



Transformation Agreement

October 1, 2013

**Quarterly Report &
New York Draft Plan To Increase Competitive
Employment Opportunities For
People with Developmental Disabilities**

Submission to the Centers for Medicare
and Medicaid Standards

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Introduction

In keeping with the Health System Transformation for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Agreement as defined in the Standards Terms and Conditions of New York State's Partnership Plan Medicaid Section 1115 Demonstration, this document reports to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) the completion of the October 1, 2013 Transformation Deliverable Schedule which includes progress and quarterly updates in the following areas:

- Transition information for specific residents of Finger Lakes and Taconic Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) including residential settings ;
- Progress for increasing availability of supportive housing options and the number of housing units available to persons being transitioned from ICFs and meeting HCBS standards;
- The Draft Plan to Increase Competitive Employment Opportunities for People With Developmental Disabilities and progress toward increasing the number of individuals engaged in competitive employment; and
- The number of participant self-direction training/education sessions conducted and the number of self-direction enrollees.

Residential Transitions and Supportive Housing

Residential Transitions and Supportive Housing

(from CMS Special Terms and Conditions, Attachment H)

- a. *By January 1, 2014, New York will transition a total of 148 residents from the Finger Lakes and Taconic ICFs in accordance with the following milestones:*
 - ii. ***20 additional people transitioned by October 1, 2013, and***
- b. *At least 30% of those persons (or a total of 44 persons) transitioned from institutions, both campus-based and non-campus-based ICFs, will qualify for MFP (i.e. can be transitioned into an MFP qualified residence). New York will transition the balance of the persons in the Finger Lakes and Taconic ICF target population (who are not transitioned to MFP qualified residences) into residential settings that comport with CMS requirements for home and community-based settings as outlined in the 1915(i) NPRM. **New York must submit quarterly reports of the total number of persons transitioned to the community, the size and licensure category of the residential settings into which persons were transitioned (e.g. 4 person group home), and an assurance that the residential settings comport with CMS requirements.***
- c. *No later than August 1, 2013, New York must submit a draft timeline for transition of the residents of the remaining campus and non-campus-based ICF's to community-based settings. **New York and CMS will finalize the plan by October 1, 2013.** This plan must detail the pace of remaining transitions, taking into account the housing availability chart developed by the state. Upon approval by CMS, the transition plan and related deliverables will be incorporated as an attachment.*



In accordance with the Developmental Disabilities Deliverable Schedule, OPWDD submitted to CMS a Draft ICF Transition Plan (Appendix 1) on July 27, 2013. Clarifying discussions on the plan have occurred between the State and CMS and further detail on children’s community based residential services was forwarded to CMS on September 26. OPWDD is looking for confirmation from CMS on the draft plan in order to communicate with Stakeholders and finalize implementation strategies.

Since July 1, 2013, OPWDD has assisted 23 individuals to transition from the Finger Lakes and Taconic campus based ICFs to community settings meeting the Home and Community Based Services settings standards.

Individuals Assisted to Transition to Community Settings July 1 – September 30, 2013					
Name	Date	Certified Capacity	Certification Type	Meets HCBS Standards	MFP Compliant
	7/31/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	7/31/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	7/31/13	9	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	8/5/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	8/6/13	11	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	8/8/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	8/20/13	12	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/5/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	9/30/13	5	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/30/13	6	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/30/13	6	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	7/19/2013	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	8/1/2013	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	8/1/2013	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	8/1/2013	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	8/1/2013	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	9/19/2013	11	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/24/2013	5	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/26/2013	6	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/26/2013	8	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/27/13	6	Supervised IRA	Yes	No
	9/30/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes
	9/30/13	4	Supervised IRA	Yes	Yes



Expanding Supportive Housing Options

*d. New York will provide quarterly updates on the progress for increasing the availability of supportive housing options, including “non-traditional housing models” such as the “Home of Your Own”, Family Care, Shared Living, Customized Residential Options, and AFI. **Each quarterly update will include the number of new housing units that are available to persons being transitioned from ICFs, and meet CMS standards for HCBS settings.***

In order to comprehensively expand supportive housing options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the NYS OPWDD is working with CMS-Housing Capacity Building Initiative for Community Living to build a sustainable infrastructure for non-certified/non-traditional housing options across all systems - now and in the future.

The following proposal was submitted by OPWDD and approved by the CMS Technical Assistance (TA) group to support OPWDD’s effort:

- The creation of a Scientific Strategy for determining housing needs. This would allow OPWDD to make predictions for approximately 3-5 years for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD)
- The creation of a system to identify existing housing stock (inventory of housing) within each county and with finding ways to access each housing type. This would include identifying key players, contact information and etc. This area may refer to learning how to operate a Housing Resource Scan. OPWDD needs a system that can verify if there are existing commitments in place in certain locations in order to make a certain number of units available to individuals with ID/DD. If so, the question then becomes – “Are these commitments being met (or does it offer opportunities to make some of the units available to OPWDD”)
- Learning the role of state and local agencies on developing supportive housing. Also learning about the specific role of Tax Credits and what it offers to special needs populations. How do we use this learned-skill to access more supportive housing opportunities for people with ID/DD?
- Creating a training package and providing training to regional housing coordinators to gain a cadre of housing specialists in each region of NYS.
- Learning the “how-tos” in taking existing investments and turning it into dollars for non-traditional/non-certified housing opportunities. How does this happen in other states?
- Learning how to access and read a Public Housing Plan to gain information for and about people with ID/DD.

The Project will begin in the Long Island and Finger Lakes/Western NY regions/localities with onsite training on November 19 and 21, 2013 followed by a series of Webinars. Participants will include staff with key responsibilities for housing and community living as well as the local government staff.



Some additional initiatives during this quarter include the following:

- Efforts to expand supportive housing inventory are continuously underway. Meetings are being held with NYSHCR to define and refine OPWDD’s specific role in the supportive housing industry. Progress is positive. Voluntary agencies are increasing the number of proposals submitted to OPWDD for support of their application for funding from NYSHCR Unified Funding RFP. OPWDD has received 13 new proposals from OPWDD agencies to submit to the NYSHCR for funding for supportive housing opportunities in the 2013 round of funding.
- Negotiations are also underway with USDA Rural Development Multi-Family homes to host sessions with developers and managers of apartments in rural NY.
- The partnership between the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA) and the Home of Your Own (HOYO) program has grown from a total of \$19.8 million in loans (through 12/31/2009) to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with mental illness and their income-eligible families to nearly \$25 million in loans. Progress for this quarter is reported below.
- OPWDD continues to play a vital role in the Governor’s Supportive Housing Development Program and as such advocates for the expansion of rental assistance to people with ID/DD, including additional housing opportunity cross systems (OTDA; DOH; OMH; OASAS). Under the MRT Program, 21 additional supportive housing opportunities through the Consolidated Supports and Services (CSS) residential option are available to OPWDD.
- As described above, OPWDD presented to the entire supportive housing cross-systems group on 9/20/13 on progress made towards expanding housing options and on the CMS/TA approved-proposal. The awareness and interest in moving from congregate residential settings to independent living is increasing at a rapid pace by individuals with ID/DD and by their families. Efforts are underway to create a scientific method to identify housing options statewide – starting with two specific regions –Long Island and Finger Lakes/Western NY.
- OPWDD is collaborating with the nationally known director of Creative Housing Solutions to expand work on the previous publication, “Making Homes that Work.” A major part of the project includes identifying and compiling best practices in the area of environmental modification in non-traditional and non-conventional housing options from leading experts and housing specialists and disseminating this information through training, written and electronic resources, capacity building and technical assistance. A series of Webinars/Webcams are being planned for 2013 – 2014.
- OPWDD is exploring new and expanding the role of existing partners in the housing industry. For example, we are working with some Public Housing Authorities and have met with Habitat for Humanity to discuss partnership opportunities.

