each of the systems? Are there topics where the technical assistance can be shared? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review how other states have used technical assistance. Identify what opportunities exist for the creating of communities of practice set up for providers, state leaders and Employment First teams.

PROVIDER TRANSFORMATION

Shifting a provider organization from providing facility-based services such as sheltered workshops or day habilitation to an organization whose supports focus on Competitive Integrated Employment and other community-based day activities takes thoughtful preparation and strategic thinking. Introducing a new philosophy, program model and infrastructure to an organization that may have a long history of

center-based supports will require technical assistance and incentives. Providers will need assistance to create different staffing models, identify new diversified funding opportunities and a new use for facilities and vehicle fleet will need to be thought through with some help.

Focus Area	Framing the Issue	Evaluating the Current System	Research Possibilities
Organizational Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As stated in the Provider Transformation Manual 2.0 and supporting webinars, an organizational structure supporting Competitive Integrated Employment is critical in anchoring the transformation process. Agencies must consider their administrative structure, finance, technology, communication, human resource and quality assurance departments to be successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify organizations that have high rates of Competitive Integrated Employment. Survey organizations to determine which are interested in support to transition to CIE. Determine if there are currently provider coalitions that are collaborating on specific practices such as workforce development or shared employer engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read more about collaborations and Communities of practice in the Transformation 2.0 manual. Review provider transformation articles and webinars from Institute on Community Inclusion and ODEP websites.
Program Service Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming the service model can be difficult for agency staff, people supported, families and funders. A thoughtful transitioning of services must be planned and given due time to be successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify which agencies are currently transitioning to providing supports to increase CIE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review literature to understand organizational structure models that support community integrated supports and Competitive Integrated Employment outcomes.
Provider Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competent workforce that can assist job seekers with disabilities in identifying their career aspirations, seek employment and be supported to be successful is the goal of all providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the current credentials the workforce is required to have in the state? What infrastructure exists for increasing staff competencies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the training requirements of staff in high performing states. See examples: Pennsylvania, Maine, Colorado. Review state and national credentialing options for staff. Review models of staff development from ICI MN.

SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

Giving students the foundation and tools they need for a life of work and adulthood is a primary function of schools. Beginning in kindergarten, students gain technical skills needed to work. Curriculum also focuses on soft skills like problem solving, teamwork, and collaboration. In special education, school to work transition is more comprehensive than for students in general education. Transition often includes training students on daily living skills such as riding the bus, budgeting and grooming for work. Working with parents and connecting the student to adult service resources are also a part of

comprehensive disability transition programs. Creating a seamless transition from school to work for young adults requires the systems that provide support to the students to be aligned and collaborate well with one another.

Focus Area	Framing the Issue	Evaluating the Current System	Research Ideas
Service Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may access services in a number of different systems as they transition from school to work. When services are not aligned state systems could be double paying for the same service or not serving some students at all. In addition, the burden for missing needed services too often falls on the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the state policy and practices on employment training for students with disabilities. Investigate how local education departments, vocational rehabilitation, and adult providers transition young adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify school to work transition models throughout the country. Some examples are: Project SEARCH and Vocational Rehabilitation pre-employment transition services. Review resources offered by National Youth Transition Center.
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While literature has focused on school to work employment training for decades, many school systems have not adopted the philosophy and practices associated with employment outcomes for students with significant disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview teachers and parents from classrooms around the state to understand student post-graduation outcomes. Interview adult service providers to identify barriers to employment for transitioning students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practices in school to work transition as identified in literature for each of the special populations and disciplines the state is placing focus.
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students are on a trajectory to receive an academic diploma while others are moving towards a non-academic certificate. Limited opportunity for community employment training may exist when so many students with diverse needs are supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review what programs for pre-employment transition services exist in the state. Determine the number of students who will need employment support in the near future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review literature and interview state leadership in other states to understand how capacity is built. Review transition models on Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

There are a number of philosophies about engaging employers. Some experts believe relationships with employers begin and end with a specific job seeker. Other experts believe in creating relationships with employers that can be accessed when a specific job seeker's ideal conditions match the employer's upon which a match can be made. There is no singular way to engage employers; however, all relationships must be reciprocal where the employer benefits for the relationship with the employee and the employee is given the opportunity to contribute as an employer. No matter which method is used, the players have to use the language and norms of the business and not of the disability world.

Focus Area	Framing the Issue	Evaluating the Current Status	Research Ideas
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Incentives and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing employers to the idea of hiring people with disabilities can be done at a micro and macro level. Public relations campaigns, introduction of tax incentives and peer to peer sharing are strategies used to engage employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey employers to determine their experience with tax incentives. • Survey employers to determine their willingness to share information about their experience with colleagues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review state initiatives for hiring people with disabilities. • Review federal incentives for hiring people with disabilities. • Review Social Security initiatives and pilot projects for employers hiring people with disabilities.
State as Model Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many states have chosen to be a role model for employers by becoming a model employer. Often special hiring authority may need to exist for the state to customize positions or offer positions to people who may not have the academic requirements of typical positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the state has a program to be a model employer, review the data regarding people hired and the types of positions they have been hired into. • Determine the public relations and marketing being done to market the state as a model employer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify jurisdictions that have adopted “government as model employer”. See Arkansas, King County WA, Montgomery County MD and the Federal Government. • Review special exemption policies that allow jurisdictions to customize jobs.
Employment Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment collaborations can be led by government, providers, employers or community advocacy agencies such as a Chambers of Commerce. Creating a peer to peer network for employers to learn about hiring people with disabilities may lead to building a network of willing employer partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research to determine if there are any local employer collaborations in any of the systems. • Survey current employers of people with disabilities to determine their interest in a collaborative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review literature regarding Business Advisory Councils, Chamber of Commerce subcommittees on disability hiring and Business Leadership Networks.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LEADERSHIP SCAN

