

Strategies, Innovations and Technical Assistance Approaches when Implementing an Employment First Policy

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Intended Audience: Self advocates, families, direct support workers, employment professionals, agency managers, educators, researchers, social workers, technical assistance providers, state and federal policymakers, and system and non-system partners.

Session Description

In Washington State, the Working Age Adult Policy, the first Employment First policy in the nation, led the supported employment industry to develop strategies, innovations, and expanded technical assistance approaches to support the bold new change. This session will showcase some of these strategies including: (1) statewide forums identifying collaborative strategies and technical assistance needs to make the policy work, (2) innovative partnership projects developed with system and non-system entities in activities such as mentorship programs, community conversation events, and story-telling initiatives, (3) the creation of replicable employment specialist certificate programs with community colleges, (4) locally planned and implemented transition-aged high school employment projects throughout the state, (5) development of a statewide network of benefits specialists funded through the developmental disability system to provide information on cash and medical benefits, and work incentives, and (6) expanded technical assistance and training requests and activities supporting Employment for All. The people of Washington have risen to the challenge, and we are excited to share our story with you.