

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)

PROVIDER TRANSFORMATION MANUAL

Module 1: Leadership and Setting the Tone for Change

Pilot Version

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# Introduction

This manual has been created to capture learning from, and support the continued success of, the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP), an initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).[1](#_bookmark2) The EFSLMP is a cross-disability, cross-systems change initiative providing a platform for multi-disciplinary state teams to focus on implementing ***Employment First***[***2***](#_bookmark3)with fidelity through the alignment of policies, coordination of resources, and updating of service delivery models to facilitate increased integrated employment options for people with the most significant disabilities.

ODEP recognizes ***Employment First*** as a national movement providing a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that all citizens, including individuals with complex disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. ODEP defines ***Employment First*** as the expectation that public systems align policies, practices, and reimbursement structures to foster competitive integrated employment as the priority option in publicly-financed day and employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities.

ODEP recognizes that the achievement of ***Employment First*** requires transformation of both public systems and service providers. To guide this two-pronged approach to Systems Change, ODEP has adopted the National Baldrige Model’s Criteria for Performance Excellence [see Exhibit 1] which includes seven key elements: Leadership; Strategic Planning; Customer Focus; Workforce Focus; Operations Focus; Results; and Ongoing Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge.

Exhibit 1. National Baldrige Model’s Criteria for Performance Excellence

Strategic

Planning

Workforce

Focus

Leadership

Results

Customer

Focus

Operations

Focus

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Source: <http://www.nist.gov/baldrige>

To facilitate provider transformation using the Baldrige approach, ODEP has developed a set of *Criteria for Performance Excellence in Employment First Provider Transformation* [see Exhibit 2]. This provider transformation manual builds on the criteria that have been developed, offering significant, detailed information, advice and examples based on best practices for provider transformation developed through the

1 This edition will be used as a pilot model. Our goal is to receive feedback over the course of the EFSLMP Community of Practice (CoP) webinar series throughout the rest of the year regarding the usefulness and applicability of the manual.

2 <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/EmploymentFirst.htm>

EFSLMP and derived from the experience and expertise of EFSLMP subject matter experts working on transformation with providers around the country.

Exhibit 2. Criteria in Performance Excellence in Employment First – Provider Transformation[3](#_bookmark5)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leadership | * Promote ongoing professional development and mentoring of leaders within provider networks to cultivate a cadre of strong leadership capable and committed to the development of competitive, integrated employment outcomes and socioeconomic advancement for people with disabilities. * Build in incentives for supporting, retaining, and rewarding “early adopters” of effective practices among staff. |
| Strategic Planning | * Infuse & embed the State’s *Employment First* vision, goals, guiding principles, & conceptual framework within the strategic planning processes, consistent with similar efforts undertaken across relevant State government agencies. * Develop, disseminate, and make readily available the provision of effective practices that lead to competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, as well as benefits planning, financial capability, and economic advancement strategies for all clients. * Develop operational agreements across various state publicly-financed systems and provider networks resulting in the alignment of policy, practice, and funding strategies to allow for a consistent focus on performance-based results. |
| Customer Focus | * Survey customers & stakeholders regularly to understand level of satisfaction & determine the areas of improvement needed. * Review service coordination processes to determine whether key steps in the process could be strengthened in terms of being more focused on person-centered, individual strategies, and experiential informed choice. * Expand and improve upon existing assessment processes to ensure a rich collection of data on the individual’s strengths, gifts, and preferences that can be used to leverage multiple options. |
| Workforce Focus: | * Realign organizational structure and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to allow the time, flexibility, and incentives required to develop professional staff in key areas critical to successful transformation. * Ensure ongoing professional development, mentoring, coaching, and staff support promoting continued strengthening of skill sets critical for expanded business models. * Optimize service time and ratio deployment for provision of long-term supports, crisis interventions, and new job starts within provider network. * Consider incentives for staff to facilitate clear measurable performance outcomes for competitive, integrated employment and to effectively address individual and cultural resistance to change. |
| Operations Focus | * Diversify funding streams to optimize available support for competitive, integrated employment services. * Expand the provision of services to include a stronger focus on the dissemination of effective practices that result in competitive, integrated employment outcomes. * Promote the modernization of operational processes including IT//electronic record-keeping and decentralized staffing models to successfully meet growing demand for the provision of competitive, integrated employment strategies. * Consider reconfiguration of service management elements within provider organizations (including, but not limited to, communication, data collection, logistics, technology, transportation, billing systems, supervision, and customer satisfaction) and infusion of “lean management” techniques. |
| Results | * Grow percentage of competitive, integrated employment placements over baseline, and capture length of time from start of service to placement. * Coordinate employment efforts with other long-term supports (housing, transportation, natural supports) and benefits planning/work incentives. * Survey customers & stakeholders regularly to understand level of satisfaction & determine the areas of improvement needed. * Track staff development milestones, including training/TA received, credentials/certification completed, etc. * Track impact of applying effective practices to internal daily operations and service approaches. * Demonstrate cost-effectiveness of competitive, integrated employment supports through maximization of natural workplace supports, assistive technology, and job customization. * Align policies, operational procedures, and funding to reflect adoption of effective practices and competitive, integrated employment service delivery. |
| Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management | * Create shared performance-based outcomes & corresponding metrics across various divisions of the organization to incentivize effective coordination of human & technical resources & collective action around pursuance of organizational strategic goals. * Establish bench-marks from baseline data and collect high-impact, relevant data to help inform continued organizational restructuring, internal policy changes, operational practice updates, and development strategies. * Translate high-impact knowledge through continued commitment to training, technical assistance, professional development and communities of practice. |

3 [http://www.leadcenter.org/system/files/resource/downloadable\_version/Employment\_First\_Technical\_Brief 3\_0.pdf](http://www.leadcenter.org/system/files/resource/downloadable_version/Employment_First_Technical_Brief__3_0.pdf)

The reader will note that the manual has been organized with individual modules that each focus on one element of the Baldrige model. In addition, modules on two other critical topics for success – bringing provider transformation to scale and being a mentor to other providers – are also included to round out this comprehensive manual. Readers can opt to use the manual as a comprehensive resource or to pull-out specific modules as they are needed during the process of transformation.

