



Disability & Employment Symposium: Research Informing Practice and Policy

Presented by

**Interagency Committee on Employment
Interagency Committee on Disability Research**

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About the Symposium

The ***Disability and Employment Symposium: Research Informing Practice and Policy*** was sponsored by the Interagency Committee on Employment (ICE) of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR), National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For more information about the ICDR and the ICE, please see [Appendix III](#) and [Appendix IV](#).

Purpose

The symposium shared the state of the science in disability employment research and examined how research-based knowledge can affect practice and policy, and how practice and policy can influence research.

Goals

- To examine how disability employment research can be useful and relevant to the needs of employers, policymakers, and workers with disabilities.
- To open dialogue between researchers, employers, and policymakers.
- To explore future research directions.
- To improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Objectives

- To identify research-based knowledge that can be useful and relevant for policy and practice.
- To identify gaps in research and evaluation needed to better inform policy and practice.
- To identify strategies to improve collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

Outcomes

- Identification of strategic key questions for collaboration among researchers, practitioners and policymakers for improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Recommendations for collaborative initiatives to address the key questions and future directions with the goal of attaining improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

The [Panel Presentations](#) section of this report summarizes each panel's descriptions of the relationships between research, policies, and practices with arrows (↔) to indicate the relationships described. [Appendix I](#) contains abstracts for each presentation with a link to accompanying presentation materials. [Appendix II](#) contains biographies for the symposium leadership, speakers, and facilitators.

The Symposium website including the program, biographies, and presentations can be located on the ICDR website at this address: <https://www.icdrteam.acl.gov/symposium/presentations.html>

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Executive Summary

The Interagency Committee on Employment (ICE) of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR), National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) conducted a one-day symposium, *Disability and Employment Symposium: Research Informing Practice and Policy* at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

Over 20 experts shared the state of the science in disability employment research and examined how research-based knowledge can affect practice and policy, and how practice and policy can influence research. Symposium participants included approximately 150 researchers, practitioners, policymakers, advocates, students, consultants, and others interested in disability and employment issues.

Panels addressed disability employment policy, employer perspectives, workforce development, vocational rehabilitation, and youth transition. Through presentation and discussion, participants identified key future questions to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities and offered recommendations to advance collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to more effectively address these questions. The following themes emerged from the symposium:

Disability employment is a complex problem that will require collaboration among many stakeholders with varying perspectives and needs to resolve. With the new emphasis on cross-system coordination in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), it is timely to issue this call to action.

- Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners need to begin an open dialogue to understand the different contexts within which each group operates. Strategies to promote joint dialogue include brainstorming sessions, ongoing working groups, online communities of practice and learning collaboratives, and coordinating councils.
- Employer perspectives and needs must be taken into account. Strategies to ensure employer engagement include establishing partnerships and using business-to-business approaches.
- Evidence-based practices and scale-up research provide knowledge applicable to policy and practice. Agencies and practitioners must participate in the research process to test real-world implementation. Strategies to encourage involvement in research include matching research to agency needs, including agencies as active partners, and developing ongoing rather than grant-specific partnerships.

High quality and relevant research plays an important role in helping to understand and shape policy and practice in disability employment.

- Key stakeholders must be included in the research process to ensure the applicability of research findings to the real-world issues.
- To improve research uptake by employers and other practitioners, findings must be timely, presented in the language of the target audience, and delivered through communication mechanisms favored by the target audience.
- Support is needed for emerging vocational rehabilitation research that holds promise to develop best practices.

- People with disabilities must be included in mainstream research.

There is an urgent need to make better use of available data and to generate new data to advance disability employment outcomes.

- Facilitate access to federal administrative data to allow linking across datasets.
- Develop common measures for cross-system collaboration, employer engagement, and program accessibility to strengthen data collection efforts.
- Pool data across various workforce agencies in states to expedite research and evaluation activities leading to systems change improvements.

Abbreviations

ACL	Administration for Community Living
AIR	American Institutes of Research
CE	Customized Employment
CLEAR	Clearinghouse of Labor Evaluation and Research
DEI	Disability Employment Initiative
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
EBP SE	Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
ICDR	Interagency Committee on Disability Research
ICI	Institute for Community Inclusion
IEP	Individualized Education Program
ILP	Individualized Learning Plans
IPS	Individual Placement and Support
KT	Knowledge Translation
KTDRR	Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research
MDPs	Model Demonstration Projects
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports
NIDILLR	National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research
NOICC	National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
NYESS	New York Employment Services Systems
NYS	New York State
ODEP	Office of Disability Employment Policy
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
PROMISE	Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income
RFI	Request for Information
SAW/RTW	Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income Benefits

TTW	Ticket to Work
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Symposium co-chairs, Dr. Cherise Hunter and Ms. Cassandra Shoffler opened the symposium. They acknowledged the planning committee and all of those who supported the planning and implementation of the symposium. They welcomed the participants and reviewed the agenda and logistical details.

Mr. John Tschida, Chair of the ICDR, observed that the symposium addresses one of the most significant challenges facing the disability community – improving employment outcomes among people with disabilities. The employment juggernaut for people with disabilities is not a challenge that can be solved by federal agencies alone. Fiscal austerity in the federal government is increasingly limiting federal options. All constituencies must be engaged together, especially people with disabilities, to address this problem. The field must look to evidence-based practice and science to influence better policy. Best practices sometimes conflict with existing policies. Researchers and policymakers must connect in order to resolve these conflicts. The symposium will begin to make those connections and generate new insights for improving employment outcomes. Tschida stated his appreciation, on behalf of the ICDR and the planning committee, for the time and expertise each participant contributed to working toward the aspirational goal of the symposium.

Panel Presentations:

Relationships between Research, Policy, and Practice

Panel I: Interactions among Research, Policy, and Practice in Disability Employment

This panel examined how disability employment research can be useful and relevant to the needs of employers, policymakers, and workers with disabilities. Panelists discussed various interactions among research, practice and policy.

Facilitated by: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

Research ↔ Policy ↔ Practice

Dr. Demetra Smith Nightingale, Chief Evaluation Officer at the Department of Labor (DOL) offered the policymakers' perspective on the interaction between research, policy, and practice. Policymakers, practitioners, people with disabilities, and researchers have different reasons for wanting to know what works. More high quality research studies and evaluations are central to sound research, policy, and practice connections for disability employment. The establishment of rigorous disability employment research includes public stakeholder engagement and input into the evaluation and research agenda. Public stakeholder engagement helps ensure that research is relevant to programs and agencies. In setting their own research agenda, DOL examines other agency research agendas, completes evidence syntheses, and collects and reviews public and stakeholder input. To collect stakeholder input, DOL conducts Requests for Information (RFI), public forums, and stakeholder meetings. In addition, stakeholders collaborate on the DOL annual plan.