APPENDIX B: GAP ANALYSIS TOOL TO BE USED IN THE EXPLORATION PHASE

APPENDIX C: GAP ANALYSIS TOOL FOR EXPLORATION PHASE

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE COMPLETED GAP ANALYSIS TOOL FOR EXPLORATION PHASE

APPENDIX E: TOOL FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITY OUTCOME AND GOALS

APPENDIX F: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AREAS PROVIDED BY ODEP

APPENDIX A: LEADERSHIP SCAN

Statewide Systems Strategic Priority	Behavior/ Mental Health	Developmental Disability	Medicaid	Education	Workforce	Vocational Rehabilitation
Cross System Collaboration						
Capacity Building						
Provider Transformation						
School to Work Transition						
Employer Engagement						

APPENDIX B: GAP ANALYSIS TOOL TO BE USED IN THE EXPLORATION PHASE

Assessment Area	Description of Assessment Area	Potential Methods to gather information
Accomplishments	Accomplishments state any successes state agencies, advocates, professionals or job seekers have regarding the 5 strategic priority areas. These can be on a micro or macro level. This is a good place to learn more about pockets of excellence that may not be scaled up to the whole state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct surveys using online survey tools • Conduct small focus groups • Review data, funding and policies • Interview key state staff who know of accomplishments across the state
Challenges	Challenges are more evident than barriers and more easily addressed. The fixes for challenges will not take a great deal of time or resources to overcome, yet they need to be overcome. Gathering information on challenges is relatively easy as most people can articulate a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct stakeholder surveys in specific strategic priority areas • Interview job seekers, families and providers • Review systems processes
Barriers	Barriers may need significant work to overcome. They will take more time and resources than challenges and may need more exploration. They may require changes to policies, funding paradigms or memorandums of understanding between departments and possibly changes to systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct round table discussions with stakeholders • Gather policy leaders to review interdepartmental process to determine their seamlessness
Opportunities	Opportunities are ideas that take into consideration what is possible. They can be as aspirational or realistic as the team decides. Spending time on opportunities promotes positive thinking toward the initiative and generates ideas. It also allows for easy transition into creating outcomes and goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a literature review to identify best practices • Conduct a national scan to learn what others have accomplished • Hear stories of people who have overcome obstacles to become employed

APPENDIX C: GAP ANALYSIS TOOL FOR EXPLORATION PHASE

Strategic Priority _____ Focus Area _____

Assessment Area	Information Identified	Methods used to gather Information
Accomplishments		
Challenges		
Barriers		
Opportunities		

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE COMPLETED GAP ANALYSIS TOOL FOR EXPLORATION PHASE

Strategic Priority _____ Cross System Collaboration _____

Focus Area _____ Funding _____

Assessment Area	Information Identified	Methods used to gather Information
Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual departments fund employment supports • All departments providing employment supports fund job development • Funding can be stacked between VR/IDD/BH departments • IDD has adopted customized employment and funds the steps • Behavioral Health funds evidence-based practice for job seekers • The Workforce system funds an incubator for small business development • VR and Workforce share training resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of current rates • Interview with providers • Website review of each of the systems
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current policy does not allow a person to receive funds from two departments at once • Vocational Rehabilitation doesn't recognize customized employment as evidence-based practice or fund discovery • Families and self-advocates must initiate services but no communication or support is offered • Transportation to and from a job is not a covered service • Staff training is not a funded service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of state disability employment policies • Interview with staff from Vocational Rehabilitation • Interview with provider employment staff • Review of Federal laws about funding collaboration • Review of Ohio's Funding work paper
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small business development is not a funded service by Vocational Rehabilitation • Behavioral Health doesn't have the staff resources to focus on collaboration • The funds provided do not meet the salary needs for the skilled staff • The workforce system does not have funds for a focused disability staff position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Employment Literature on best practices • Survey of providers on funding barriers
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state WIOA work plan mandates departments work together to review rates for all disability populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of WIOA regulations • Review of literature on best practices of collaboration • Review of EFSLMP webinars on WIOA work plan collaboration

APPENDIX E: TOOL FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITY OUTCOME AND GOALS

Strategic Priority _____

Member Name	Stakeholder Group Representing

Summary of Gap Analysis

What were the highlights of the gap analysis? Add information about the methods for gathering information and discoveries:

Outcome Statement: _____

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Resources needed to implement the goals: _____

Values assumed in the outcome: _____

APPENDIX F: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AREAS PROVIDED BY ODEP

Partnerships needed to accomplish the goals:

Cross Systems Policy & Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis; • Strategic planning; • Rate restructuring and resource braiding; • Service delivery coordination; • Cross-agency collaboration; • WIOA & HCBS implementation; • Provider contract reform.
Provider Transformation Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision/mission realignment; • Staff decentralization; • Financial restructuring & funding diversification; • Executive leadership development; • Communications/marketing; • Performance benchmarking.
Employer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined employer outreach activities; • Customization of employer engagement; • Job development, job negotiation tailored to the unique business needs of each individual employer; • Dissemination of technological tools for improving the direct relationship between the employee and the employer.
School to Work Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of multi-disciplinary local partnerships to facilitate service coordination and resource braiding; • Provision of cross-systems professional development, training and ongoing mentoring support on the dissemination of effective practices; • Analysis of current policy barriers that may hinder scalability of validated transition strategies.