## More on the EFSLMP Approach to Provider Transformation

The EFSLMP has developed a unique approach to supporting provider transformation in a comprehensive way. The approach brings together the collective experiences of over thirty Subject Matter Experts from around the country, all of whom are either disability employment service providers themselves – who have shepherded

their organizations through a process of transformation - or integrated employment and community supports experts who have provided support, technical assistance and training to disability employment and day service providers from around the country who have been actively engaged in organizational transformation. ODEP’s EFSLMP Subject Matter Experts are both, by definition and by design, an eclectic group of people with tremendous breadth of experiences and knowledge. This is particularly valuable in supporting provider transformation on a national scale because:



**Transformation:**

It takes the desire to change, the determination to start, and the dedication to continue.

* Ben Timmis

**Transformation:**

It isn’t about improving, it’s about re- thinking.

* Malcolm Gladwell
  + - No two providers’ transformation process and circumstances are the same, even if providers may operate in the same state or locality;
    - The nature of provider transformation has changed over time, both within particular states and nationally;
    - Core best practices for successful provider transformation – practices that are considered “tried and true” among those who make this topic their life’s work – can be implemented in many subtly different ways depending on a particular provider’s circumstances and challenges;
    - Effective mentoring relationships cannot be forced, and rely most heavily on “smart” matching of leaders and organizations who will “gel” in truly impactful ways;
    - Communities of practice that bring together Subject Matter Experts and diverse providers on the path of organizational transformation can enhance learning, information exchange, mutual support structures and translation of knowledge.

The EFSLMP Provider Transformation Initiative brings together many experts with a deep historical perspective on provider transformation. This has greatly enhanced the project’s ability to build on and further expand the historical knowledge base for provider transformation. In addition, one of the most important contributions of the EFSLMP Provider Transformation initiative has been to modernize, and recast as necessary, long-standing best practices into strategies that are geared toward the ***current realities- both challenges and opportunities*** facing traditional employment and day service providers across the country.

## The Case for Organizational Transformation: Why Do It and Why Now?

This manual’s publication date is 2017—twenty-seven years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A quarter of a century ago, a very small number of community rehabilitation providers across the country, including some facility-based day service providers were engaged in organizational transformation. At the same time, federal supported employment capacity building grants were beginning to make a positive impact in many states, demonstrating



… in the past five years (2011-2016), an evolution in thinking has taken place across the field of disabilities that has set the stage for competitive integrated employment and integrated community supports to become the primary service models for transition-age youth and working-age adults with disabilities in every state.

the valuable outcomes that supported employment could bring to individuals with significant disabilities. Yet overall, there was not any sense that a major evolution in employment and daytime support services for people with disabilities was just around the corner.

And while it’s true that the intervening years leading up to 2011 did not bring to scale, to the extent many had anticipated, the systemic momentum and best practices built in the early years of supported employment, it is hard for anyone to deny that in the past five years (2011-2016), an evolution in thinking has taken place across the field of disabilities that has

set the stage for competitive integrated employment and integrated community supports to become the primary service models for transition-age youth and working-age adults with disabilities in every state. This broad-based evolution of thinking has been ushered in through a variety of different, but coinciding federal policy initiatives, state-level reforms, legal actions, and media coverage that collectively have begun to reshape public opinion. Among the most influential developments of the past five years are the following:

* + - The June 2011 Statement of the ***Department of Justice*** on Enforcement of the Integration Mandate of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and *Olmstead v. L.C.* This Statement[4](#_bookmark8) established for the first time, an expectation that compliance with the ADA and *Olmstead* required states to have an effective working plan to address “individuals spending their days in sheltered workshops or segregated day programs” and which “must have demonstrated success in actually moving individuals to integrated settings in accordance with the plan.” Most of the *Olmstead* lawsuits and settlement agreements that came after this Statement have had a strong focus (and in the cases of Oregon and Rhode Island, an exclusive focus) on transitioning publicly funded state systems away from segregated employment and day services to individualized supported employment and integrated community supports.[5](#_bookmark9)

4 See [https://www.ada.gov/olmstead/q&a\_olmstead.htm](https://www.ada.gov/olmstead/q%26a_olmstead.htm)

5 See U.S. Department of Justice settlement agreements with the states of Georgia, Delaware, North Carolina, and Virginia, as well as the settlement agreement with the state of Oregon and the consent decree with the state of Rhode Island. See <https://www.ada.gov/olmstead/>for more information.

* + - The September 2011 Informational Bulletin[6](#_bookmark10) released by the ***Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)*** which provided strong guidance regarding employment and employment-related services in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers.[7](#_bookmark11) This guidance underscores CMS’s commitment to the importance of competitive integrated employment and self-employment opportunities for waiver participants. The guidance is now part of the Technical Guide states must follow in creating, renewing or amending HCBS Waivers, and it contains a strong expectation from CMS that states will use HCBS Waivers to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities and meaningful community integration for HCBS Waiver participants with disabilities.
    - The August 2012 report by the ***National Council on Disability***, a federal agency, calling for a phase out of sub-minimum wage.[8](#_bookmark12) This report both preceded and followed local, state and national media coverage of the use of sub-minimum wage in the employment of people with disabilities. Meanwhile, legislation to phase out and end the use of Section 14(c) special minimum wage has been introduced multiple times in ***Congress***, first in October of 2011, then in February of 2013 and most recently, in January of 2015. The current House bill (HR 188) has 69 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle, as of June, 2016, and the Senate companion (S. 2001) is bipartisan as well. Additionally, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), passed in July of 2014, established an ***Advisory Committee to the U.S. Department of Labor*** charged in part with making recommendations regarding the future of Section 14(c). WIOA also introduced restrictions on the ability of employers to pay youth a sub-minimum wage and new requirements for state vocational rehabilitation agencies to conduct annual outreach to all state residents with disabilities being paid sub-minimum wage to offer services that would allow these individuals to obtain competitive integrated employment paying at least minimum wage. And most recently, in March of 2016, the ***AbilityOne Commission*** issued a Declaration in support of minimum wage for all people who are blind or have significant disabilities.[9](#_bookmark13)
    - The September 2013 promulgation of a new rule, by the ***U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs***, governing the implementation of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain individuals with disabilities. The rule strengthens the affirmative action provisions of the regulations, requiring increased efforts by contractors to recruit and hire people with disabilities, and improve job opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
    - The February 2014 Executive Order 13658, signed by ***President Barack Obama***, “Establishing a Minimum Wage for Contractors,” to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 for all workers on Federal construction and service contracts, including all workers with disabilities whether covered under the Section 14(c) special minimum wage certificate program or not.