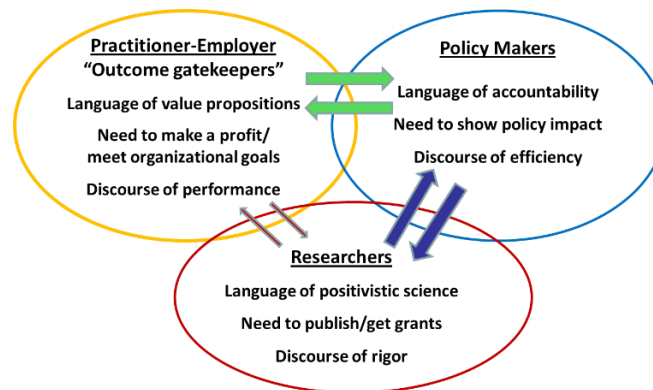
DOL applies these principles to inform priority policy areas. Current DOL policy activities center on work readiness, job training strategies, and workforce solutions. One valuable resource designed to improve research, policy, and practice is DOL's Clearinghouse of Labor Evaluation and Research ([CLEAR](#)). CLEAR

identifies and summarizes many types of research and assesses the strength of the evidence to make research more accessible to non-researchers. It includes topics such as disability employment, community colleges, and youth opportunities.

Research ↔ Policy ↔ Practice

Dr. Hannah Rudstam, Cornell University, offered insight based on her experience in organizational development related to disability and employment. Figure 1 displays the different worlds and relationships between the practitioner-employer, policymakers, and researchers. Communication between pairs of constituencies is very different. While there is generally a strong connection between research and policy, and policy and practitioners, there is often poor communication between researchers and employers.

FIGURE 1 FROM KNOWLEDGE-USER TO OUTCOME GATEKEEPER (RUDSTAM)



To improve the application of research findings to employment settings, researchers must identify the key players and stakeholders who can facilitate positive employment outcomes. These key players should be included in the research process. If their needs and contexts are appropriately understood and considered, the likelihood of creating the right kind of knowledge that can be used to optimize employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities increases.

The “Just-in-Time” model targets managers and supervisors, the “outcome gatekeepers” who are the most powerful decision makers for changing employment outcomes. Research knowledge that addresses organizational goals and decision makers’ questions will lead to better uptake and promote disability inclusiveness.

“Researchers must identify the key players and stakeholders who can facilitate positive employment outcomes.”

Research ↔ Practice

Dr. Kathleen Murphy, American Institutes for Research (AIR), described the findings of a focus group study with employers conducted by the NIDILRR-funded Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research. Small and large businesses were interviewed to gain an understanding of the key barriers and facilitators to research uptake and engagement in the research process. The findings suggest that researchers should consider layering outreach to employers in ways that address the barrier of time:

- **Useful.** Research needs to be timely, packaged for quick consumption, and connected to a business case so that its use is perceived as worthwhile.

- **Language.** Research needs to be presented in plain language, so that businesses can understand and quickly evaluate the content.
- **Individualized.** While dissemination via email (listservs) is valued, a hybrid form of outreach that combines online products with individualized conversational follow-up is best for getting research to businesses.

Panel II: Disability Employment Policy

This panel identified current policy issues and relevant research, explored future research directions, and opened dialogue between researchers and policy makers, to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Panelists discussed various interactions among research, practice, and policy.

Facilitated by: Serena Lowe, PhD, U.S. Department of Labor

Policy ⇌ Research ⇌ Policy and Practice

Dr. Paul O’Leary, Social Security Administration (SSA), described strategies for how researchers and policymakers can collaborate on new policy development. Ideally, there is an iterative interaction between research and policy development. Policy identifies questions of interest, and research develops data, interprets findings, and provides data to support policy and program development.

“Relatively few beneficiaries exit from SSA disability cash benefits for extended periods of time.”

Research on SSA beneficiaries with disabilities over the last decade has found consistent interest in work. Evaluations of programs such as the Mental Health Treatment Study and Ticket to Work (a program to help beneficiaries work toward financial independence) also found that many beneficiaries are willing to participate in return to work activities, with some eventually working at substantial levels. Despite these positive employment findings, relatively few beneficiaries exit from SSA disability cash benefits for extended periods of time. These findings led policymakers to ask whether providing employment and other support services earlier in the process, before the start of SSA benefits, would lead to better results. The collaborative process to develop early intervention services illustrated how research and policy can work together. To help develop and refine programs and policies, researchers can:

- Brainstorm with policy teams on program design options.
- Use current data to confirm need, and assess alternative approaches.
- Use data to strategize program expectations and estimate costs.
- Help define the target population.
- Validate and measure program fidelity and outcomes.
- Design the evaluation up front to ensure the necessary evidence is generated.

Practice ⇌ Research ⇌ Policy

Dr. Yonatan Ben-Shalom reported on the Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative (SAW/RTW) designed by Mathematica Policy Research and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) that seeks to advance policies and programs that promote positive outcomes for workers who experience a chronic illness, disability, or medical condition.

The SAW/RTW Collaborative utilizes a “research to affect policy” strategy that includes facilitating three policy work groups, each assigned to identify, develop, and share actionable policy steps on an