Progress made in the development of new housing units includes the addition of 4 new home owners, totaling 6 since April 1, 2013. Supportive housing units reported during the first quarter that are connected to the Governor’s Medicaid Redesign Team Supportive Housing Development Program and, OPWDD’s partnership with the NYS Homes & Community Renewal (NYSHCR), include 21 additional opportunities as described above, totaling 83 available units.

Total Number of New Housing Units Developed	
New Home Owners	6
Available Supportive Housing Units	83



Increasing Supported Employment Services and Competitive Employment

*Supported Employment Services and Competitive Employment
(from CMS Special Terms and Conditions, Attachment H)*

- a. *By May 31, 2013, New York must provide CMS with a baseline count of the number of enrollees receiving supported employment services and the number of enrollees engaged in competitive employment for the most recent period for which data is available. **Thereafter, the state must provide CMS with a quarterly report documenting the state's progress toward the agreed-upon goal of increasing the number of persons engaged in competitive employment, through Supported Employment, by 700 persons above the previous 12 month enrollment, with no exceptions for attrition during the period of April 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014. Given the expected fluctuations triggered by school timelines (e.g. graduations), New York will increase the number of persons in competitive employment by no less than 250 persons by October 1, 2013, with no exceptions for attrition. Only integrated gainful employment at minimum wage or higher will be considered competitive employment. The quarterly report also must include a description of activities the state has undertaken during the quarter to increase the number of demonstration participants engaged in competitive employment.***
- b. *Effective July 1, 2013, New York will no longer permit new admissions to sheltered workshops. The state will report the number of enrollees that remain in sheltered workshops in each quarterly report as required under paragraph 62.*
- c. ***By October 1, 2013, New York will submit to CMS a draft plan for CMS review, and a final plan no later than January 1, 2014, on its transformation towards competitive employment. Both the draft and final plans must include a detailed proposal/work plan for increases in the number of individuals in competitive employment and the number of students exiting the educational system moving directly into competitive employment. The plan must include a timeline for closing sheltered workshops, and a description of the collaborative work with the New York educational system for training/education to key stakeholders on the availability and importance of competitive employment.***

Baseline Data Adjustment

After the July 1, 2013 report was submitted OPWDD received additional data from provider agencies on the number of people receiving supported employment services. The additional data has resulted in an adjustment to the March 31, 2013 baseline. There were 9,934 individuals with developmental disabilities enrolled in supported employment, of these individuals 6,983 were competitively employed in an integrated setting earning at least minimum wage. During the period of April 1, 2013-July 31, 2013 there was a net increase of 222 individuals engaged in competitive employment. Employment data for August 1, 2013-October 1, 2013 will be included in the next quarterly report.



Workshop Enrollments

The March 31, 2013 baseline for workshop enrollment was 7,896 people. During the month of June there was an increase of 205 enrollments making the new baseline 8,101. Effective July 1, 2013, New York has ended new enrollments into sheltered workshops.

Improving the Quality of Supported Employment Services

In an effort to build the capacity of voluntary agencies to provide high quality supported employment services to people with developmental disabilities, OPWDD engaged in the following activities:

- Convened seventeen Innovations in Employment Training sessions. This training series provides participants with skills, tools and techniques that can be used to improve employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. The four-part series includes sessions on: Employment and Putting People First; Assessment and Planning; Job Development; and Job Coaching.
- As a follow up to these sessions, OPWDD convened ten Employment Management Forums with the directors and managers of supported employment programs. This was an opportunity to facilitate dialogue with the leadership of provider agencies about things they can do to support their front line employment staff in the implementation of tools and techniques provided in the Innovations in Employment Training Series. These forums also created an opportunity to discuss job attrition, the reasons why people have difficulty maintaining jobs and strategies that can be used to assist people in retaining jobs. There were 256 participants at these Employment Management Forums representing 165 out of 174 supported employment agencies in New York State.
- Convened two Employment Roundtables in Region 2 (Broome, Central NY and Sunmount). The first employment roundtable was designed to recruit new supported employment providers. This session focused on OPWDD's employment expectations, goals and strategies for delivering quality supported employment services. Billing and documentation requirements were also covered. The second employment roundtable was a follow-up to the Statewide Promising Practices in Employment video conference. This session enabled supported employment providers within the region to share promising practices and successful techniques for transitioning people from day habilitation and workshop services to competitive employment. Plans are currently underway to convene additional employment roundtables in New York City and Long Island.

Fostering Business Partnerships

OPWDD had several meetings with the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) about the need to encourage businesses to hire people with developmental disabilities. As a result of these discussions, ESDC facilitated a meeting between OPWDD and the New York State Retail Council and New York State Food Industry Alliance to discuss ways to educate their membership about the untapped workforce of people with disabilities. These two trade associations represent supermarkets and retail store across New York State. OPWDD identified a supported employment agency and a few businesses that employ people with developmental disabilities to participate in the meeting. The trade associations were very interested in the job carving, customized employment and job coaching supports that are available to workers with disabilities.



During the next quarter, OPWDD and ESDC will have follow up discussions with these trade associations in an effort to encourage their members to hire people with developmental disabilities.

Fostering Partnership with the State Educational System

As part of the collaboration between OPWDD, State Education Department, Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and University of Rochester on the Partnership in Employment Systems Change grant, efforts are underway to utilize model demonstration projects to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities.

The University of Rochester is leading efforts to increase the number of Project Search sites in the state. The Project Search model has been very successful in transitioning students from high school to employment because of the collaborative efforts of school administrators, regional vocational rehabilitative offices, businesses which in most instances are hospitals and developmental disabilities regional offices.

A new Project Search site is currently in development with Monroe ARC where the focus will be on transitioning people from workshops to competitive employment. This will be the first Project Search site in the nation focused on workshop participants.

In addition to Project Search, OPWDD's Employment Training Program (ETP) will also be utilized in some of the model demonstration sites. ETP is a paid internship program that has enriched OPWDD's partnership with the State Education Department and has created incentives for businesses to hire people with developmental disabilities. ETP program components include discovery and job readiness training. A customized approach is used to carve a job that matches a person's interests and skills with the needs of a business. During the internship, OPWDD pays the ETP intern a minimum wage salary (with non-Medicaid funds) and job coaching supports are provided by the high school. Every ETP participant has a job description that is used to assess their progress in meeting the employer's expectations. At the end of the internship the ETP participant is hired by the business. Several businesses that have hired ETP interns have indicated that they were initially hesitate to hire a worker with developmental disabilities. The paid internship reduced risk for the business and provided an opportunity for the business to see that a person with developmental disabilities could be successful in the general workforce. 67% of the high school students that participate in ETP are working after leaving high school.