6 See <https://downloads.cms.gov/cmsgov/archived-downloads/CMCSBulletins/downloads/CIB-9-16-11.pdf>

7 Medicaid HCBS Waivers first became available in 1983 when Congress added section 1915(c) to the Social Security Act, giving States the option to receive a waiver of Medicaid rules governing institutional care. Medicaid HCBS Waivers allow a state to offer services and supports to people with disabilities, otherwise qualified for institutional care, in the community.

8 <https://www.ncd.gov/publications/2012/August232012>

9 <http://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/US%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20Declaration%2018March2016%20Final.pdf>

* + - The March 2014 promulgation of the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Settings Rule by the ***Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)*** which requires all HCBS settings eligible for Medicaid funding to provide opportunities for individuals to pursue employment, work in competitive integrated settings, and engage in community life. The rule further requires all HCBS settings eligible for Medicaid funding to be integrated in, and support full access to, the greater community. And finally, the rule establishes a requirement that states must offer HCBS participants an opportunity to receive HCBS services in non-disability-specific settings, thus requiring states to develop and offer integrated prevocational and day habilitation service models if the state had only facility-based prevocational and day habilitation service options prior to the implementation of the rule.[10](#_bookmark14)
    - The July 2014 passage into law of the ***Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)***, raising expectations across state workforce and vocational rehabilitation systems that competitive integrated employment be the prioritized investment and outcome for transition-age youth and adults with disabilities. WIOA ushered in the expectation that state workforce system programs achieve true programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities, while also introducing new requirements for state vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide pre-employment transition services to youth with disabilities enrolled in secondary education.
    - The May 2016 promulgation of new Medicaid Managed Care Rules by the ***Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)*** which requires states and managed care organizations to ensure access to, and supports for, competitive integrated employment in Medicaid Managed Long-Term Services and Supports programs that serve persons with disabilities. Prior to the issuance of these rules, numerous states moving to Medicaid Managed Care had built in expectations for increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes for enrollees with



… a number of federally funded grant and technical assistance initiatives include a focus on supporting provider transformation, extending mentoring, training, technical assistance and other key support strategies to a growing number of disability service providers across the country that are seeking such supports to evolve their organization’s services to align with changing expectations and opportunities.

disabilities.

Throughout this time, the country has also seen an array of federally funded grant and technical assistance initiatives aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment opportunities for transition-age youth and adults with disabilities, including an emphasis on facilitating systems change and implementing policies consistent with ***Employment First***. In addition to EFSLMP, a number of other federally funded grant and technical assistance initiatives include a focus on supporting provider transformation by extending mentoring,

training, technical assistance and other key support strategies to a growing number of disability service providers across the country that are seeking such supports to evolve their organization’s services to align with changing expectations and opportunities.

10 https:[//w](http://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2014-Fact-sheets-items/2014-01-10-2.html)ww[.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2014-Fact-sheets-items/2014-01-10-2.html](http://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2014-Fact-sheets-items/2014-01-10-2.html)

At the same time, our nation’s economy is beginning to recover from one of the most serious and long- standing recessions in history. Coupled with this is the stark reality that our workforce is fundamentally changing. With baby boomers now retiring in record



Yet at the end of the day, what appears to be moving more and more disability service provider organizations to embrace sustained organizational transformation is the recognition of the benefits and possibilities that transformation brings to the people with disabilities each of these organizations serves.

numbers, most every industry and economic sector is projecting major workforce shortages in the decades to come. And there is a recognition that American workers are changing as well, with the millennials ushering in expectations for a better work-life balance and greater workplace flexibility. As employers of all kinds respond to these trends, there is a groundswell of interest in non-traditional labor pools and groups that are untapped and/or underrepresented in the current labor

market, with individuals with disabilities being a key part of these groups. Further, there is growing interest in

progressive and innovative approaches to human resource (talent) management, including Customized Employment[11](#_bookmark15) and the concept of a Teachable Fit[12](#_bookmark16) to bridge the divide between employers and the new face of America’s modern workforce. These approaches not only make room for workers with disabilities but endorse fundamental strategies that pave the way for increased hiring of workers with all kinds of disabilities into competitive integrated employment situations.

For several decades, we have seen the emergence of a research and evidence base for competitive integrated employment services, thus enabling disability service providers to fill their toolboxes with a variety of innovative and “proven to work” strategies for facilitating competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with various types of significant disabilities. In the last decade, research addressing the connection between competitive integrated employment and positive health and mental health outcomes has increased, as has research demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of public investments in supported employment.

As federal and state funders of disability services increase emphasis on integrated service provision and competitive integrated employment services in particular, providers of more traditional employment and day services are no doubt feeling the pressure to participate in this evolution and bring their organizations and practices into full alignment with the many developments discussed above that have come about in rapid succession in recent years. Yet at the end of the day, what appears to be moving more and more traditional employment and day service provider organizations to embrace sustained organizational transformation is the recognition of the benefits and possibilities that transformation brings to the people with disabilities each of these organizations serves. What’s more, organizations embracing transformation are also finding that staff at all levels of the organization are similarly positively affected, finding new energy, passion and satisfaction in doing new work that is changing their roles and their impact on the people with disabilities they support and

11 [https://www.accenture.com/t20150824T010002 w /us-en/\_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-](https://www.accenture.com/t20150824T010002__w__/us-en/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Strategy_7/Accenture-Trends-Reshaping-HR-Workforce-One.pdf) [Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Strategy\_7/Accenture-Trends-Reshaping-HR-Workforce-One.pdf](https://www.accenture.com/t20150824T010002__w__/us-en/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Strategy_7/Accenture-Trends-Reshaping-HR-Workforce-One.pdf) and <https://www.dol.gov/odep/documents/vignette_v3_blue_508_final.pdf> For more information on Customized Employment, also see: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/CustomizedEmployment.htm>and

<http://www.leadcenter.org/customized-employment>

12 <https://www.manpowergroup.com.au/documents/White-Papers/2010_Teachable-Fit-Framework.pdf>

their communities. As one thirty five-year veteran manager of employment services from a community rehabilitation provider in Wisconsin put it:

“When you have staff achieve an employment goal with someone, and you see the joy that they experience with that individual…and you have someone come into your office and say ‘Yes! I’m a working man now. I’m going to be a working man now!’ it really brings home to you why you are putting all of this effort into this.”[13](#_bookmark17)

And finally, it seems clear that organizations engaged in transformation are recognizing the positive benefits of this work on their reputation and standing in the wider community. They are finding support is increasing from the local business community and their traditional community supporters. They are also finding significantly increased support from their funding sources that are equally invested in their success. And they are finding that peer organizations, both from within the state and from other states, are now looking to them for advice, mentoring and technical assistance.