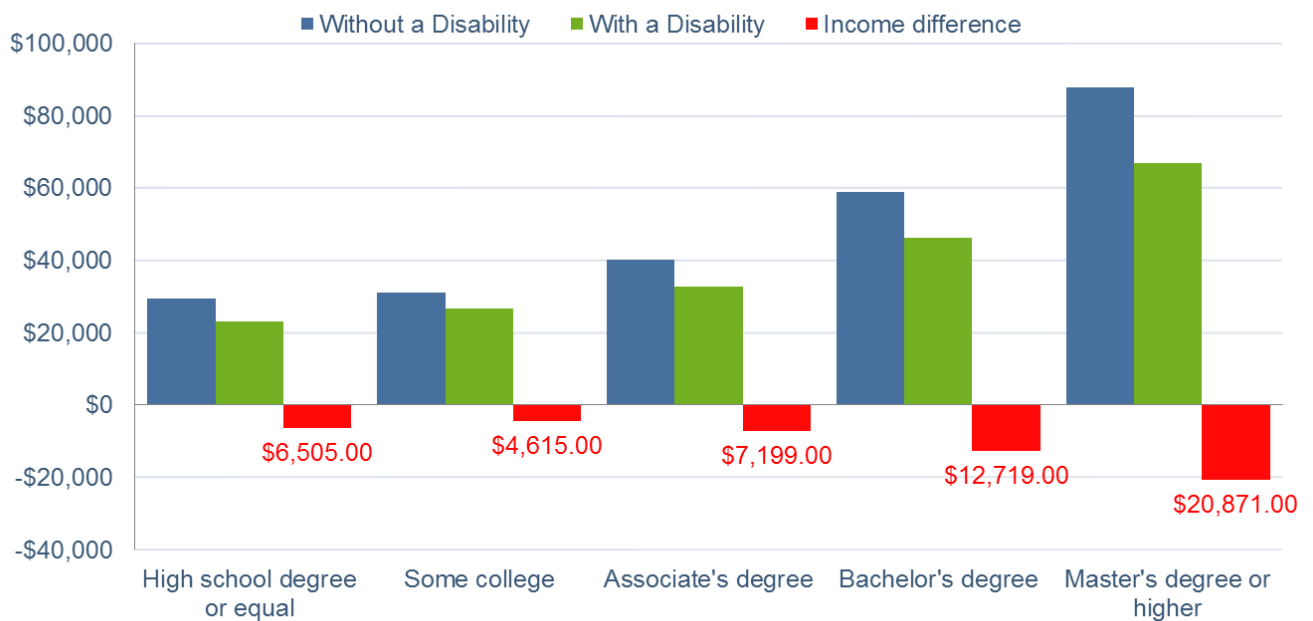
SAW/RTW-related topic; developing new SAW/RTW resources for stakeholders such as federal and state agencies and policymakers; and distributing SAW/ RTW information and products to these stakeholders and other target audiences. The work groups are led by a core group of researchers and practitioners; use communities of practice to involve the private, public, and academic sectors; promote collaborative learning through webinars and online dialogues; and conduct strategic outreach to relevant stakeholders. Preliminary recommendations from the policy work group for improving disability employment are:

- Task federal entities with leading interagency collaboration on preventing avoidable work disability.
- Encourage states to expand evidence-based early intervention services in their strategic plans for workforce development.
- Provide direct wage subsidies or refundable tax credits for workers/employers.

Research ⇨ Practice

Ms. Dahlia Shaewitz of American Institutes for Research (AIR) reported the findings of a study that examined the earnings difference between people with and without disabilities after accounting for educational attainment and workforce preparation. Using data from the 2011 U.S. Census, American Community Survey, investigators found that the higher the educational attainment of individuals with disabilities, the greater their income gap compared to their counterparts without disabilities (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: EARNINGS AND EARNINGS DIFFERENCES BY DISABILITY STATUS AND ED. ATTAINMENT (AIR)



These findings can be used for future analysis by the federal government to investigate income disparities.

Panel III: Employment of People with Disabilities: Employers Perspective

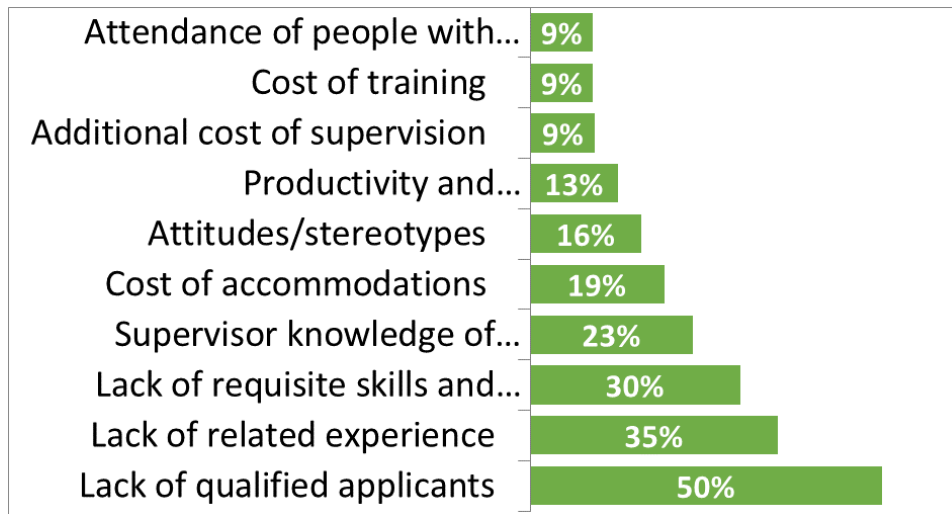
This panel identified current employer issues and relevant research in disability employment, explored future research directions, and opened dialogue between researchers and employers, to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Panelists discussed various interactions among research, practice, and policy.

Facilitated: Patrick Cokley, U.S. Department of Labor

Research ↔ Policy and Practice

Dr. Susanne Bruyère, Cornell University, reported the findings of a 2011 survey of Human Resource (HR) professionals on workplace policies for disability inclusion. Respondents represented a range of industries and organization sizes. The study identified the barriers to employment or advancement presented in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AND ADVANCEMENT (VONSHRADER, BRUYÈRE & VANLOOY 2013)



Companies also reported on their disability inclusion policies/practices related to planning, recruiting, hiring and management. Overall, about 75% of organizations had implemented at least one of eight identified practices. However, companies who had hired a person with a disability were far more likely to have the following practices in place:

- Internships for people with disabilities,
- Strong senior management commitment,
- Explicit disability-related organizational goals,
- Actively recruit people with disabilities,
- Include people with disabilities in diversity and inclusion plans, and
- Maintain relationships with community organizations.

Helping business to implement these successful practices could have a significant impact on the employment of people with disabilities.

Research challenges in this area center on access to internal workplace data and metrics, access to federal administrative data on wages and unemployment, and the ability to link data across sources.

Collaborations could help address these challenges in the following ways:

- Collaborations among researchers will maximize perspectives across disciplines.
- Collaborations with business may build incentives for employers to share information without undue risk/exposure.
- Collaborations across federal agencies that hold key data may facilitate access to administrative data, and allow for the ability to link data.