As part of the Partnership in Employment Systems Change grant, OPWDD in partnership with the Center for Human Services Education, has been working with the State Education Department to create a job readiness curriculum that will be used by teachers. Three high schools have agreed to test the curriculum and provide feedback. During this reporting period, OPWDD has developed a curriculum outline and has solicited feedback from the Office of Special Education's (OSE) Regional Transition Specialists. This feedback will be used to make additional modifications to the modules. OPWDD and OSE are working to align the job



readiness curriculum with the State Education Department Common Core Standards that are required for all classroom instruction. The curriculum topics are as follows:

- **Unit One:** *My Life, My Choices*
 - Lesson 1- A Discovering Me: Assets, Challenges and Solutions
 - Lesson 2- Understanding My Learning Styles
 - Lesson 3- My Ideal Job
 - Lesson 4- Self Advocacy: Speaking Up
 - Lesson 5- Making Informed Choices
 - Lesson 6- Problem Solving: Seeking Assistance
- **Unit Two:** *Avenues to Adulthood*
 - Lesson 1- How Will Work Impact my Life?
 - Lesson 2- Following Instructions and Workplace Rules
 - Lesson 3- Time Management: Making it all Work
 - Lesson 4- Who's on My Team?
 - Lesson 5- Documents for Work
 - Lesson 6- My Rights and Responsibilities as a Community Member and Worker
- **Unit Three:** *Think It, Say It, Feel It*
 - Lesson 1- Developing Self-Esteem
 - Lesson 2- Personal Awareness (Physical, Verbal and Non-Verbal)
 - Lesson 3- Listening Skills
 - Lesson 4- Accepting and Providing Feedback
 - Lesson 5- Understanding Other's Needs
 - Lesson 6- Creating Questions that Cause Conversations
 - Lesson 7- Building Trust
- **Unit Four:** *Developing Community Connections*
 - Lesson 1- Meeting New People: Networking Skills
 - Lesson 2- Getting Involved in My Community
 - Lesson 3- What Types of Jobs are Out There?
 - Lesson 4- Who's in my Network?
 - Lesson 5- What are the Job Match Possibilities in My Community?
 - Lesson 6- Exploring My Community: What's Happening?
- **Unit Five:** *The Road to Employment*
 - Lesson 1- Creating My Portfolio
 - Lesson 2- Capturing my Experience: Perfecting my Resume
 - Lesson 3- Completing Job Applications
 - Lesson 4- Trying It Out: Assessing my Success
 - Lesson 5- What Skills Do I Need to Learn for Work?
 - Lesson 6- Preparing for Day One at Work
 - Lesson 7- Gathering References

- **Unit Six: *Entering the Workplace***
 - Lesson 1- What am I Nervous About?
 - Lesson 2- Understanding Employer Expectations
 - Lesson 3- Dressing for Success
 - Lesson 4- Job Interview Preparation
 - Lesson 5- Getting To Work: Orientation and Mobility
 - Lesson 6- Preparing for Change
 - Lesson 7- Understanding Workplace and Community Safety
 - Lesson 8- Informational Interviewing Skills
- **Unit Seven: *Long Term Success at Work***
 - Lesson 1- Being a Team Player
 - Lesson 2- Balancing Life and Work
 - Lesson 3- Putting Feedback to Work: Creating New Habits
 - Lesson 4- Handling Authority
 - Lesson 5- Working with A Mentor or Job Coach
 - Lesson 6- Making a Difference at Work
 - Lesson 7- Moving Up
- **Unit Eight: *Apps for Achievement***
 - Lesson 1- Using Technology to Find Jobs
 - Lesson 2- Understanding Assistive Technology
 - Lesson 3- Internet/Technology Safety
 - Lesson 4- Apps to Use for Work Success
- **Unit Nine: *Working and Earning***
 - Lesson 1- Understanding my Paycheck
 - Lesson 2- My Needs and Wants: Financial Goal Planning
- **Unit Ten: *Wellness and Working***
 - Lesson 1- Healthy Living
 - Lesson 2- Relationships at Work
 - Lesson 3- Keeping Up with Personal Care
 - Lesson 4- Whole Life Balance

Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the process of developing the Draft Plan to Increase Competitive Employment Opportunities for People With Developmental Disabilities (Appendix 2), OPWDD solicited feedback from stakeholders in the following ways:

- Convened an Employment Committee comprised of parents, self-advocates and providers who made recommendations related to ways to transition high school students and workshop participants to competitive employment. A summary of their recommendations is in Appendix 3.
- Convened eight Community Dialogues across the state to solicit feedback from parents, self-advocates and providers on concepts within the OPWDD Employment Transformation Plan. A summary of these recommendations is in Appendix 4.



Increasing Self-Direction

Consumer Self-Direction

(from CMS Special Terms and Conditions, Attachment H)

*b. New York will increase the number of people offered the option to self-direct their services through increased education to all stakeholders in a consistent manner statewide. This education will be provided to at least 1,500 beneficiaries (with designated representatives as needed) per quarter beginning on April 1, 2013. **New York will submit a quarterly report of the number of training/education sessions conducted and the number of persons attending the sessions.** New York will share training materials and curricula for these sessions with CMS, and make them available statewide by May 1, 2013.*

*c. In the design and implementation of its 1915(b)/(c) waiver and other MLTSS models authorized by this demonstration, New York will incorporate and enhance opportunities for self-direction by demonstration participants. If the state utilizes the agency with choice model of self-direction, New York will assure that these agencies provide maximum control by the beneficiary, and include a performance indicator(s) to assure that beneficiaries exercise choice and control. **New York will report to CMS on a quarterly basis its efforts to enhance self-direction, and the results of the performance measurement.***

e. New York will provide a report to CMS no later than July 1, 2013, on the current number of persons with IDD and other disabilities who self-direct their services under this demonstration.

i. By October 1, 2013, 350 new beneficiaries will self-direct services;

Self Direction Education to Beneficiaries

The NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) has promoted self direction for individuals receiving supports through educational efforts by OPWDD staff and stakeholder groups. Educational efforts include community training sessions and new staff practices at the “Front Door” which ensure that individuals coming to OPWDD to access services make an informed choice regarding self directed service options

Consistent with the transformation goal to expand education about self-direction service options in a consistent manner to all stakeholders statewide, OPWDD has educated more than 1,500 individuals and family members in self-direction sessions during the second quarter ending on September 30, 2013, with a total count of 3,746 individuals and 66 training sessions. Self-direction education sessions are actively attended by individuals and family members, and more sessions are scheduled for the third quarter of 2013. Specifically, OPWDD will continue to focus education activities on self-direction according to the education goals described in the table below.



Self-Direction Education Totals			
July 1 - September 30, 2013			
Self-direction Education Target	Education Goal	Total Number of Individuals	Total Number of Sessions
New people requesting supports from the OPWDD system and people who are transitioning from the education system into the OPWDD system of supports.	Increase awareness of self-direction options among the people engaging in supports from OPWDD	3465	66
Individuals who are currently receiving OPWDD supports and services and new individuals who have expressed an interest in self-directing services.	For people who are expressing interest in self-direction, the goal is to ensure understanding of the key concepts of self-directed supports.	237	26
Individuals who are actively seeking to self-direct services with budget and employer authority	Detailed understanding of the operational components of self-directed supports; clear understanding of the responsibilities associated with self-direction.	44	6
	Total	3,746	98

Beneficiaries with Developmental Disabilities who currently Self-Direct their Services

