

## MISCC Employment Committee

### **A Shared Vision**

The MISCC Employment Committee adopted the following vision statement in May 2008:

*All people can work. New York State, in partnership with the whole community, will exercise leadership to advance prospects for employment and economic self-sufficiency of all individuals with disabilities. Resources will be directed or redirected to realize this vision of integrated competitive employment. Individuals with disabilities will have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the economic vitality of the workforce. Employers will view individuals with disabilities as valued employees in their recruitment and hiring efforts.*

### **Charge**

The employment rate of working-age people with disabilities (ages 21-64) was 33.5 percent compared to 77.9 percent for people without disabilities, a gap of 44.4 percent\*.

The Employment Committee will make formal recommendations to the MISCC to close the employment gap for individuals with disabilities through executive, legislative and budgetary action.

### **Membership**

The Employment Committee was chaired by Edward Placke, Assistant Commissioner, State Education Department Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). Joanne Bushart, the Manager of the Center for Excellence in Employment, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, served as Vice Chair. The Committee consisted of stakeholders across consumer, advocacy and statewide organizations, including community rehabilitation programs, independent living centers, public schools and colleges, as well as business and State agencies.

### **Common Values**

There was initial agreement that NYS needs to develop a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for the employment of individuals with disabilities where policies address the needs of consumers, services providers and employers.

The Employment Committee identified five collaborative opportunities emerging from its shared vision and common values. Key values driving the development of these collaborative opportunities include:

- All individuals with disabilities can work when the proper supports and services are available.
- Work is a normative and expected activity for working-age individuals with disabilities and should be the first consideration when providing supports and services for people with disabilities. Integrated work in the community is the preferred option over segregated day programs.
- New York State policy needs to shift to a “make work pay” paradigm that promotes integrated employment and supports greater financial independence, while at the same time creating safety nets to ensure ongoing access to essential benefits and services that make work possible and enable individuals to achieve real gains in economic self-sufficiency.

## **Collaborative Opportunities**

### **Collaborative Opportunity #1**

Develop a statewide infrastructure for benefits and work incentives planning and assistance, including statewide collaboration on applying for the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) Comprehensive Employment System Medicaid Infrastructure Grant entitled *New York Makes Work Pay*.

### **Collaborative Opportunity #2**

Marketing to Employers through a collaborative marketing campaign for employment of qualified candidates who have disabilities.

### **Collaborative Opportunity #3**

Reviewing data and funding integration to explore how existing funding and reporting structures across agencies can be more effectively integrated to better meet the needs of people with disabilities seeking employment and meaningful community integration.

### **Collaborative Opportunity #4**

Develop recommendations to significantly improve opportunities for public sector employment for individuals with disabilities.

### **Collaborative Opportunity #5**

Improve access to employment services for individuals with disabilities across State agencies by developing clear cross-systems partnership policies and procedures to ensure collaboration, coordination and a streamlined experience for customers.