Policy and Research ↔ Practice

Amy Dwyre D'Agati of TransCen, Inc. described their collaboration with the Hispanic Business Foundation and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as a part of the ODEP *Add Us In* program. Young people with disabilities face challenges in the process of finding jobs. The program connects talented youth with disabilities to local small and mid-sized businesses using a business development approach. The program offers training on Customized Employment (CE) strategies for people with disabilities. This business-to-business approach matches the job seeker and the company to benefit all parties involved. She identified a need for a shift from “deficit marketing” that focuses on the charitable aspects of hiring to one that focuses on employer needs and the jobseeker’s assets and value to a business.

Aida Flores from the Hispanic Business Foundation of Maryland shared her experience-based perspectives working on the *Add Us In* project to help youth find jobs:

- Youth have high aspirations, but lack qualifications or appropriate academic degrees that employers require for their desired jobs.
- Even though their families often personally and financially support youth with disabilities, there are limited academic opportunities for these youth to attain the requirements and diplomas they are asked to have in many industries. Cultural and language barriers contribute to this challenge.

To address these challenges, an examination of how young people with disabilities are served by the education system is necessary to promote better job preparation.

She highlighted concerns from the perspectives of Hispanic employers she interviewed as a part of this project:

- Cost associated with hiring: accommodations.
- Additional supervision and loss of productivity.
- Youth with disabilities could have different productivity standards.
- Concerns that once in a position, the youth would stay in the position and small businesses have less flexibility/room to hire.
- Lack of training for employees about working with people with disabilities and fear of doing the “wrong” thing.

Flores identified the need for more awareness and outreach to Hispanic businesses. A follow up comment indicated that the research indicates that people with disabilities have higher turnover than people without disabilities.

Policy ↔ Research ↔ Practice

Michael Murray, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), described the progress in hiring people with disabilities within the federal government in response to the 2010 Executive Order 13548 which required the federal government become a model for the employment of individuals with disabilities. Preliminary 2014 data show increases in the number of total full-time permanent employees who have disabilities and new hires with disabilities. The following best practices gleaned from this effort could be implemented across all areas for employment of people with disabilities:

“The passage of WIOA is now prompting the government as a whole to take a closer look at disability employment.”

- Examine the benefits of people with disabilities disclosing their disability, and understand how to make it comfortable for people with disabilities to disclose, so that employers can help provide them what they need to be optimal employees.
- Set goals at the company level, and determine how to implement best practices and measure the goals.
- Ensure there is accountability for the process of employing people with disabilities.
- Mandate training for all employees about disability in the workplace. Decreasing fear should lead to increased understanding and competency. This can also include mandatory training on disability etiquette for all managers.

Panel IV: Workforce Development System

This panel identified current issues and relevant research in workforce development, explored future directions, and opened dialogue between researchers and policymakers in workforce development, to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Panelists discussed various interactions among research, practice, and policy.

Facilitated by: Wayne Gordon, U.S. Department of Labor and Savi Swick, U.S. Department of Labor

Practice ↔ Research

Dr. Douglas Klayman of Social Dynamics discussed insights gathered from the ODEP’s Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) evaluation. Challenges to conducting research on workforce system effectiveness include:

- Limited focus on the quality/functionality of the systems in which interventions are implemented.
- Limited sharing among researchers and leadership.
- Variation in workforce systems’ enrollment policies and practices.
- Limited information on disability type and severity.
- Limited data sharing.

ODEP is seeking to change the low workforce participation rate of people with disabilities through a systems change intervention. Researchers have put together an [Implementation and Systems Change Rubric](#) to measure workforce systems integration and outcomes. Each system is rated on 110 indicators to assess level of implementation. In addition, SSA data is being integrated into the evaluation to identify disability type. These research strategies will improve the quality of data available for program improvement.

Research ⇌ Practice

Dr. Arun Karpur, Cornell University, described the New York State Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (NYS PROMISE) program supported by the Department of Education. NYS PROMISE is designed to improve employment, education, and economic outcomes for youth receiving Supplemental Security Income Benefits (SSI) benefits through implementation of an intervention that engages and increases the capacity of indigenous systems serving these youth. The initiative, which is implemented in a randomized clinical trial design, is currently working to generate evidence of this design's impact.

Using the New York Employment Services System's (NYESS) administrative structure enables service linkages and coordination of employment supports across systems and provides all New Yorkers with a single point of access to all employment-related services. Thus far, this coordinated approach has benefited individuals, employers, and providers in the following ways:

- Created a unified source for case management and service coordination.
- Supported implementation of outcomes-based payment system.
- Generated data for implementation and effectiveness evaluation.

These efforts have substantial implications for how workforce development systems in New York can pool data from various agencies such as vocational rehabilitation (VR), education, developmental disability services, healthcare services, and labor.

“There is not yet a commonly agreed upon set of indicators to define and measure the strength and effectiveness of cross-system collaboration.”

Policy ⇌ Research

Michael Morris of the Burton Blatt Institute and the National Disability Institute discussed the impact of WIOA on research. WIOA promotes effective and meaningful participation of youth and adults with disabilities in all services and activities of the workforce development system. It reaffirms the role of the customer-focused, one-stop delivery system as the cornerstone of the workforce development system and brings a new emphasis on cross-system coordination of resources and collaboration for the benefit of career seekers.

WIOA presents the new opportunity to revisit the challenges and prospects of data collection to define performance at an individual and systems level. However, two major data collection and analysis barriers must be overcome:

- There is not yet a commonly agreed upon set of indicators to define and measure the strength and effectiveness of cross-system collaboration. Educational attainment, median earnings, and percentage of people with unsubsidized employment may serve as potential indicators for those experiencing employment barriers.
- There is no agreement at a federal, state, or local level regarding data collection identifying people with disabilities who seek services from American Job Centers. The six questions related to disability identified in the Affordable Care Act may be appropriate.

Common measures to evaluate employer engagement and program accessibility would also strengthen data collection efforts. WIOA presents a unique opportunity to build consensus and reach agreement on these individual and systems measures that will yield critically needed data on local and state performance to advance employment and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.

Panel V: Best Practices in Vocational Rehabilitation

This panel identified current issues and relevant research in vocational rehabilitation, explored future research directions, and opened dialogue between researchers and vocational rehabilitation service professionals, to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Panelists discussed various interactions among research, practice, and policy.