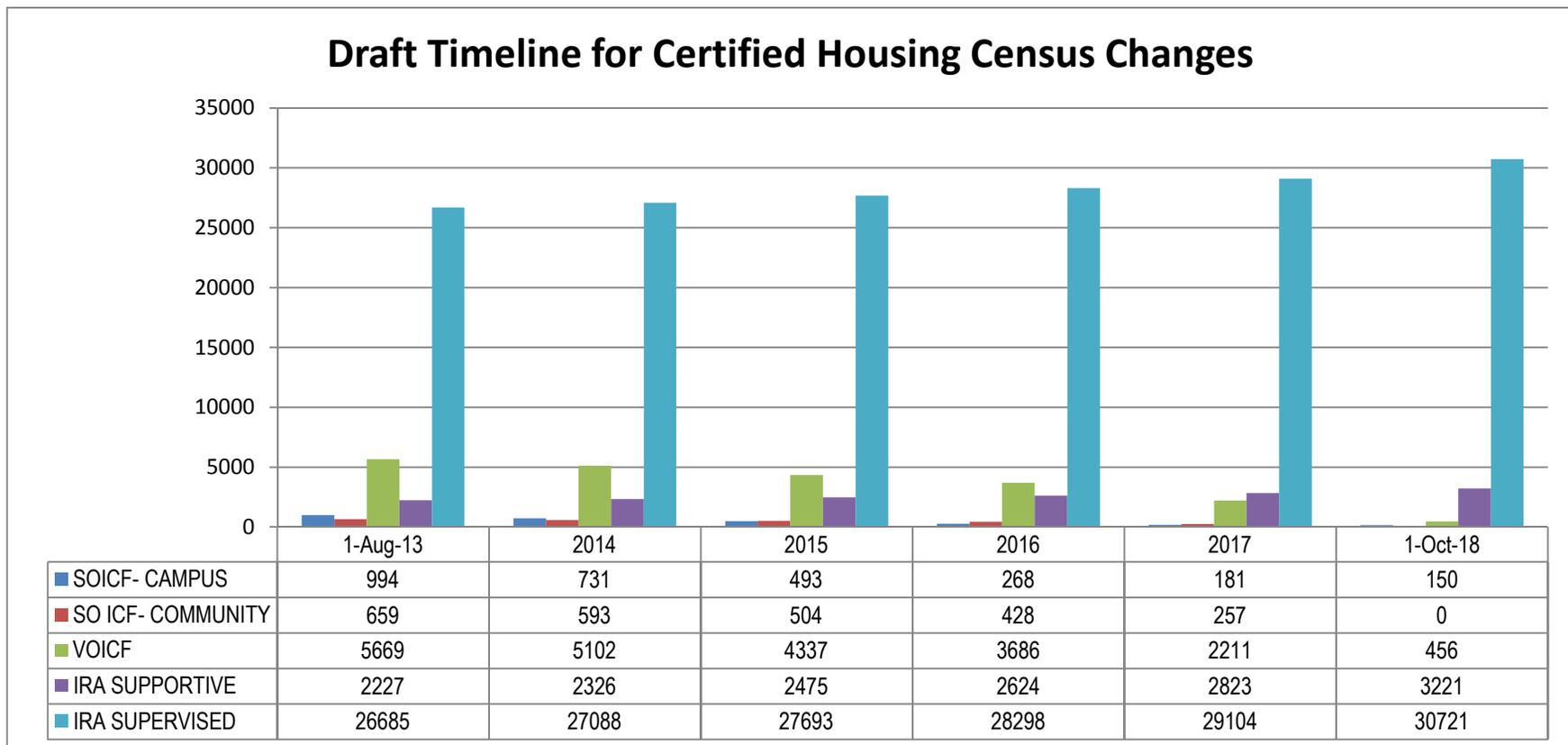
The July 1, 2013 Developmental Disabilities Transformation Update reported a total of 979 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who self-direct their services using Consolidated Supports and Services (CSS). Updated analysis which includes a wider range of existing self directed options as noted below, indicates the baseline was actually 1,155 individuals.

New York State is now serving 394 individuals in self direction beyond the baseline of 1,155. As approved under the HCBS Waiver, individuals can choose to direct their supports under various service models. Based on eMedNY data, 131 additional participants self direct through CSS. In addition, OPWDD has been promoting these various options in many venues as evidenced by the additional 263 individuals now self-directing through the Community Habilitation service, as documented in a memorandum of understanding signed by the participant. As shown in the table below, OPWDD has met the goal of 350 new beneficiaries self-directing their services by October 1, 2013.

Number of Individuals Self Directing	
Updated Baseline	1,155
October 1, 2013	394
Total	1,549

Appendix 1 - ICF Transition Plan

Housing Options	August 1, 2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	October 1, 2018
CERTIFIED HOUSING:						
SOICF- CAMPUS	994	731	493	268	181	150
SO ICF- COMMUNITY	659	593	504	428	257	0
VOICF	5669	5102	4337	3686	2211	456
IRA SUPPORTIVE	2227	2326	2475	2624	2823	3221
IRA SUPERVISED	26685	27088	27693	28298	29104	30721



This plan includes opportunities for 1048 people to move into person controlled housing by Oct. 1, 2018.



APPENDIX 2

NEW YORK DRAFT PLAN TO INCREASE COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Final Draft - Sept 30, 2013

I. Introduction

In accordance with the Health System Transformation for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Agreement as defined in the Special Terms and Conditions, this document sets forth New York State's strategies and plan toward increasing competitive employment. This plan describes specific strategies to: increase the number of individuals engaged in competitive employment; increase the number of students that transition from high school to competitive employment; collaborate with the educational system to ensure that stakeholders are aware of employment services; and transition workshop participants to competitive employment or other meaningful community activities.

II. Increasing the number of individuals and high school students in competitive employment.

Competitive employment is defined as employment in an integrated setting, in the general workforce, where a person earns at least minimum wage. In order to increase the number of people who are competitively employed there must be growth in the number of new people receiving supported employment services. New York will encourage growth in supported employment by working collaboratively with Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) and by creating a career planning service to assist individuals with the transition to competitive employment.

1. Connect Individuals to ACCES-VR

Competitive Employment starts with ACCES-VR which is the state agency designated to provide employment services to individuals with disabilities, including individuals with developmental disabilities. Annual growth in the number of individuals applying for and receiving ACCES-VR services will result in an increase in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities who are competitively employed.

OPWDD will contribute to this annual growth by working collaboratively with ACCES-VR to increase the number of individuals who apply for and receive intensive supported employment services through ACCES-VR. All individuals that apply for OPWDD services will receive information about the availability of supported employment services. If an



individual is interested in employment, OPWDD's regional office will connect them with their local ACCES-VR office. In an effort to increase the number of students who transition from high school to employment, OPWDD regional offices will refer all transition aged youth to their local ACCES-VR offices. Individual who are unable to receive ACCES-VR services will have the option of receiving OPWDD's Pathway to Employment service.

2. Create Pathway to Employment

Pathway to Employment is a new person-centered, comprehensive career planning and support service that will provide assistance for participants to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment. The service will be available by March 1, 2014. It is a focused, time limited service that engages a participant in identifying a career direction, provides instruction and training in pre-employment skills, and develops a plan for achieving competitive, integrated employment at or above minimum wage. Within 12 months, or sooner, the outcome of this service is documentation of the participant's stated career objective; a detailed career plan used to guide individual employment supports; and preparation for ACCES-VR intensive supported employment services.

The Pathway to Employment service will be available to anyone who needs additional supports before transitioning to ACCES-VR or needs supports to assist them in maintaining or advancing in employment. Individuals receiving day habilitation, prevocational or workshop services and high school students will have the option of receiving Pathway to Employment services.

In an effort to ensure that Pathway to Employment services result in an increase in the number of people engaged in competitive employment, the service will only be authorized to be provided by supported employment agencies. In addition, voluntary agencies will be required to complete an OPWDD approved training prior to the delivery of Pathway to Employment services. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently under development for an entity to develop the Pathway to Employment curriculum and provide statewide trainings to voluntary agencies.