If these outcomes are the kinds of outcomes that resonate with you and your organization, then transformation is the right next step. This manual brings together in one place, the best strategies, tips, lessons learned and perspectives on provider transformation to help you and your organization get started, or if you have already started, to help you and your organization continue your efforts and ultimately achieve the best possible success with transformation.

13 To view a video on organizational transformation efforts in Wisconsin and the perspective of this and other community rehabilitation provider directors and managers, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xd3qgUwLHbw>

**Module 1:**

**Leadership and**

**Setting the Tone for Change**

**Key Terms**

*Learning Organizations Communities of Practice Gap Analysis*

*Board of Directors Organization Self-Assessment Focus Groups*

*Historical Timelines Transformation Team Value Stream Mapping*

Resources and References for Module 1- Leadership and Setting the Tone for Change

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resources | |
| Sample Organizational Self-Assessment Tools | |
| Organizational Self-Assessment Tool | Sasnett, G. 2017. Created for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, Employment First State Leadership State Mentoring Program. https://apps.econsys.com/ta-  planner/resources/provider\_transformation |
| Moving from segregation to integration: Organizational change strategies and outcomes | Rogan, P. 2007. In P. Wehman, K. Inge, W.G. Revell, & V. Brooke (Eds.). Real work for real pay: Inclusive employment for people with disabilities. Baltimore: Paul Brookes. https://apps.econsys.com/ta-  planner/resources/provider\_transformation |
| Organizational Change Technical Assistance Guide | Rinne, S., and Rogan, P. 2005. Indiana Employment Initiative, Center on Community Living and Careers. https://apps.econsys.com/ta-  planner/resources/provider\_transformation |
| Organizational Self-Assessment: A Tool to Assist Facility-Based Day and Prevocational Service Providers in Planning and Implementing an Organizational Transition to Community-Based Service Delivery with Integrated Employment as the Core Opportunity for All Working-Age  Participants with Disabilities | Mills, L. 2013. Madison, WI: Moving To A Different Drum, LLC. https://apps.econsys.com/ta- planner/resources/provider\_transformation |
| Sample Survey Tool | |
| Organizational Transformation Staff Survey Sample | 2009. Created by Wisconsin Pathways to Independence Initiative for the Wisconsin CRP Rebalancing Initiative. Adapted from survey originally developed by Institute for Community  Inclusion, UMass Boston. [www.communityinclusion.org](http://www.communityinclusion.org/) |

**MODULE 1: Leadership and Setting the Tone for Change**

Change can be challenging in any organization. Every community service provider agency has a history. Habits have been developed. Routines have been followed. Missions have been set and pursued. Staff and leadership have worked hard to accomplish goals. People have pride in the work they have done. The agency has been considered a success.

Now new and exciting employment strategies are being introduced and adopted that are changing the way we view community employment for people with disabilities. New options have opened for people with disabilities to be employed in competitive integrated jobs and recognized as full citizens of their communities.

What an exciting time! Not only has this changed the way we think but it also impacts the way services are

provided. Change is not just coming, it’s here. Great, visionary leadership is needed to shepherd agencies into the future.



"In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are."

-- Max De Pree

Times of change can be exciting and energizing but they can also be unsettling and frightening for people served by the agency, families and guardians, boards of directors and staff. Effective leadership in the change process is essential to make the shift as smooth as possible. Leadership will set the tone for the change. The attitude of leaders will affect the receptivity of stakeholders to change in either

a positive or negative manner. If the leadership presents the changes as burdensome, something the agency is being forced to do and generally undesirable, others will see it that way too. But if the leadership can project excitement and optimism about the possibilities, demonstrate a “can-do” approach, encourage inclusiveness and determination, even when the future is not absolutely clear, positive change can and will occur, no matter what obstacles are encountered.

## Some Key Areas of Focus for Leaders

* + - People supported – the people with disabilities who are receiving support are the most effected by transformation and should be included and actively involved in all aspects of the process
    - Values, vision and mission – working with stakeholders to determine who you are as an agency, where you are going and how you will get there
    - Outreach – reaching out to stakeholders in a planned and consistent manner to inform, educate and receive feedback about the changes within the agency.
    - Communication and culture – providing information, making sure everyone knows the direction the agency is pursuing and why, being honest and building trust, not always having the answers but building a culture of optimism, determination, inclusiveness and teamwork.
    - Planning - engaging stakeholders in the process of setting the course for the future based on the agency’s values, vision and mission
    - Partnering – developing partnerships with staff, families, board members, community employers, funders and other stakeholders to accomplish transformation goals. Everyone has something they can contribute, whether leads for jobs or training in the community, private fundraising opportunities or other community resource options.
    - Celebrating success- keeping morale high by recognizing and rewarding accomplishments, and keeping a focus on where your agency is going rather than what you’re leaving behind.
    - Branding and marketing – guiding the development of branding for the agency that will better reflect its new identity. Marketing the new brand.
    - Mentoring new leaders – building leadership from within the organization, providing them with the opportunities to lead throughout the change process, and mentoring them as they grow. They are the future of the agency and the ones who will carry the transformation forward.

Finally, though it can be personally very difficult, it is important for agency leaders to do some self-reflection about their role in the transformation process. You have to ask yourself if this transformation is something in which you can truly invest all of the effort, energy, and creativity that will be necessary for it to be a success. Transformation, though rewarding when you see the terrific results, is not easy and it does not happen quickly. And while you don’t always have to be in the lead, because often other staff members will step up out of the ranks and drive the change, you do have to be able to embrace and support your agency’s transformation. It takes courage, but at some point, you must ask yourself if you are the best person to lead this effort and if you find you are not, make the tough choice to step aside.