Facilitated by: Timothy Tansey, PhD, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Research ↔ Practice and Policy

Dr. Susan Foley of the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) summarized the state of best practices in VR. ICI completed a literature synthesis on VR research (<http://www.explorevr.org/>) that indicates that most VR research has relied on NIDILRR funding. The VR knowledge base is highly varied, covering participant characteristics, programs, services, and agency characteristics, but is largely based on survey and administrative data. There is limited depth of knowledge to support a “what works” conclusion. Emerging innovations and research activities developing within VR agencies hold substantial promise to become best practices. Many of these innovations are in line with policy changes from the WIOA including increased pacing of services; work experience efforts for customers with significant barriers to work; connections between VR services, community colleges, and employers for middle skill job training; and “demand side” and business relations practices.

The VR community of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must identify critical areas of need, invest in those areas, and seek to create knowledge that results in adopted best practices, including:

- Consider people with disabilities as part of mainstream research.
- Consider the customer perspective, including dual customer strategies.
- Identify solutions to implementation barriers.
- Focus on system level coordination and customer needs.
- Eliminate “job readiness” requirements.
- Reduce financial incentives for assessments.
- Include financial incentives for coordination that do not pit populations against each other.

“The VR community of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must identify critical areas of need, invest in those areas, and seek to create knowledge that results in adopted best practices.”

Research ⇌ Practice

Dr. Judith Cook, University of Illinois at Chicago, described the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an evidence-based practice model of supported employment (EBP SE) for people with psychiatric disabilities. When implemented with a high degree of fidelity, IPS has a proven ability to return noteworthy proportions of job seekers to competitive employment. It requires high levels of service coordination both within and across mental health and rehabilitation service providers, and multiple funding sources to implement and sustain.

EBP SE research offers VR:

- Well-validated fidelity measure with predictive validity.
- Evidence for work outcomes other than 26 closures.
- Reassurance that the model works in different populations and regions of the country.
- Confirmation that the team structure (in some form) is necessary for competitive employment.

- Evidence for the importance of two essential vocational services: job development and ongoing job support.

The VR system offers EBP SE researchers:

- Potential to study large national samples.
- Expertise and perspective of the VR rehabilitation counselor.
- Multi-disability perspective and interdisciplinary approach.
- Financial and other resources.
- Opportunity to conduct practice- and policy-relevant research with immediate real-world applications.

Research ↔ Policy and Practice

Dr. Joseph Ashley and Dr. Kirsten Rowe, Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, discussed the state of VR research from the agency perspective. Promising research findings include services for transition-age students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Project Search (a model for intensive internships and training) and research on handheld technologies have both been shown to improve employment success. Economic research has shown that state VR programs do provide a good return on investment and this work is being expanded. The DEI-related studies have implications for VR.

They discussed opportunities and challenges for collaborative research that can inform VR policy and practice. Opportunities include:

- Increased VR focus on transition-age youth.
- Expanded VR access to new data sources (state- and federal-level employment data).
- Heightened emphasis on competitive integrated employment.
- Increased alignment of VR with other workforce programs.

“Ongoing partnerships between research and VR agencies, beyond grant-specific collaborations, may enhance collaborative research on the VR program.”

Challenges include:

- Dynamic tension between researchers’ and VR agencies’ priorities.
- Need for both evidence-based model and information on how to maintain fidelity in implementing the models widely.
- VR agencies’ acceptance of controlled research methods.

Incentives for research and VR agencies to collaborate would likely increase the collaboration. Ongoing partnerships between research and VR agencies, beyond grant-specific collaborations, may enhance collaborative research on the VR program. State VR agencies can be involved as active partners in research through “enlightened self-interest” such as matching research opportunities to agency needs and priorities.

Panel VI: Employment Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities

This panel identified current issues and relevant research in transition and employment outcomes for youth and young adults, explored future research directions, and opened dialogue between researchers

and professionals, to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Panelists discussed various interactions among research, practice, and policy.

Facilitated by: Mindy Larson, Institute for Educational Leadership

Research ⇌ Practice and Policy

Dr. David Test, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, summarized current evidence-based practices and predictors related to secondary transition and employment outcomes for students with disabilities. Around 2000, researchers started using evidence-based practices to inform policy and programs—in particular, transition programs that lead to opportunities of employment for people with disabilities. Investigators reviewed experimental research to identify a summary of all practices and predictors used in secondary transition, with the goal to push evidence-based practices out to local and state education agencies.

The researchers identified several items that need to be addressed in future secondary transition research, including:

- Need for high quality, longitudinal data that addresses difficult topics such as family involvement, interagency collaboration, etc.
- Focus on scaling up and sustaining what we know works.
- Continued research on cost of implementing nothing.

Policy regarding transition also needs to be addressed. School systems are held accountable for the outcomes (both educational and occupational) of all their students. WIOA performance measures, high school multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) measures, early warning systems, and state longitudinal data systems are advancing to the forefront of educational policy. Perhaps then, the calls for “seamless transition” will be heeded.

Research ⇌ Practice

Dr. Marlene Simon-Burroughs, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) described their model demonstration projects (MDPs). MDPs take an intervention for which there is some evidence of efficacy in a research context and identify what it takes to “install” the practice into a real world setting with actual practitioner. The following questions are taken into account when testing intervention effectiveness:

- Can practitioners learn the intervention and implement it with fidelity?
- What supports are needed to establish learning and quality of implementation?
- Are the outcomes achieved in a more controlled setting replicated in the MDP context, and can the practice be sustained?

OSEP has recently supported two programs: the Juvenile Justice Re-Entry System and Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE). They hope these MDPs will contribute to more positive program implementation based on research evidence.

Practice ⇌ Research

Dr. Scott Solberg, Boston University, described current practices that support transition including individualized learning plans (ILPs) and work-based learning. Education specialists are currently trying to integrate the ILP as a fundamental part of individualized education program (IEP) use for transition. An ILP is a plan to personalize learning, develop college and career readiness, and prepare to meet

graduation requirements. The ILP can lead to work-based learning opportunities, such as internships or apprenticeships. However, there are many local and state challenges that are preventing adoption of the ILP, including:

- Lack of evidence-based, grade-specific ILP curriculum that includes measurable benchmarks.
- Deficiency of school leadership ILP knowledge and support, resulting in lack of whole school buy-in.
- Lack of connectivity between web-based career information and student information systems.

To address these issues, investigators developed a policy brief to help organize a statewide implementation design. A state leader network to discuss career development implementation has been established, and thus far has determined a few recommendations for ILP integration and collaboration:

- Scale state leaders network to create a national coordinating council similar to National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC).
- Support cross-sector state and regional collaborations to leverage access to work-based learning opportunities.