Once Pathway to Employment services are available, OPWDD will work with voluntary agencies to educate families and individuals currently receiving day habilitation, prevocational and workshop services about the service and how it can assist them in the transition to competitive employment.

3. Collaborate with State Education Department

Both ACCES-VR and the Office of Special Education (OSE) are within the New York State Education Department (SED). OPWDD will work the educational system to educate



stakeholders about supported employment services. Discussions are currently underway between OPWDD and ACCES-VR to create a Supported Employment Memorandum of Understanding designed to formalize the role that each agency will have in developing strategies to assist people with development disabilities in achieving competitive employment.

OPWDD is also working with OSE to educate school district and high school administrators, regional transition specialists and Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) superintendents about employment options for high school students. Efforts are also underway to develop a partnership with the New York State School Boards Association to educate their membership about OPWDD services including employment.

OPWDD will continue to utilize the Employment Training Program (ETP) as a way to partner with schools and educate stakeholders about employment while students are still in high school. There are currently 192 students participating in ETP. Components of the program include discovery and job readiness training. A customized approach is used to carve a job that matches a person's interests and skills with the needs of a business. During the internship, OPWDD pays the ETP participant a minimum wage salary (with non-Medicaid funds). Job development and job coaching supports are provided by the high school. Every ETP participant has a job description that is used to assess their progress in meeting the employer's expectations. At the end of the internship the ETP participant is hired by the business. Several businesses that have hired ETP interns have indicated that they were initially hesitate to hire a worker with developmental disabilities. The paid internship reduced risk for the business and provided an opportunity for the business to see that a person with developmental disabilities could be successful in the general workforce. OPWDD has used the paid internship program to partner with several high schools and BOCES.

Approximately 67% of the high school students that participate in ETP are working after leaving high school. ETP has created opportunities for OPWDD to get into high schools and connect with educators and families prior to OPWDD's Front Door Process. Very often teachers and families are not aware of OPWDD services. ETP triggers discussions about the OPWDD eligibility process before students leave high school. This has resulted in a smoother transition for families.

OPWDD will also utilize its collaboration with the State Education Department on the Partnership in Employment Systems Change grant, which is detailed in the October 1, 2013 Quarterly Report, as a way to educate stakeholders about supported employment options for people with developmental disabilities.



4. Improve Job Retention

In addition to focusing on annual growth in the number of people receiving supported employment services, OPWDD will also focus on strategies that assist individuals in the retention of jobs. On an annual basis approximately 1,000 people transition from ACCES-VR intensive supported employment services to OPWDD extended supported employment services. Approximately 800-900 people lose those jobs becoming un-enrolled in supported employment services, resulting in annual supported employment growth of 2%-3%. This accounts for the lack of historical growth in the number of people with developmental disabilities who are engaged in competitive employment. Data from OPWDD's supported employment programs provides the following information about the historical trend for job retention:

- Sixty-eight percent of people who transition from ACCES-VR intensive supported employment services to OPWDD extended services remain employed one year after placement.
- Retention is fifty-one percent after two years
- Retention is forty percent after three years
- Retention is thirty-three percent after four years
- Retention is thirty percent after five years

Data from OPWDD's Employment Training Program provides information on the following factors that contribute to job loss:

- Inability to Master Job Skills-18%
- No Longer Want to Work- 16%
- Behavior Challenges- 15%
- Lack of Transportation- 13%
- Financial Disincentive-12%
- Layoff-8%
- Dissatisfaction with Job 8%
- Medical Needs-2%
- Other-8%

OPWDD is developing the following strategies to improve job retention for individuals receiving supported employment services:

- Incentivize Employment

The current billing and fee structure for supported employment is not comparable to the billing and fee structure for day habilitation, workshop or prevocational services. This has created a financial disincentive for providers where many voluntary agencies provide supported employment services at a financial loss.



OPWDD will work with the Department of Health to create a new supported employment billing and fee structure that is more reflected of the true cost associated with helping an individual retain employment. The new structure will be more in line with fees for other day services, creating an incentive for providers to assist individuals in transitioning from day services to employment. Beginning in October 2013, OPWDD will conduct a review of its 176 supported employment providers to identify the rates, billing cycle and level of supports needed to successfully assist individuals in maintaining employment. The review will be completed by December 31, 2013. By January 31, 2014 recommendations will be made to the Department Health for a new supported employment fee and billing structure. Components of the new supported employment fee and billing structure will include performance measures, tiered funding levels based on support need and transportation cost.

- Provider Training and Performance Monitoring

Many of the factors contributing to job loss indicate that the quality of supported employment services must be improved to ensure that appropriate discovery, job carving/job development and job coaching are provided by voluntary agencies. While OPWDD has trained over 2,000 staff of provider agencies in the areas of assessment, planning, job development and job coaching, the turnover of provider agency staff is such that ongoing provider training is necessary. OPWDD will continue to offer the Innovations in Employment Training Series to providers of supported employment, day habilitation, prevocational and workshop services. OPWDD is also in discussions with ACCES-VR to align the supported employment training of both agencies to ensure that similar expectations of success are reinforced.

In addition to training it is also important that adequate supervision is provided to front-line supported employment staff. To ensure that supported employment agency supervisors are providing guidance and direction to front line staff and are monitoring their employment outcomes, OPWDD will be convening regular provider meetings by region to discuss retention, the reasons for job lost and promising practices that can be used to improve outcomes. In-person meetings will be supplemented with provider agency specific calls focused on their employment data. Effective December 2014, OPWDD will release an annual report on its website on provider supported employment outcomes with data by provider on:

- The number of people receiving supported employment services;
- The number of people engaged in competitive employment;
- The number of people who are not working; and
- The number of people who have lost jobs in the last 12 months.



- Improved Data Collection

In 1993 an interagency agreement was established between OPWDD, ACCES-VR, Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Commission on the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) regarding supported employment where OMH was designated as the agency that would collect supported employment data. In order to create and implement strategies that improve employment outcomes for people receiving SEMP services, OPWDD has decided to collect its own employment data.

In May 2013, OPWDD began to collect data on the number of people with developmental disabilities receiving supported employment services, number of individuals that are employed, their salary, the employment setting (integrated or segregated) and employment start date. This data was used to establish the March 31, 2013 baseline. In August 2013, providers were required to submit monthly reports on the number of people on their supported employment roster, whether those individuals are employed, whether the employment setting is integrated or segregated, the type of employment placement (individual or enclave) and employment start date. For purposes of the data collection, a segregated setting is defined as a work setting where workers with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness only interact with, and work alongside, other workers with disabilities. The data that is now being collected from voluntary agencies provides better information about the following:

- Retention by provider and region of the state;
- Reason for job lost; and
- The amount of time a person is unemployed

This data will be use to work with provider agencies to create additional strategies to improve retention.

