Work Matters
A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities

Handout Accompanying March 30, 2017 Testimony of Robert "Bobby" Silverstein, State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED)

State Policy Options Identified in *Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities*

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK [PAGE 19]

1. **States as Model Employers**—States are encouraged to be model employers of people with disabilities, enacting policies that increase disability inclusion in the civil-sector workforce and serving as an example for private-sector employers to follow. [page 21]

   Examples:

   a. Formal mechanisms to enact policies e.g., bills, joint resolutions, executive orders [page 21]

   b. Infrastructure to adopt and implement policies e.g., cabinet level position, interagency working group [pages 22-23]

   c. Strategic plan [page 24]

   d. Hiring Goals [pages 24-25] [Oregon page 24]

   e. Survey and reporting mechanisms [page 25]

   f. Hiring systems, including fast track hiring systems (e.g. special appointment lists, waiving/modifying civil service exams, offering onsite accommodations) [pages 26-28]

   g. Hiring preferences [page 28]

   h. Trial work periods [pages 28-29]

   i. Mandatory interviews [page 20]

   j. Formal partnerships for certification purposes [pages 29-30]

   k. Centralized accommodation funds [page 30]

   l. Centralized expertise on disability employment [pages 30-31]

   m. Stay at work/return to work [page 31]

   n. Training and information to state personnel [page 31]

2. **Build Capacity of Private and Nonprofit Sector**—States can build capacity of private-and nonprofit-sector employers to engage in disability inclusion efforts. States can adopt policies that incentivize hiring of workers with disabilities and provide financial supports and technical assistance. [page 32]

   Examples:

   a. Provide technical assistance to businesses e.g., dedicated staff, single point of contact VR agency, expand Governor's committees, public awareness campaign [page 33]

   b. Develop or use existing data bases of persons with disabilities looking for employment e.g., CSAVR Talent Acquisition Portal [page 34] and link businesses and qualified applicants [page 36]

   c. Extend diversity and inclusion (affirmative action) to state government contractors [pages 34-35]

   d. Convene task force or summit bringing public and private employers together, including identifying business champions [page 35]

   e. Explore coordinated strategies to support business hiring efforts, lessen administrative burdens, and engage in education and outreach to increase resource utilization [page 36]

   f. Use tax incentives to encourage businesses to hire qualified persons with disabilities [page 37]

   g. Explore tax credits for employment supports e.g., barrier removal, workplace accommodations, technology, transportation and child care [page 38]

3. **External and Internal Focus on Disability Awareness**—States are encouraged to have an external and internal focus on disability awareness, including disability etiquette. In developing awareness around disabilities, the focus should be cross-disability and include both visible and non-obvious disabilities. [page 39]

   Examples:

   a. States are encouraged to have an external and internal focus on disability awareness e.g., awareness training, people first language. [page 39]

   b. Training and certificate programs for all those in public and private sectors who work with children, youth, and adults with disabilities should require disability-related professional development elements. [page 40]

4. **Interagency Coordination and Collaboration**—States can implement policies that optimize resources and services through interagency coordination, collaboration, and blending/braiding of funding, and implementation of robust performance measures. [page 41]

   Examples:

   a. Employment First Initiatives [page 41] [See Oregon policy]

   b. Blending/Braiding of Funding [pages 42-43 (definition)]; Oregon Youth Transition Program [page 42]

   c. Interagency formal agreements [page 43;44]

   d. Community linkages [page 44]

   e. Job coaching programs [page 44]

   f. Accessible one-call, one-click system to match persons with disabilities and appropriate transportation and other services [page 44]

   g. Improve reporting mechanisms [page 44]

PREPARING FOR WORK [PAGE 45]

5. **Education and Career Readiness**—States can promote education and career readiness policies and strategies that expect and prepare all youth, including those with disabilities, to enter the workforce. [page 47]

   Examples:

   a. Comprehensive education and career development plans e.g., align IEPs with career development plans, coordinated person-centered career readiness programs [page 47; 49]; Oregon person-centered planning model [page 49]

   b. Include youth with disabilities in career readiness and development process, beginning at early age [page 50]

   c. Strengthen capacity of professionals to design and implement evidence-based, inclusive programs and strategies [page 51]