Closing Remarks

Leading policymakers in the federal government – Jennifer Sheehy, Acting Assistant Secretary for ODEP; Jaime Kendall, Acting Director of the Independent Living Administration for ACL; Sue Swenson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for OSERS; and Maria Town, Associate Director in the Office of Public Engagement at The White House – reiterated the critical importance of improving collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to improve disability employment outcomes. They were encouraged by the extent of innovative research, policy, and program activities occurring around the country, and by the size and energy of the crowd. They challenged all participants to take action on the information and ideas shared during the symposium to begin the change process today.

Appendix I: Presentation Abstracts

Interactions among Research, Policy, and Practice in Disability Employment Panel

Facilitator: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

Panelist: Hannah Rudstam, PhD

Cornell University

Presentation Abstract: A challenge unique to KT efforts in the field of disability and VR is the distance between researchers and intended knowledge users (employers). Research rigor alone (though always needed) may not be enough to lead to knowledge uptake if the question posed by researchers is not the question knowledge user-practitioners (employers) want answered. Further, a knowing-doing gap has limited the power of research findings. Though employers increasingly know the value of a disability inclusive workforce, they are struggling to turn this knowing into “doing”—into actions in their own organizations that lead to better employment outcomes for people with disabilities. To build more powerful conversations between researchers and employers, researchers might need to create a more nuanced definition of “knowledge user”—a definition which can reach more deeply into employer organizations to identify who is really making decisions that impact employment outcomes. During this session, I will discuss a conceptual shift from “knowledge user” to “outcome gatekeeper” and will illustrate this shift by describing a project targeting employment outcome gatekeepers. Called the Just-in-Time approach, this project is based on the premise that knowledge users who researchers typically identify and target are often not those who are the most powerful decision-makers for changing employment outcomes.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Hannah Rudstam's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Demetra Smith Nightingale, PhD

U.S. Department of Labor

Presentation Abstract: Federal agencies that identify, develop, and implement research agendas have an important role in reinforcing quality interactions amongst research, policy, and practice. This presentation will provide an overview of the role that DOL’s Chief Evaluation Office plays in promoting high quality program evaluations and disseminating and communicating findings from the evaluations to critical stakeholders. Policymakers, program practitioners, academics, researchers, other stakeholders and consumers of public and community services each have different reasons for wanting to know what works and what the evaluations find. Central to sound research, policy, and practice connections, particularly for disability employment, is raising the research quality bar and expanding the number of high quality studies. However, it is also critical that the establishment of rigorous disability employment research includes public stakeholder engagement and input into the evaluation and research agenda. Public stakeholder engagement aids in ensuring that evaluations are relevant to programs and agencies. Examples of how these principles are infused into current priority policy areas will be discussed, including how the Chief Evaluation Office sets the research agenda; the recent evidence synthesis “What Works in Job Training”, a companion paper to the White House Job-Driven Training Initiative, “Ready to Work”; and DOL’s new evidence-based clearinghouse, CLEAR (Clearinghouse of Labor Evaluation and Research).

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Demetra Smith Nightingale's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Kathleen M. Murphy, PhD

American Institutes for Research

Presentation Abstract: Members of the business community, some of whom influence relevant legislation and set corporate policies, are key stakeholders and audience for the research agenda in disability and employment. With support from NIDILRR, the Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research conducted 12 focus groups with members of the business community to determine barriers and facilitators to research uptake. Findings are relevant to discussing how the research agenda and associated outreach cohere best with the expressed needs of the business community:

- Be aware that there is wide variation regarding how “research” is defined.
- Time is an important factor: research needs to be timely; to be packaged in ways that make it possible for quick consumption; and be connected to a business case so that its use is perceived as worth the time investment.
- Outreach should map onto preferred channels of information receipt (data generated in-house or via highly trusted sources) with opportunities for dialogue.
- LinkedIn aside, social media tools used more by business to push information out, not for accessing research, though online products disseminated via email (listservs) are valued.
- Overall recommendation: a hybrid form of outreach that combines online products with individualized conversational follow-up.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Kathleen Murphy's presentation.](#)

Disability Employment Policy Panel

Facilitator: Serena Lowe, PhD, U.S. Department of Labor

Panelist: Yonatan Ben-Shalom, PhD

Mathematica Policy Research

Presentation Abstract: The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) Policy Collaborative, funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor, focuses on informing efforts to improve policies and programs that promote positive SAW/RTW outcomes for workers who experience a chronic illness, disability, or medical condition that puts them at risk for labor force exit. The Collaborative is: facilitating three policy work groups, each assigned to identify, develop, and share actionable policy steps on an SAW/RTW-related topic; developing new SAW/RTW resources for stakeholders such as federal and state agencies and policymakers; and distributing SAW/ RTW information and products to these stakeholders and other target audiences. This presentation will provide a brief overview of the Collaborative’s activities and findings to date, highlighting features of the Collaborative designed to foster interaction between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Yonatan Ben-Shalom's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Paul O’Leary, PhD

Social Security Administration

Presentation Abstract: Research on SSA beneficiaries with disabilities over the last decade has found consistent interest in work by beneficiaries. Programs such as the Mental Health Treatment Study and Ticket to Work have also found that many beneficiaries are willing to participate in return to work activities and some eventually work at substantial levels. Despite these positive employment findings, however, relatively few beneficiaries exit from SSA disability cash benefits for extended periods of time. This research has led policymakers to ask whether we could get better results if we provided employment and other support services earlier in the process—before the start of SSA benefits. This presentation will review strategies for how researchers and policymakers can effectively collaborate on new policy development, using the development of SSA’s early intervention demonstration as an example.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Paul O'Leary's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Dahlia M. Shaewitz, MA

American Institutes for Research

Presentation Abstract: For people with disabilities, does attaining educational success equal to that of their non-disabled peers ensure opportunities for financial independence and success? The existing disability literature compares earnings and income between people with disabilities and those without, examines employment rates among people with different types of disabilities, and identifies labor market outcomes for specific populations with disabilities (e.g., male heads of households and post-high school young adults).