## Becoming a Learning Organization

Before an agency begins transformation, stakeholders need to have a clear idea of what it is transforming to. It is always good practice to stay informed about innovations and newly evolving strategies, but it is especially important during transformation. Individuals, staff and other stakeholders need to learn about what is possible and become inspired by the innovations that are occurring. Once interest and excitement is established the next step is to gain knowledge about new technologies and approaches and acquire the skills to implement them.

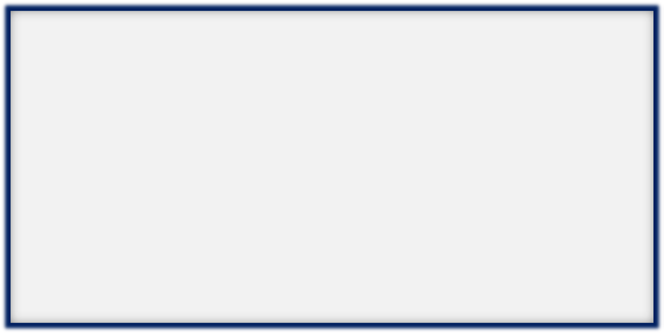
We gain knowledge and skills through exposure and practice. In a *learning organization*, a high value is placed on staff development and training; but learning organizations also understand that there are others among their stakeholders that would benefit from additional knowledge. Job seekers with disabilities need to know what new options are available to them. Family members need to understand the new approaches to competitive integrated employment that have become available. Members of boards of directors need to understand what is being proposed and how it may affect services and their responsibilities. And of course, staff in every position in the agency needs to gain a good understanding of both the philosophy behind new strategies and how they will be implemented.

### Key strategies to help stakeholders gain knowledge and skills

* + - Encourage and support attendance at key training conferences – not just leaders and supervisors, but people served; family members, board members and direct support professionals. A list of relevant conferences can be found in Module 3.
    - Provide access to on-line and face to face training and webinars – While some trainings and webinars are provided for a fee, many others are offered at no cost. Webinars can be very effective in training, especially when groups view them together and discuss what they are learning.
    - Develop the habit of sharing new information - In learning agencies staff develop the habit of seeking out new information and sharing what they learn. Articles, blogs, podcasts, videos and other

information should be circulated in the agency and opportunities to discuss content should be provided in staff meetings, board meetings and other forums.

* + - Participate in Communities of Practice (CoPs) – Participation in CoPs provides peer to peer support to agencies as they are in the transformation process. Sharing with peers can help staff learn new strategies and develop a sense of common mission with other agencies.
    - Visiting other organizations that have successfully transformed and are now demonstrating exemplary practices can be very inspirational. These visits are highly effective in helping staff grasp how what they are learning can be put into action. In other words, seeing is believing. Agencies that are successful love to share their knowledge and experience.



St. John’s Community Services took advantage of grant funding to pay for all their home office administrative staff to attend a national competitive integrated employment conference being held near their headquarters in Washington, DC. Different staff attended on alternate days to minimize costs. The objective was to increase the knowledge of *everyone* on staff about impending changes so that they could work cooperatively towards a commonly understood outcome.

## Convening a Transformation Team

No leader can make transformation occur alone. Teamwork is required to make change. Building a culture of teamwork will help engage stakeholders in the process, provide an opportunity for them to have input, feel invested, and to share the responsibility for planning and implementing change.

### Important things to consider when forming and using a Transformation Team

* + - Team Composition – The Transformation Team will be the guiding force in the transformation process. Thoughtful creation of this team is necessary to have the correct representation from across the organization. It is a good idea to have representation on the team from management as well as from people served and direct support professionals. Some agencies form several teams that work together to facilitate the transformation. In such cases, careful coordination and clear communication between the teams is essential.
    - Delineating team responsibilities – team members should have specific responsibilities in the transformation planning and implementation process. People need responsibility to feel engaged and committed. One way to achieve accountability is to break down these responsibilities into specific action steps and timelines.
    - Communicating with internal and external stakeholders – One of the chief roles of the Transformation Team is communication. Teams should have a communication plan that will delineate how information is going to be shared by the team and with whom it will be shared. Members should have specific responsibilities related to communication. Messages must be clear and consistent. Communication also should be two-way. That is, team members will have responsibility not only to carry messages to others but to receive and transmit message back to the team.
    - Supporting your team – The team or teams will be effective if they are properly supported. Some preliminary training in team operation and facilitation can be useful. Logistical considerations must be made to accommodate member’s schedules and workloads. Participation is greater and more effective when meetings are scheduled well in advance, agendas are developed and followed, minutes are taken and made available to members and meetings are held in locations that are accessible to everyone. Note that when direct support professionals are included, it is very important that they be supported by their managers to participate. Managers should arrange for and assure staff coverage for participating direct support staff.

## Engaging Your Board of Directors from the Start

*Boards of directors* have the ultimate decision-making authority in agencies. The members of the board should be involved in the transformation process from the beginning. They must understand what you are proposing to change and why. Smart leadership will begin the education process with the Board as early as possible. The educational groundwork must be laid before the discussion of change occurs.

Board members typically have many questions and perhaps some concerns about organizational change to competitive integrated employment services. Some board members may not have the same depth of knowledge of the Employment First movement that staff has. Some may be invested in the agency as it has been. They may have raised money for buildings and equipment to provide employment services in facilities and like others in the agency, are proud of their accomplishments. Good leadership will help to guide the board’s understanding of the direction the agency hopes to go in the future, help them to see what is possible, and engage them in developing plans to get there.