III. Transitioning People from Workshops to Competitive Employment and/or Other Meaningful Community Activities.

The main components of OPWDD's workshop transformation are strategies for provider agencies to convert to alternative business models and strategies for workshop participants to transition to integrated employment, retirement or other community inclusion options. The current demographics of workshop participants are as follows:



Age	Workshop Enrollment	% of Total
18-33	1747	21.5%
34-43	1554	19.2%
44-50	1562	19.3%
51-58	1691	20.9%
59-96	1547	19.1%
Total	8101	100
Mean Age 46		
Median Age 47		

Individualized Service Planning Model (ISPM) Scores	Statewide Totals	% of Workshop Participants
1	3377	42%
2	110	1.3%
3	3346	41%
4	373	4.6%
5	33	0.40%
6	11	0.13%
Missing Info	851	10.5%
Total	8101	100

1. Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the process of creating the Employment Transformation Plan, OPWDD convened an Employment Committee comprised of parents, self-advocates and providers and Community Dialogues were also convened across the state to solicit feedback from parents, self-advocates and providers. Both of these activities gave OPWDD the opportunity to share information and solicit feedback from stakeholders. This feedback has been incorporated into the Employment Transformation Plan. OPWDD will engage in ongoing communication and dialogue with stakeholders as the Employment Transformation Plan is finalized and implemented.

Feedback from stakeholders included the following:



Strategies to Improve Employment Outcomes

- a. There needs to be greater collaboration between ACCES-VR and OPWDD. State agencies should work together to better align and streamline their eligibility processes.
- b. More information must be available to students and families about the impact of employment on their benefits and how work incentives can be utilized.
- c. OPWDD should expand the Employment Training Program (ETP) which will increase partnership with schools and increase the number of students who transition to employment upon leaving high school.
- d. The State should increase business incentives to encourage the employment of people with developmental disabilities.
- e. A new flexible and tiered supported employment fee structure is need that is more in-line with the true cost associated with assisting someone in achieving their employment goals. Flexibility must be built into the fee structure that would allow voluntary agencies to provide supports that are efficiently and effectively tailored to the changing support needs of each person.
- f. If needed, transportation should be included in supported employment fees.

Strategies related to Workshop Transformation

- a. Concerns were raised by parents with children in their 40s who have attended workshops for over 20 years. Parents gave examples of the emotional and psychological stress that would be caused by the transition to community employment.
- b. Concerns were raised about the need for a safety net for people who may not be successful in employment and the need to provide sufficient supports on the job.
- c. Concerns were raised about the lack of jobs in rural parts of the state.
- d. Work centers were described as vocational training centers that not only prepare people for competitive employment but provide a safety net if people are not successful.
- e. Concerns were raised about the lack of a safety net in the plan and it was suggested that workshops could be transformed to serve that purpose.
- f. Concerns were raised about the lack of choice available to people if they want to remain in a workshop.
- g. Concerns were raised about the interpretation of the Olmstead Decision and whether it requires workshops to be closed.
- h. Self advocates raised concerns about transportation and stressed that community employment is not possible if people do not have reliable transportation.
- i. Since the policy decision was made to end new enrollments into workshops effective July 1, 2013, consideration should be given to allow for the natural



attrition of workshop participants especially since 40% of workshop participants are over the age of 50.

- j. For the remaining 60% of workshop participants annual goals in the range of five to ten percent a year should be identified to transition people out of workshops to competitive employment.
- k. Consideration should be given to the large number of people who are currently employed in workshops and the time it will take to engage in the discovery and transition planning needed to assist them in the transition to either competitive employment or other meaningful community activities, therefore OPWDD funding for workshops should phase out over 9-11 years. This timeline is in line with what has been done in other states.
- l. Supported Employment must be restructured to fund the supports people will need as they transition to competitive employment. Job coaching supports must be available whether a person needs one-on-one or lifelong coaching supports.
- m. Data systems should be created to track workshop transformation, including the number of people who transition to competitive employment, the number of hours per week they are employed, the number of support hours they receive, what happens to people who are not working and the how satisfied individuals and families are with the their post workshop options.
- n. As people transition to competitive employment attention must be paid to case management which will be essential in assisting individuals and families navigate employment and community inclusion options.
- o. Technical assistance and financial support must be available to voluntary agencies with large physical plant infrastructures, mortgages or equipment obligations. Assistance will be needed in finding alternative usages for properties. Technical assistance will also be needed to retrain staff and upgrade their skill set so they are successful in assisting individuals in the transition to competitive employment.
- p. The business community should be engaged in discussions about ways to increase the employability of people who will be transitioning from workshops.

2. Workshop Conversion

While there are 113 workshops currently in New York, several providers have already had success converting their workshops into integrated community businesses using the affirmative business or social enterprise model. OPWDD's central office will work with workshop providers interested in restructuring their business model to create employment opportunities in the general workforce where people with disabilities have opportunities to work alongside people who do not have disabilities.



OPWDD's central office will convene a Workshop Conversion Workgroup comprised of provider agencies that have converted to affirmative businesses or social enterprises and universities within New York State that have done extensive research on the outcomes and criteria for successful workshop conversion. The Workshop Conversion Workgroup will make recommendations to OPWDD regarding the type of technical assistance and support that will be needed to encourage and incentive workshop conversion. The goal of workshop conversion will be to establish models of integrated employment for people who choose not to retire or have great difficulty maintaining competitive employment.

The workgroup will be convened in November 2013 and recommendations for alternative business models will be made by March 1, 2014. OPWDD will issue workshop conversion guidance to voluntary agencies by May 1, 2014. Providers interested in workshop conversion will be required to submit conversion plans to OPWDD by September 1, 2014. Plans will be approved by November 1, 2014. In addition to recommendations from the Workshop Conversion Workgroup, plans will be required to include the following: business plans for creating a affirmative business or social enterprise; strategies for recruiting and maintaining an integrated workforce; plans for how existing workshop contracts will fit within the new business structure; plans for recruiting new business partners; plans to repurpose workshop space; supervisory and management opportunities for employees with disabilities and plans to assist people with developmental disabilities who are interested self-employment.

3. Assisting Workshop Participants in Transitioning to Competitive Employment

OPWDD regional offices will work with provider agencies to use a combination of age and ISPM scores to identify workshop participants who may be interested in transitioning to competitive employment. The ISPM combines the Adaptive, Health and Behavioral Scores from the DDP2. The ISPM score provides information on the amount of direct support a person needs in the areas of motor skills, cognitive skills, communication, self care, activities of daily living, managing medical conditions and behavioral supports. The score provides the following information:

- A score of 1 indicates that a person has low need for support with adaptive skills and medical conditions and low need for behavioral supports.
- A score of 2 indicates that a person has low need for support with adaptive skills and medical conditions and high need for behavioral supports.
- A score of 3 indicates that a person has medium need for support with adaptive skills and medical conditions and low need for behavioral supports.
- A score of 4 indicates that a person has medium need for support with adaptive skills and medical conditions and high need for behavioral supports.



- A score of 5 indicates that a person has high need for adaptive and medical supports and low need for behavior supports.
- A score of 6 indicates that a person has high need for adaptive, medical and behavioral supports.

A multi-year strategy will be needed to identify workshop participants who are: interested in competitive employment, ready to begin a discovery and assessment process that identifies the supports and services that will assist them in becoming employed, and ready transition to ACCES-VR employment services. OPWDD estimates that 50% of workshop participants could successfully transition to competitive employment over six years. OPWDD regional offices will work with providers to engage workshop participants in the following transition activities:

- **Discovery, Assessment and Transition Planning**
Pathway to Employment services will be offered to all workshop participants interested in transitioning to competitive employment. Discovery and assessment will focus on both the individual and their environment. This process will be used to identify supports and services that will assist an individual in obtaining competitive employment. Since a variety of discovery, assessments and transition planning tools already exists, OPWDD will not require the use of a specific tool but providers will be required to cover a minimum of the following:
 - An assessment of the individual- soft skills (social behavior, ability to handle stress, willingness to work with others, etc), job performance (attendance, punctuality, hygiene/grooming, etc), communication skills, work ethic (motivation, initiative, focus, etc), interest (likes, wants, dislikes, dreams, etc).
 - An assessment of the individual's situation: transportation needs, family supports, physical and mental health, safety, etc.
 - Opportunities for individuals to discover different community experiences to obtain information that will be use to create a person-centered transition plan.
 - Transition plans will include both work and non work activities that create opportunities for individuals to engage in meaningful activities.
 - Transition plans will include activities and options that allow individuals to maintain social networks and friendship established in the workshops.
 - Families and/or an individual's circle of support will be included in discovery, assessment and the transition planning process.
- **Family Engagement**
Families will be actively involved in the discovery, assessment and planning process for workshop participants who will be transitioning to competitive employment. Families will also receive information about the impact of working on benefits, how their loved one will travel to and from work; what other



meaningful community activities their loved one will be engaged in when they are not working; how job coaching supports will be provided; what happens if their loved one loses their job; and the type of supports that will be provided to help their loved one obtain new employment.

