

An Introduction to the
National Technical Assistance and Research
Center to Promote Leadership for Increasing
the Employment and Economic
Independence of Adults with Disabilities
(NTAR Leadership Center)

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Agenda/Objectives

- Provide an overview of the NTAR Leadership Center and the State Leaders Innovation Institute as well as other major activities planned for the Center
- Answer your questions

The NTAR Leadership Center

- Established in September 2007 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- A collaboration of partners with expertise in workforce and economic development, disability employment, financial education and asset building, and leadership development
- Created for the purpose of building capacity and leadership at the federal, state, and local levels to enable change across workforce development and disability-specific systems that will increase employment for adults with disabilities

The NTAR Center: Major Activities

- State Leaders Innovation Institute
 - An intensive leadership institute for three states (Connecticut, Maryland, and Minnesota)
- State Peer Leaders Network
 - An information exchange and peer learning network for a select group of state and local leaders
- Knowledge Development and Dissemination
 - Research briefs and other products
- Knowledge Exchange
 - A dedicated NTAR Center website to support information sharing and knowledge exchange

Guiding Principles

- Increasing partnerships and collaboration among and across generic and disability-specific systems
- Increasing the use of self-direction in services, and integration of funding across and among systems
- Increasing economic self-sufficiency through leveraging work incentives, financial education, or other strategies that promote profitable employment and asset building
- Increasing the use of universal design in employment services and as a framework for employment policy
- Increasing the use of customized and other forms of flexible work options for individuals with disabilities and others with barriers to employment

The State Leaders Innovation Institute (SLII)

- Recognizes the significant value of leadership at the state level in creating systems change
- Dedicated to helping states build on existing efforts to become national leaders in increasing employment for adults with disabilities
- Focused on connecting disability employment strategies to demand-driven state economic growth policies

Participants:

- Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota
- Core teams include representation from state's governor's office, workforce development system, economic development, disability employment, private-sector business and adults with disabilities

What SLII State Teams are Working On

- Connecticut
 - Planning to build on the State's Connect-Ability initiative
 - Working on targeted efforts to improve employer outreach and engagement
 - Developing a talent development system for PWD as part of their economic development efforts in attracting and retaining business in CT
 - State team lead by the Governor's Office and includes representatives from the state and local workforce system, state economic development office, vocational rehabilitation, state department of education, corrections and human services.

■ Maryland

- Planning to link jobseekers with disabilities to employment opportunities that will be created as a result of significant job growth in five military bases and their surrounding areas under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission.
- Efforts will focus on the education and training of PWD to meet the workforce needs of incoming BRAC related employers
- Efforts also include incorporating the needs of PWD in new housing and transportation planning and expansion taking place in BRAC counties
- State team co-lead by the Department of Labor and Department of Disabilities services and includes representatives from the Lt. Governor's BRAC Commission, state transportation, state community affairs, vocational rehabilitation and the employer community

- Minnesota
 - Planning to include employment efforts for PWD as part of the state's overall regional prosperity efforts
 - MN plans to expand a Manufacturing Camp model to help adults with disabilities gain training and internship experience that can serve as a pathway to high demand, well paying jobs in manufacturing
 - State team lead by the Department of Employment and Economic Development includes representatives from vocational rehabilitation, state human services, state college and university consortium, and the employer community

Research Activities

- Production of Research/Issue Briefs – Topics Include:
 - TANF and Disability
 - Emerging Trends in Asset Building Strategies
 - Collaborating and Coordinating with Employers
 - Using Workforce and Labor Market Information to Guide Strategy Development for Adults with Disabilities
 - Leveraging State Economic Development Resources to Create Opportunities for People with Disabilities
 - Integrating the Disability Perspective into Regional and Local Workforce Development-Economic Development Strategies
- National Study of Demand Driven Workforce Development Strategies for Preparing and Employment People with Disabilities

Questions



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NTAR Leadership Center Website

www.ntarcenter.org