### Some strategies to effectively engage boards

* + - Staff/board retreats – Staff and boards benefit from focused, uninterrupted time in a structured process that will allow both parties to learn together, discuss their hopes and anxieties, and plan for the future.
    - Educational sessions as a part of routine board meetings – Staff presentations at meetings are not only helpful for board members, but it can challenge staff to refine their own thinking.
    - Attendance at training sessions – It is a good strategy to invite board members to staff training sessions. If they can attend, they can learn along with staff and share what they learn with other board members.
    - Attendance at governmental informational sessions – Attendance at government information sessions with provider agencies can help board members learn about expectations from funders first hand. They can gain additional insight into the direction your agency should be taking in response to funders’ priorities.
    - Observations at other agencies – Joining staff as they visit other agencies can help board members visualize what you are trying to accomplish.
    - Inviting a board member to spend time with an individual receiving services – Some board members may be very interested in spending time with and getting to know an individual who receives services at the agency. Such interactions may lead to mutually enjoyable relationships, and serve to bring the change efforts to life for both individuals.

*What about board members who continue to oppose our new direction?*

It is possible that some board members will be unable to embrace the new direction of the agency despite efforts to engage them and gain their support. The agency leader should have individual relationships with all board members and know who is supportive or not. He or she must work with supportive members to help opposed or reluctant members envision how the transformation will be beneficial to both individuals served and the agency. Time must be taken to address the concerns of these members and healthy debate is good. Ultimately it will be imperative to have a supportive board to move forward. As board membership turns over, agency leadership should support the board to recruit new members who will be knowledgeable and supportive.

## Conducting a Preliminary Gap Analysis

As the team is being exposed to new thinking and approaches to competitive integrated employment, the leadership should begin a process by which the team begins to identify best practices they would like to adopt. A description of some of these best practices is included in Modules 3 and 5. This process helps the agency to formulate a vision of where they want to be and what they want to become as they transform. This is the beginning of the visioning process that will be discussed in greater detail later in this module.

After the team has identified the best practices they would like to adopt, it is time to take an initial look at some of the agency’s current practices. This activity helps identify the gaps between where the agency is and where it wants to be. A more in-depth analysis which is discussed elsewhere in this module should also occur. That analysis will surface a wealth of additional information about the agency’s status and all of the elements of transformation that should be addressed. However, an initial “*gap analysis*” will set the stage for change by helping everyone to have a mental picture of the ideal compared to present performance.

An example of best practice they may learn about and want to adopt:

* + - Competitive integrated employment is an expectation for everyone supported by the agency and everyone has an employment goal and an employment plan.

An example of a current practice they may have:

* + - Competitive integrated employment is targeted only to people who have been identified as “job ready” and only these individuals have employment goals or employment plans.

The gap analysis would identify the absence of the expectation of employment for everyone served and therefore the lack of employment goals and plans for everyone supported by the agency.

## Conducting an Organizational Assessment and Analysis Process

### Reviewing present operations and culture

An important step in the transformation process is conducting an in-depth assessment of the agency, its culture and beliefs, services and practices and positioning for transformation. As was noted earlier, you must know where you are to plan for where you are going. This assessment process should examine the agency’s beliefs and culture, customers and services, operational structures and procedures, workforce and staff development, organizational structures and management practices, community image and marketing approach.

### Conducting internal assessments

Many agencies find it helpful to conduct an internal or *self-assessment* and analysis process. Leadership and staff may find themselves more open to introspection and honest reporting of information if the assessment is an internal one rather than a traditional external review.

*What are some tools and processes for conducting an internal organizational self-assessment?*

* + - Organizational self-assessment surveys – These are assessments conducted by the management team and whomever they determine should be included in the process. Often parts of the surveys are conducted by different individuals or groups and then the components are all brought together as one comprehensive document.
    - As a part of the self-assessment process agency staff should be prepared to review agency budgets and financial reports, reports conducted by external surveyors, agency description and marketing materials, organizational charts, business or strategic plans, services and funding sources, facilities, and other assets, among other available data. Three example tools that organizations use for internal self- assessment can be found at the end of this module. These tools are also designed to assist organizations to identify their need for training and technical assistance.
    - Customer interviews and/or focus groups – The most important group of people from which to get input is the people who are most impacted by change, the people supported by the agency. Often direct, individual interviews are the best way to get the opinions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Care should be taken to ensure that if an interview process is used, it is carefully structured to avoid leading questions or inherent bias. You want to know how well the people you support understand the anticipated changes and how receptive they are to what is being planned. It is an opportunity to identify apprehension and resistance and to develop strategies to address those concerns.
    - Direct service staff, supervisor, manager surveys and/or focus groups – It is important to get some direct feedback from agency personnel while the assessment is being conducted. You want to know how well informed they are about impending changes, whether they embrace those changes or oppose them and how they feel about the direction of the agency. If staff feels uninformed and frightened for their futures as opposed to knowledgeable and confident, then that will be a clear indication of where some of the initial focus of the change process must be placed. Many agencies conduct annual staff satisfaction surveys. These surveys can be expanded to capture critical information regarding transformation or new surveys can be developed. A sample survey can be found at the end of this module.
    - If the focus groups are used and can be conducted by someone the staff view as more neutral in the agency or by an external party, the most honest opinions of staff may more easily surface.
    - Board of Directors focus group – The importance of board support is discussed earlier in this module. Focus groups may work well to determine how well informed they are and how they feel about the proposed changes.
    - Developing a *historical timeline* of the organization – Some organizations have found it to be useful to develop a historic timeline, sometimes called a “Lifeline” that highlights key events, people, services, decisions, and outcomes in an organization’s past. The timeline serves to educate stakeholders about

the evolution of the organization and its services, and the significant changes that occurred. An example of an historical timeline is provided in Exhibit 3 below.