However, the current research does not describe the income difference between people with disabilities and their non-disabled counterparts in full-time employment by educational level. Nor does it describe the subsequent economic impact on individuals, states, or the nation.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted a study to address this gap in the research by analyzing the earnings difference between people with and without disabilities after accounting for educational attainment and workforce preparation, and determining the economic impact of this discrepancy.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Dahlia Shaewitz's presentation.](#)

Employment of People with Disabilities: Employer’s Perspective Panel

Facilitator: Patrick Cokley, U.S. Department of Labor

Panelist: Aida Flores

Hispanic Business Foundation of Maryland

Presentation Abstract: The brief will present some of the challenges faced by young people with disabilities in the process of finding jobs. From our experience during the last 3 years assisting youth from 16 to 25 years old to match their desired job and set of skills with an actual job, we have found important barriers preventing youth from being hired in the fields of their interests. Some of the barriers we have identified are: lack of qualifications or appropriate academic degrees, difficulties to obtain necessary certifications, and cultural and language background. In addition, we have identified a gap between the education and qualification levels of young people with disabilities and the high level of expectations employers often have, thus preventing youth from getting the job. We have also found that, even though youth with disabilities are often supported personally and financially by their families,

there are limited academic opportunities for these youth to attain the requirements and diplomas they are asked to have in many industries. The brief closes with a discussion of action and research needs.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Aida Flores' presentation.](#)

Panelist: Amy Dwyre D'Agati

TransCen, Inc.

Presentation Abstract: Human Services agencies that assist job candidates with disabilities to acquire employment have struggled with placing candidates in long lasting careers. The traditional approach to an employer that utilizes a charity or feel-good motivation for hiring has not been shown to be successful long-term. The un- and underemployment of people with disabilities in this country is still alarmingly high. TransCen, Inc., in following research, has been modeling a business-to-business approach to job development for people with disabilities using customized employment strategies, recognizing that the only reason a business should hire ANY individual is because that person's talents add value to their business and improve their bottom line. With that in mind, TransCen partnered with two business organizations – the Hispanic Business Foundation of Maryland and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Montgomery County -rather than human services agencies for the ODEP funded Add Us In program. We connect talented youth with disabilities to local small and mid-sized businesses with a business development approach – where we offer HR services to our business partners - which has been very successful in facilitating meaningful youth internships and long term hires.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Amy Dwyre D'Agati's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Michael Murray

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Presentation Abstract: In 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order (E.O.) 13548 on Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities, providing that the federal government, as the Nation's largest employer, must become a model for the employment of individuals with disabilities.

The federal government has made great progress towards accomplishing these goals. In 2014, preliminary data shows total full-time permanent federal employment for people with disabilities had increased to 247,608, representing an increase from 12.80 percent to 13.56 percent. Preliminary data also shows new hires who were people with disabilities totaled 20,615, representing an increase from 18.18 percent to 19.74 percent. Historical data shows that the federal government hired more people with disabilities, both by percentage and real number than at any time in the past 34 years. This success has led to more people with disabilities in federal service, both in real terms and by percentage than at any time in the past 34 years.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Michael Murray's flyer.](#)

Panelist: Susanne M. Bruyère, PhD

Cornell University

Presentation Abstract: Cornell University collaborated with the Society for Human Resource Management to survey HR professionals. Respondents were asked if they had hired a person with a disability within the last year, and whether their organization had each of eight different practices or policies in place. Overall, about three quarters of the organizations had implemented at least one of the eight policies/practices. The most significant predictors for disability-inclusive practices were: larger

organizations, federal contractors, and nonprofit status. Companies who had hired a person with a disability were far more likely to have each practice in place. The greatest impact on hiring was found for: participation in internship programs for people with disabilities, demonstrated commitment to disability hiring by senior management, use of tax incentives for hiring, and active disability recruitment. Each was associated with over a threefold increase in the likelihood of having hired a person with a disability. The clear relationship between these practices and actual hiring strongly suggests that these practices make a difference. However, the majority of organizations do not currently have many of these practices in place. Implementing these practices in more organizations could have a real impact on the employment of persons with disabilities.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Susan Bruyère's presentation.](#)

Workforce Development System Panel

Co-Facilitator: Wayne Gordon, U.S. Department of Labor

Co-Facilitator: Savi Swick, U.S. Department of Labor

Panelist: Douglas Klayman, PhD

Social Dynamics, LLC

Presentation Abstract: This presentation focuses on workforce system functionality and its potential impact on the implementation and effectiveness of interventions. Through research on the Disability Employment Initiative, which includes 178 local workforce investment areas (LWIAs), Social Dynamics has collected information on the capacity to achieve positive employment outcomes for customers with disabilities, effective coordination/integration of services, employer engagement, implementation of promising practices and their sustainability over the long-term. Our findings indicate that functional workforce systems are characterized by strong leadership and interdependent partnerships that respond to the changing economic, political and social environments. Research and evaluations of workforce systems must assess the quality of the systems within which an intervention is being implemented, prior to implementation, to determine if program effects are due to other factors including the level of system function/dysfunction, implementation quality and/or program fidelity.

Another concern is the lack of data integration across federal data systems. Existing workforce data systems (WIASRD, Wagner-Peyser) do not adequately capture information on disability type or severity, which are key factors in the process of returning to work.

Integration of data systems such as WIA/WP, VR, SSA/TTW, New Hire etc., would significantly advance research on job center customers with disabilities and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries enrolled in the public workforce system.

Panelist: Arun Karpur, MD, MPH

Cornell University

Presentation Abstract: The New York State Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (NYS PROMISE) aims to improve post-school outcomes of employment, education and economic situation for youth receiving SSI benefits through implementation of a program that engages and increases the capacity of indigenous systems serving these youth. Through implementation of an outcomes-based payment systems, intensive case management and services coordination, improved inter-agency collaboration, and services for family members/parents, the program aims at achieving sustainable impact on participants, programs and systems. The implementation evaluation leverages on

an integrated database system - the New York State Employment Service System (NYESS) that pools data from various youth serving agencies in the state. These efforts have substantial implications on how workforce development systems in NYS will be emboldened with the opportunity to pool data from various agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, education, developmental disability services, healthcare services, and department of labor. The implementation evaluation framework as well as key features of NYESS will be shared with the audience.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Arun Karpur's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Michael Morris, JD

Burton Blatt Institute and National Disability Institute

Presentation Abstract: Passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014 presents a new opportunity to revisit the challenges and opportunities of data collection to define performance at an individual and systems level. The Act promotes effective and meaningful participation of youth and adults with disabilities in all services and activities of the Workforce Development system. The Act also places an increased emphasis on cross-system coordination of resources and collaboration to create career pathways for job seekers with and without disabilities. The challenges of data collection and analysis to drive future policy development will be described and recommendations will be offered to overcome these identified barriers. There is not agreement at a federal, state, or local level regarding the data to be collected to identify people with disabilities who seek services from American Job Centers. There is also not yet a set of indicators that are commonly agreed to define and measure cross-system collaboration. WIOA presents a unique point in time to build consensus and reach agreement on these individual and systems measures that will yield critically needed data on local and state performance to advance employment and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Michael Morris' presentation.](#)

Best Practices in Vocational Rehabilitation Panel

Facilitator: Timothy Tansey, PhD, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Panelist: Susan Foley, PhD

University of Massachusetts

Presentation Abstract: The National Institute on Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research has funded multiple vocational rehabilitation research projects with an increased investment in the last ten years. Emerging innovations and research activities developing within VR agencies hold substantial promise to become best practices. Many of these innovations are in line with policy changes from the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act including increased pacing of services, work experience efforts for customers with significant barriers to work, connections between VR services, community colleges, and employers for middle skill job training, and “demand side” and business relations practices.