- **Staff Training**
Workshop staff will be trained on how to perform the discovery, assessment and person-centered planning necessary to assist individuals in transitioning from workshops to supported employment. OPWDD's Innovations in Employment Training and the Pathway to Employment curriculum yet to be development will be utilized as ways to retrain staff. OPWDD will also encourage providers to create opportunities for workshop staff to work as a team with their supported employment staff.
- **Peer Mentoring**
OPWDD will partner with providers, independent living centers and self advocates to identify peer mentors who have successfully transitioned from workshop services to competitive employment. Peer mentors will share success stories with families and workshop participants and encourage them to try competitive employment options.
- **Self Direction**
Self direction will be explored as a way to assist in the transition to competitive employment. This option would be especially useful for individuals who want to hire their own supported employment staff.
- **Self Employment**
As part of the assessment and transition planning process self employment will be included as a possible career choice. Self employment could be funded by ACCES-VR, or as part of Pathway to Employment or Supported Employment.

4. Options for People Who Will Not Be Transitioning to Competitive Employment

Based on age, ISPM score and amount of time some individuals have worked in workshops, OPWDD estimates that 50% of individuals and families will not be interested in transitioning to competitive employment or have medical, adaptive or behavior support needs that create barriers to employment. Alternative options for these individuals are as followings:

- For individuals who are retirement age, Community Habilitation, Consolidated Supports and Services or Day Habilitation could be used to fund community activities. These activities may consist of supports to



participate in volunteer, social, recreational, senior center and other community activities that are typical of people who are retirement age.

- For individuals who want to continue to work obtaining employment in a former workshop that has converted to an affirmative business or social enterprise will be an option.
- If an individual reconsiders and later expresses interest in employment options other than those offered by provider agencies, Pathway to Employment services will be available.

5. Partnerships with the Business Community

In an effort to increase job opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities, OPWDD will continue to foster partnerships with the New York State Department of Labor and Empire State Development Corporation.

Collaboration with the Department of Labor is focused on improving interaction between OPWDD regional offices, supported employment providers and Department of Labor One Stop Centers, which can provide benefit counseling and job matching services to job seekers, and supported employment agencies. Collaboration with the Empire State Development Corporation is focused on educating businesses about the employment potential of people with developmental disabilities and encouraging businesses to hire more people with developmental disabilities.

6. Technical Assistance for New York State

In an effort to further improve competitive employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities, New York joined the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). SELN is a cross-state cooperative venture of state MR/DD agencies that are committed to improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. The SELN helps states enhance their capacity to develop, implement, and support effective integrated employment initiatives designed to improve employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

SELN will provide the following technical assistance to New York:



- Administer a self-assessment process designed by NASDDDS and Institute on Community Inclusion (ICI) project staff to identify the strengths and weaknesses of New York’s existing employment support infrastructures and develop related system improvement strategies.
- Conduct on-site visits to review/discuss New York’s self-assessment and desired future, resulting in two site visit reports prepared by members of the SELN project team. These reports (a) outline the team’s principal findings and observations and (b) provide a brief overview of the state’s DD service delivery system and policy making environment.
- Receive assistance in developing a state Employment Work plan that lays out short-term objectives and action steps aimed at placing the state on a pathway to achieving its near-term system improvement goals. This plan identifies the types of outside assistance that may be required.
- Receive access to a pool of peer-to-peer consultants and trainers drawn both from Network states and external sources developed by ICI and NASDDDS.
- Receive assistance, if necessary, from ICI in developing a data tracking system that will help the state monitor its progress and fine-tune system improvement strategies over time.
- Receive assistance in identifying and selecting outside consultants to help the state to translate desired changes in employment policies and practices into specific operational strategies.
- Participation in monthly Network steering committee calls to manage project business and also share experiences among the participating states.

IV. Summary

This Draft Employment Transformation Plan describes New York’s commitment to improving competitive employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities. The plan outlines strategies that: address systemic barriers to employment growth, improve cross system collaboration, and create opportunities for workshop participants to transition to competitive employment or other meaningful community activities.



Appendix 3

Summary of Employment Committee Recommendations

September 2013

The committee agreed to make the following recommendations to OPWDD as it relates to its creation of an Employment Transformation Plan :

1. Strategies to Improve Employment Outcomes
 - a. There needs to be greater collaboration between ACCES-VR and OPWDD. State agencies should work together to better align and streamline their eligibility processes.
 - b. Opportunities must be created for supported employment providers to partner with schools and start working with students and families prior to graduation to better support the transition to adult services and community employment outcomes.
 - c. Opportunities must exist with ACCES-VR and OPWDD to fund supports for summer and afterschool employment.
 - d. More information must be available to students and families about the impact of employment on their benefits and how work incentives can be utilized.
 - e. The State should build on the success of the Model Transition Program (MTP) previously funded by ACCES-VR.
 - f. OPWDD should expand the Employment Training Program (ETP) which will increase partnership with schools and increase the number of students who transition to employment upon leaving high school.
 - g. The State should increase business incentives to encourage the employment of people with developmental disabilities.
 - h. A new flexible and tiered supported employment fee structure is need that is more in-line with the true cost associated with assisting someone in achieving their employment goals. Flexibility must be built into the fee structure that would allow voluntary agencies to provide supports that are efficiently and effectively tailored to the changing support needs of each person.
 - i. If needed, transportation should be included in supported employment fees.

2. Strategies related to Workshop Transformation
 - a. Since the policy decision was made to end new enrollments into workshops effective July 1, 2013, consideration should be given to allow for the natural attrition of workshop participants especially since 40% of workshop participants are over the age of 50.



- b. For the remain 60% of workshop participants annual goals in the range of five to ten percent a year should be identified to transition people out of workshops to competitive employment.
- c. Consideration should be given to the large number of people who are currently employed in workshops and the time it will take to engage in the discovery and transition planning needed to assist them in the transition to either competitive employment or other meaningful community activities, therefore OPWDD funding for workshops should phase out over 9-11 years. This timeline is in line with what has been done in other states.
- d. Given the concerns of families and the feedback received from the Community Dialogues the elimination of funding for workshops should be reconsidered. Workshops should continue to be an option for individuals who are retirement age but want to continue to work or have medical, behavior or other support needs that create employment barriers. Workshops should also be viewed as a safety net for people who lose their jobs.
- e. As people transition from workshops to competitive employment funding must be available for providers to address their property costs.
- f. Supported Employment must be restructured to fund the supports people will need as they transition to competitive employment. Job coaching supports must be available whether a person needs one-on-one or lifelong coaching supports.
- g. Options must be available for people who lose employment that allow them to become engaged in the discovery process to find new employment.
- h. Data systems should be created to track workshop transformation, including the number of people who transition to competitive employment, the number of hours per week they are employed, the number of support hours they receive, what happens to people who are not working and the how satisfied individuals and families are with the their post workshop options.
- i. As people transition to competitive employment attention must be paid to case management which will be essential in assisting individuals and families navigate employment and community inclusion options.
- j. Technical assistance and financial support must be available to voluntary agencies with large physical plant infrastructures, mortgages or equipment obligations. Assistance will be needed in finding alternative usages for properties. Technical assistance will also be needed to retrain staff and upgrade their skill set so they are successful in assisting individuals in the transition to competitive employment.
- k. The business community should be engaged in discussions about ways to increase the employability of people who will be transitioning from workshops.