Exhibit 3. Example Historical Timeline for an Organization

1868

* Agency founded as orphanage

1950s

* Orphanage closes
* Private school for children with disabilities established

1970s

* Deinstitutionalization lawsuit in state filed
* PL 142 passed (Education for All Handicapped Children Act); private school students begin to transition to public schools

1980s

* 1983 services for deinstitutionalized adults begin (group homes & day)
* Workshop opened early 80s
* SE commenced 1986

1990s

* SE grows as agency expands; "one person/one job" philosophy embraced
* Workshop closes; agency commits to transforming to 100% community services
* Day services become 100% community based (pathway to employment)
* Early intervention services move to 100% community based

2000s

* Expansion continues
* Group homes closed, move to independent and supported living
* School services moved to public schools, facilities sold, agency now 100% in community
* Agency adopts "employment first" (EF) policy and customized employment approach

2010s

* Agency absorbs 100% facility based agency with workshop; loses 100% community based designation; begins conversion
* 2016 workshop closed, competitive integrated employment found for participants
* Entire agency becomes 100% community based again with focus on EF across all services

### Conducting an external organizational self-assessment

* + Parent/guardian surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups – The opinions of family members or guardians will assist the agency to understand where there is receptivity and support and where there are concerns and resistance. It will help establish current knowledge levels and future education and information needs. It will also identify where effort needs to be focused to bring these important partners on board with the changes.
  + Case manager, care coordinators, rehabilitation counselor surveys and/or focus groups - The agency assessment should also include surveys or focus groups with case managers, care coordinators, and rehabilitation counselors. They are often responsible for facilitating referrals of individuals to agencies and advocating for them to receive employment services. Knowing their beliefs and philosophies,opinion of your agency’s current performance, hopes for your future direction, and overall customer satisfaction is critical to your future.
  + Other stakeholder focus groups: Funding sources, employers/business leaders, the local Chamber of Commerce, local school personnel involved in transition, and other collaborative organizations – every agency has important community partners that will be impacted by the agency’s transformation. Using interviews or focus groups as outreach methods will help the agency learn more about these partners, their perceptions of the agency, their understanding of and opinions about the changes that are at hand, as well as their interest and willingness to be supportive partners in the future.

*Now that we have all this information, how do we analyze and use assessment results for strategic planning?*

Once the data is collected from all assessment activities the analysis can begin. These tools can also be useful for anticipating challenges and developing solutions as part of your strategic planning process. Module 2 offers detailed information on how to use this data to move forward with development of a strategic plan.

## Identifying Your Values, Vision, and Mission

One of the most important activities to be undertaken in the transformation process is the review of your agency’s core identity and making a philosophical and programmatic commitment. This is done through examination of your philosophy, values, vision, and mission. These are your guiding principles throughout the transformation process and beyond. In transformation to competitive integrated employment, dependence on facilities is either greatly diminished or eliminated. Staff members need a virtual framework in which to operate. Philosophy, values, mission, and vision become the new “four walls” of your community based agency.

### One approach to consider: Value Stream Mapping

Value stream mapping is a lean management method for analyzing the current state and designing a future state for the series of events that take a product or service from its beginning through to the customer. It can be applied to nearly any value chain. It can be helpful in achieving process improvement and efficient use of resources in service delivery of competitive integrated employment. The idea is to look at every activity (even those that aren’t causing problems) and find ways for that activity to increase customer value and reduce waste. A small value increase or waste reduction in every activity performed leads to greatly increased performance and reduced costs. An example Mapping Process is provided below.

### Customer service philosophy

It is important to establish a strong customer service philosophy within your agency as the foundation upon which everything else will be built. Customer service not only means providing services needed or requested by the customer, but soliciting feedback and developing or adjusting what you do in response to that input. Providing great service that exceeds the expectations of your customers should be your primary focus.

**Example Mapping Process:**

* Define the “issue” and agree on your goal (e.g., increase integration and employment outcomes).
* Determine what process to map.
* Map *Current Process* from the perspective of a customer (value stream) - e.g., job seeker entering your program - through finding a job and follow-up.
* Analyze current state: Identify value adding and non-value adding activities, waste, chaos, and potential resources.
* Brainstorm possible solutions and resources: Identify potential starting points for service transformation (areas to explore) - “what’s a better way?”
* Develop a *Future State* map which redefines the process and reallocates resources to achieve more and/or better outcomes/results from the perspective of the customer by eliminating waste and non-value activities.
* Analyze/Prioritize next steps (low hanging fruit, *just do it*, priorities, long/short term goals, and never minds)
* Write an action plan
* Plan/Do/Check/Adjust, Repeat.

*Source: Verstegan, D. & Murphy, S. (Personal communication, December 2016). TransCen*.

### Values

An agency’s values are based on its beliefs. If an agency believes economic opportunity and parity is a basic right for all people, then that is one of their values. Identification of an agency’s values is the starting place for development of its vision and mission. First the agency must determine what it believes in before it can begin to imagine where it can go in the future.

**Example Values Statement:**

Pioneer, in Syracuse, New York, affirmed that:

* People with disabilities have the same human similarities and differences that exist among all individuals;
* Disability should be viewed as being as much a function of setting-related factors as of individual characteristics;
* People with disabilities have the same right to the same community opportunities, risks, relationships, and activities experienced by other members of the community, using, if necessary, individualized sources of support to achieve such participation;
* Having the opportunity for valued, integrated employment and community participation of one’s choosing is a right, not a privilege to be earned.

*Source: Murphy, S. & Rogan, P. (1995). Closing the Shop: Conversion from sheltered to integrated work. Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing. (pp. 182-183)*.

### Vision

The agency’s vision is the description of *what* the organization and its services will look like in the future. Developing the agency vision requires involvement of various stakeholders. There are many strategies that can be used but the common thread among them all is dreaming without constraint. It can be difficult to let go of all of the obstacles that can get in the way of realizing the vision but it is necessary to get started. First think of what you want to be in the future, ideally. That vision is what you want to achieve. How you will achieve it will come next.

**Example Vision Statement:**

* To comprehend, implement, and facilitate the needed activities that will shift Buffalo River Services from a facility-based, systems-centered service organization to a community-based, person-centered service network).

*Source: Buffalo River Services, Inc., Waynesboro, TN. In Organizational Change Mentoring Participant Manual (2005). Center on Disability & Employment, University of Tennessee, CRP-RCEP IV*.

### Mission

The agency’s mission describes *how* the vision will be accomplished. The mission provides guidance for planning and implementation of strategies in an agency. It is the standard by which the agency’s actions can be measured. It is the guidance for competitive integrated employment staff when they are in the field and may not have immediate access to supervisory support. When a decision must be made by staff, whether managers or direct support professionals, the options being considered should be evaluated to determine if they forward the mission, impede it, or contradict it.

**Example Mission Statement:**

* Kaposia invests in the prosperity of individuals who have a disability and the profitability of our partners.).

*Source: Kaposia, Inc. (www.kaposia.com)*.