6. **Skill Development and Job Exploration**—States can facilitate skill development and job exploration opportunities, such as work-based learning, for youth and young adults, including those with disabilities, that align with education and career development planning and meet businesses' predicted workforce needs. [page 52]

Examples:

    a. Inclusive work-based learning experiences [page 53]

    b. Business-lead advisory groups [page 53]

    c. Incentives for business intermediary groups to offer technical assistance regarding compliance with federal and state laws [page 53]

    d. Public-private partnerships facilitating employer recruitment and student placements [page 53]

    e. Collaboration between education agencies and VR agency to provide range of integrated work-based learning experiences [page 54]

7. **Family Engagement**—States can promote meaningful family engagement throughout the education and career development process for youth and young adults, including those with disabilities. [page 55]

    Examples:

    a. Comprehensive trainings for parents and families [page 55]

    b. Opportunities to serve as advisors [page 56]

    c. Engage families in career development planning [page 56]

GETTING TO AND ACCESSING WORK OPPORTUNITIES [PAGE 59]

8. **Transportation is Available, Reliable, Affordable, and Accessible**—States are encouraged to ensure that transportation is widely available, reliable, affordable, and accessible to people with disabilities in order to support access to the workplace. [page 61]

    Examples:

    a. States are encourage to adopt policies that prioritize transportation options that are reliable and accessible for individuals with disabilities, as well as alternative strategies that address and mitigate challenges for people with disabilities e.g., using emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles, rideshares, partnering with taxi companies, and implementing transportation coordination councils. [page 61]

    b. States should encourage businesses to use government incentives and programs offering transportation options to employees. [page 64]

9. **Accessible Information and Communication Technology**—States can adopt policies that support accessibility in the workplace, particularly related to accessible information and communication technologies (ICT), and assistive technologies. [page 65]

    Examples:

    a. Encourage employers to take steps to level the playing field for employees with disabilities by the adoption of accessible ICT and supporting the use of assistive technology [page 65]

    b. Elevate importance of accessible ICT in design, development, and procurement of technology systems [page 67]

    c. Ensure higher education curricula for technology, engineering, design, and architecture include principles of accessibility, universal design. [page 68]

    d. Create procurement policies that ensure that ICT acquired by state and local government are fully accessible [page 68]

    e. Policy-driven adoption of accessibility [page 71]

10. **Worker Access to Build Environment, Including Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure and Physical Design**—States can enact policies that support worker access to the built environment, including housing, public transportation, infrastructure and physical design. [page 71]

    Examples:

    a. Enact policies that facilitate complete streets, livable communities, mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, shared mobility, mobility on demand, travel demand management and "Smart Cities" in order to reduce barriers to accessibility and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in travel. [page 71]

    b. Work with local governments, economic development interests, and metropolitan and rural planning organizations to encourage businesses and residential living facilities to locate in areas with access to transit. [page 71]

    c. Provide assistance to households that include persons with disabilities in making physical and technological modifications to their homes in order to improve accessibility and promote working at home. [page 72]

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STAYING AT WORK [PAGE 73]

11. **Job Retention and Return to Work** —States can develop policies to support employee retention in the event of injury, illness, or a change in status of an individual's disability. Stay-at-work and return-to-work policies can support all workers as they continue in their careers and as new challenges present themselves. [page 75]

   *Examples***:**

   a. Adopt stay at work/return to work programs in private and public sectors [page 75]; Oregon employer at injury program [page 76]

   b. Help businesses and persons with disabilities navigate the complexities of benefits [page 77]; Oregon benefits counseling [page 77]

   c. Supplement existing financial incentives to target disability employment supports e.g., able act [page 78]; Oregon legislation

SUPPORTING SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP [PAGE 79]

12. **Viability of Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship—**States are encouraged to ensure that state workforce development systems support entrepreneurship and self-employment as viable employment options for people with disabilities. [page 81]

   Examples:

   a. State workforce development systems support entrepreneurship and self-employment through formal policy [page 81]

   b. Position entrepreneurship and self-employment as possible career strategies [page 82]

13. **Supporting Disability Owned-Businesses—**States can include disability-owned businesses in targeted state procurement, certification and financial incentive policies. [page83]

   Examples:

   a. Procurement and contracting systems. [page 84-85]

   b. Fast-track certification. [page 86]

   c. Tax and financial incentives to support start-up and/or growth e.g., low-interest revolving loans, grants, angel investors, mentoring [page 87]