3. Discovery, Assessment and Transition Planning

- a. Discovery is an essential part of the process of transitioning people to competitive employment. It will provide baseline information on a person's skills, abilities, interests, etc. This information should be used to establish benchmarks related to what a person needs in order to successfully transition to employment or other meaningful community activities.
- b. Discovery should be a process that is used to learn about the individual and their unique needs. From the individual perspective there should be a review of soft skills including: social behaviors, job performance and work ethic. An individual's situation should also be assessed and include a review of their transportation needs, family supports, social relationships, mental and physical health and the impact that work will have on their lives.
- c. There should be opportunities for periodic reassessment and reevaluation of a person's progress and continuing needs.
- d. The discovery process should be used to create individualized employment plans.
- e. The transition process should include opportunities for people to engage in integrated work sampling, work try outs, internships, situational worksite assessment, job sharing, etc.
- f. A staff team approach should be utilized to engage in the discovery, assessment and transition planning process. Training opportunities must be available for workshop staff and to the extent possible they should have opportunities to work with supported employment staff as individuals transition to competitive employment. A person's circle of support must be included in the discovery, assessment and transition process.
- g. There must be a recognition that additional funding will be needed due to increased staffing supports that will be needed to assist people in the transition to competitive employment.
- h. Mechanisms must be in place for post job placement follow up which will enable providers to assess how satisfied people are both mentally and physically with competitive employment. It will also be important to create ways for social networks that have been created in workshops to stay connected.
- i. Ongoing supports must be available to address any barriers or concerns that arise after job placement including fears, isolation, transportation difficulties, benefits problems, health and safety, etc.
- j. Benefits counseling should be available families.



- k. The Social Security Administration should be encouraged to incentive employment by allowing people to earn income without immediate reductions to their monthly benefits.
4. Volunteerism as the Bridge to Employment
- a. Volunteering should be used as part of the discovery process and transition planning process as an opportunity to work on soft skills and identify interests.
 - b. The provision of volunteerism as a bridge to community inclusion creates an opportunity for workshop staff to upgrade their skill set to better align with community-based support options.
 - c. Volunteerism may also create opportunities to address family concerns and fears related to the transition to competitive employment.



Appendix 4

OPWDD Community Employment Dialogue Summary

September 27, 2013

The following is a summary of stakeholder feedback from the eight Community Dialogues convened between September 16 and 26:

- Concerns were raised by parents with children in their 40s who have attended workshops for over 20 years. Parents gave examples of the emotional and psychological stress that would be caused by the transition to community employment.
- Concerns were raised about whether state and federal expectations regarding transition to competitive employment are realistic.
- It was suggested that the current workshop model be changed to meet state and federal employment expectations rather than be eliminated.
- Self advocates raised concerns about transportation and stressed that community employment is not possible if people do not have reliable transportation. OPWDD was strongly encouraged to work with local transportation authorities to create better options for people with disabilities who want to be engaged in their community.
- It was suggested that transportation be covered in SEMP rates because the cost in the long-term would be less than supporting someone in day hab.
- It was suggested that financial incentives should be available to encourage providers to change their business model which will create jobs in integrated settings.
- Concerns were raised about the need for a safety net for people who may not be successful in employment and the need to provide sufficient supports on the job.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of choice available to people if they want to remain in a workshop.
- Concerns were raised about the interpretation of the Olmstead Decision and whether it requires workshops to be closed.
- It was suggested that assessments should not only focus on ability but also include what a person wants to do with their life and should factor in the perspectives of a person's circle of support.
- Concerns were raised about whether businesses are willing to hire people with disabilities.
- Questions were raised about the willingness of community members to accept people with disabilities.
- Self advocates shared their successful transition from a workshop to employment but stressed that it is important for others to have the workshop option.



- It was suggested that the decision to close workshops be reconsidered and that state and federal entities renegotiate that section of the Transformation Agreement.
- Work centers were described as vocational training centers that not only prepare people for competitive employment but provide a safety net if people are not successful.
- Concerns were raised that people will either attend day habilitation or stay home if workshops are closed.
- Families questioned why the choice of being employed in a workshop is being eliminated.
- There were questions about whether the Olmstead Decision really requires the elimination of workshops if it is the most integrated setting appropriate to a person's needs.
- It was suggested that self employment be an option for people interested in transitioning from workshops.
- Concerns were raised about people with forensic backgrounds and the prevocational training role that workshops currently provide. There was a question about how people with forensic histories will be supported to obtain jobs in the community.
- Concerns were raised about the decision to end new enrollments in workshops.
- Concerns were raised about people with medical and behavioral needs. There was doubt that businesses would be willing to hire people with complex needs.
- Concerns were raised about the availability of the staffing supports that will be needed to successfully transition people from workshops to competitive employment. It was suggested that the concept of fading job coaching supports should be eliminated.
- A Long Island self advocate described how there are some people employed at workshops who earn at or above minimum wage depending on their productivity. It was explained that the workshop is a better employment option for someone who needs personal care assistance. The need for reliable transportation was also raised.
- A Broome sibling raised concerns about how unrealistic it is to expect people in their 60s to find employment in the community. Concerns were also raised about the unemployment rate across the state and how challenging it will be for people with disabilities to be hired.
- In Finger Lakes, it was suggested that the decision to close workshops be reconsidered and alternatives to workshops should be developed before talking about closure. Concerns were raised about the definition of "integrated setting" because for some people the workshop is the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Concerns were also raised about people with behavioral challenges who will have difficulty finding a business willing to hire them.
- A Long Island self advocate and support staff shared their experience with self direction and how CSS has been used to create the live envisioned by the circle of support. They shared how CSS was used to identify employment interest and led to finding a job.



- A Long Island parent talked about self direction as a very person centered option for people who want to work. The importance of doing good person centered planning was stressed. It was also suggested that OPWDD work more closely with the State Education Department and reach out to the Department of Labor regarding rules for volunteering in for-profit companies. The importance of person centered assessment was stressed along with the need to end agency and programmatic silos.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of workshop closure on businesses that have contracts with provider agencies. It was argued that this decision could erode the relationship and trust that providers have with local businesses.
- A suggestion was made to allow providers who are in the process of converting to either an affirmative business or social enterprise to enroll new participants.
- In Long Island, a parent talked about his experience with Consolidated Supports and Services and how it can be used to help people obtain community employment as long as flexibility is maintained. Concerns were raised about language in the plan that is focused on job readiness instead of focusing on what people with developmental diversity can do. It was also suggested that OPWDD think creatively about ways to get businesses to foster acceptance and tolerance within their companies and hiring practices. The need for public service announcements about hiring people with developmental diversity was also suggested.
- Concerns were raised about the future of staff employed at workshops.