### Agency name

Often as you go through examining and retooling your agency’s philosophy, values, vision and mission the issue of your agency’s name will arise. This is usually because the name, though sometimes very longstanding and held dear by many stakeholders, no longer accurately represents who you are. Name reconsideration can be among the most emotionally fraught and difficult issues for an agency to address. However, if the agency’s name does not communicate what you are becoming and what you want the public’s immediate perception of you to be, you should tackle this issue. If a name change does occur, a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy for marketing the new name and agency identify should be planned and implemented.

## Investing in Staff Development

Module 6 will provide an in-depth look at transforming your workforce. There are, however, several things that leaders should address with all agency staff from the beginning of the transformation process. Some of those items are:

* + Communicating clear expectations regarding agency direction and changing staff roles - Because change can be stressful for many, it is incumbent on leadership to be supportive to staff during the transformation. You must help them understand and embrace new roles and responsibilities while staying consistently on-message about the agency’s new direction.
  + Providing ongoing professional development – Staff who are well informed and well trained tend to be the most satisfied at work. Satisfied staff will bring their best effort to the workplace and provide the best customer service.
  + Encouraging open and honest conversations about fears, concerns and hopes – Staff can have anxiety during transformation for many reasons. They fear for the people who they have supported in facility-based settings for years and cannot imagine how they can be successfully employed in the community. They may wonder if those people will ever get a job, will be safe, will miss their friends or will be unavailable for staff to see every day. They also may wonder about their own future and their livelihood. These fears, as well as their hopes for people, should be acknowledged and addressed by leaders. You won’t be able to guarantee that there will be no problems, but you can listen and sympathize with their concerns while providing the assurance that everyone in the agency will work together thoughtfully and collaboratively toward the vision for the future.
  + Understanding that there will be supporters and resistors – As with any proposal to do things differently, there will be camps into which people will fall. Some will be pro, some will be con and others will be undecided. Leaders may have to contend with some degree of conflict during the change process. Though ideally you want everyone to be supportive and excited, that may not occur. You should do as much as possible to bring everyone along, but it is important to understand that you may not win everyone over. If, after providing information, training, and support, some staff cannot make the change to the new approach, then amicable separation may have to occur and you must learn to be comfortable with that.

## Learning from Others

*It seems like there is so much to learn. Where can I get additional help if I need it?*

* + Using external consultants – Consultants who can provide support and mentorship to the agency through the various aspects of transformation can be invaluable. Those that have had experience with competitive integrated employment and know how to use effective strategies and approaches can assist staff to learn to use those strategies more skillfully. Consultants that have been through the transformation process can provide advice about what must be considered in the process. Some consultants may have experience with supporting multiple organizations, in a variety of states or localities, to transform and thus bring a broad perspective on the work. An agency may choose to use one consultant or a variety of consultants to achieve their transformation goals. While consultants can’t make the changes for the agency, they can provide guidance and insight that will make the process more manageable.
  + Aligning with mentor agencies – Agencies that are in the process of transformation benefit from developing relationships with mentor agencies. Mentor agencies are ones that have experience they can share on a peer level with sister agencies. Agencies tend to have more trust in people and organizations that they believe have circumstances and experiences similar to theirs. Mentor agencies generally have more experience, greater expertise and an understanding that in sharing with others, they grow as an organization.

## Promoting a Strong and Consistent Message (Marketing)

### Letting your community know about the changes in your organization

Communicating commitment to the vision – As your agency is changing, the new vision for the future must be communicated to your stakeholders and the public. Many people have a preconceived notion of your agency and what it does because that is the message that you have communicated in the past. As you transition to a new way of doing things you must communicate that changes are occurring. You should let your audiences know what you believe in now and your new direction. The way the agency commitment to its vision is communicated is multi-faceted. Some vehicles for communicating your new message are:

* + Social media
  + Blogs
  + “Elevator” speeches (short and clear statements)
  + Presentations, internally and externally
  + Newspaper articles
  + Television and radio programs
  + Newsletters
  + Annual reports
  + Fund-raising events and solicitations

Changing our behavior - One strategy is subtle, but perhaps most effective. It is changing how people within the agency support people with disabilities. All staff must understand that they are modeling the message when they are with or representing people with disabilities in public. If they treat people as competent and valuable, with an ability to learn and contribute, then that is the message that is communicated. Nothing we say can be more powerful than our actions.

Supporting peer to peer education between families and individuals – The people who have benefited from competitive integrated employment and those who love them can communicate your message more strongly than anyone else. The people who have gotten jobs and experienced improved quality of life as a result may choose to share their experiences. Their families and guardians may choose to do the same. Their powerful testimonials tell the story of where you are headed as an agency and why. Some agencies have found that individualized opportunities for peer to peer education are much more successful than hosting large group forums; but both can be considered.

Developing your website, brochures, etc. with desired messages and images – What your agency is currently marketing may not be sending the message that corresponds to your new vision for the agency. In the transformation process, all marketing materials must be examined to see exactly what they are communicating and whether it is in sync with your new message. New marketing materials should:

* + Include photographs of people in competitive integrated jobs, not in disability specific work settings. Photos should show individuals with disabilities engaged with community members, not just staff or other people with disabilities, working side-by-side with co-workers or supervisors in integrated workplaces, and employed in a variety of jobs and industries, not just traditional ones.
  + Use language that is respectful – Always use “people first” language, focused on ability, not disability and understandable to the general public - no jargon.
  + Be attractive and professional in appearance.

# Conclusion

This manual reflects best practices that have been developed over the course of the past 40 years, with an emphasis on the most up-to-date and effective practices that are relevant in today’ environment where we see a tremendous acceleration toward competitive integrated employment and inclusive community supports. The manual is a synthesis of the knowledge and experience that the authors, their colleagues and numerous provider organizations across the country have gained in transforming organizations, and the public systems that fund them, so that individuals with disabilities, including those with complex support needs, can get and keep competitive integrated employment in their communities.

Clearly, there is no one way for organizations to implement a transformational change process, but we hope that the practices described in this manual – practices that are considered “tried and true” among those who make this topic their life’s work – will assist you in your efforts. Be sure to tap the many resources cited in this document, as well as experts and mentors who can provide guidance on your journey.

We urge you to advocate for and enact positive change with a sense of urgency. Be part of the exciting Employment First movement that is underway toward true systems change and full lives in the community for all individuals with disabilities. As Margaret Mead said, “Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”