Findings from an ICI literature synthesis on VR research (<http://www.explorevr.org/content/about>) indicate a near reliance on NIDRR funding and a high use of administrative data and survey research. The VR knowledge base is highly varied and spans across research designs, participant characteristics, programs, services, and agency characteristics. This breadth is also a weakness as there is limited depth of knowledge to support a “what works” conclusion at this juncture in its development. The VR

community of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must identify critical areas of need, invest in those areas, and seek to create knowledge that results in adopted best practices.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Susan Foley's presentation.](#)

Panelist: Judith Cook, PhD

University of Illinois at Chicago

Presentation Abstract: Individual Placement and Support is an evidence-based practice model of supported employment for people with psychiatric disabilities. When implemented with a high degree of fidelity, it has a proven ability to return noteworthy proportions of job-seekers to competitive employment. It also is an ambitious model that requires high levels of service coordination both within and across mental health and rehabilitation service providers, as well as the braiding of multiple funding sources to implement and sustain. These factors pose significant challenges to researchers and the field of vocational rehabilitation, giving both a shared stake in working toward effective solutions. This presentation will focus on how research, policy, and practice might be better aligned to address these barriers through collaboration between scientists, system administrators, service providers, and career-building customers.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Judith Cook's presentation.](#)

Panelists: Joseph M. Ashley, RhD and Kirsten Rowe, PhD

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Presentation Abstract: This presentation will review promising findings of recent and ongoing collaborative research on the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program that has involved the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and their implications for VR policy and practice. The presentation will also discuss both opportunities and challenges for collaborative research that can inform VR policy and practice, including opportunities presented by passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Finally, the presenters will review strategies that can enhance collaborative research on the VR program, and involve state VR agencies as active partners in research that can better inform VR policy and practice.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Joseph Ashley and Kirsten Rowe's presentation.](#)

Employment Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities Panel

Facilitator: Mindy Larson, Institute for Educational Leadership

Panelist: David W. Test, PhD,

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Presentation Abstract: This presentation will summarize what is known about evidence-based practices and predictors related to secondary transition and employment outcomes for students with disabilities. In addition, suggestions for future research and implications for policy change will be provided.

Panelist: V. Scott Solberg, PhD,

Boston University School of Education

Presentation Abstract: Dr. Solberg will describe current issues and relevant research as it relates to the challenges and opportunities for engaging employers in providing transition related resources and coordination with local communities. The presentation will describe strategies being used internationally and nationally to engage employers and support their efforts to provide work-based learning opportunities for youth and to become a partner with schools, youth serving community based organizations and state education/workforce development agencies. The presentation will identify strategies being used internationally to motivate employers to become engaged and identifying the structures and processes necessary to facilitate these collaborations. Furthermore the presentation will discuss ways in which online career information systems that can facilitate employer engagement and how establishing cross-sector collaborations with employers can support efforts to aligned work-based learning opportunities to student goals and establish high quality experiences that can be translate back into work related credentials, academic credits and/or college and career readiness skills.

Panelist: Marlene Simon-Burroughs, PhD

U.S. Department of Education/OSERS/OSEP

Presentation Abstract: The mission of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is to provide leadership to achieve full integration and participation in society of people with disabilities by ensuring equal opportunities in, access to, and excellence in education, employment and community living. Among other activities to implement this mission, OSERS awards and administers discretionary grants to state agencies, institutions of higher education and other non-profit organizations to support research, model demonstrations, technical assistance and dissemination, technology and personnel development, and parent-training and information. Research suggests that better outcomes for youth with disabilities may be linked to several practices. In order to achieve better outcomes for youth with disabilities, OSERS' discretionary investments are designed to identify and support the implementation of these evidence-based practices. This presentation will feature examples of how the current knowledge base on evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities has informed the development of the notice inviting applications for specific investments. Two key investments – the Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) Projects and the Model Demonstration Projects on Reentry of Students with Disabilities from Juvenile Justice Facilities into Education, Employment, and Community Programs – will be highlighted.

[Select here to download an accessible and printable copy of Simon-Burroughs, Solberg, and Test's presentation.](#)

Appendix II: Speaker & Facilitator Biographies

JOSEPH M. ASHLEY, RHD, CRC

Assistant Commissioner Grants & Special Programs Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Website: <http://vrroi.org>

Dr. Joseph Ashley serves as the Assistant Commissioner for Grants and Special Programs with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services in Richmond, VA. In his capacity with the general agency, he is responsible for identifying and securing grants to support the employment choices for persons with disabilities. He also has responsibility for Social Security Cost Reimbursement and Ticket to Work programs as well as the Agency's implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. Dr. Ashley currently serves as co-principle investigator on the NIDILRR DRRP to develop Return on Investment estimates as an outcome measure for the VR program and for the Disability Employment Initiative Round IV in Virginia. He previously led the Agency's involvement in a VCU/RRTC NIDRR DRRP to develop VR interventions for persons with Autism. He also previously served as co-director on multiple DOL grants, including DEI Round I.

YONATAN BEN-SHALOM, PHD

Senior Researcher

Mathematica Policy Research

Website: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/return-to-work-policy-collaborative>

Dr. Yonatan Ben-Shalom's research focuses on policies and programs related to the employment and income of people with disabilities. He directs the Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative for the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor, and serves as principal investigator for several studies funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. Since joining Mathematica in 2009, Dr. Ben-Shalom's work has focused primarily on SSA's disability programs and return-to-work outcomes among beneficiaries. Examples include a study of characteristics and employment outcomes among people who first received Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits before age 40, a study of factors associated with the achievement of return-to-work milestones by SSDI beneficiaries, and an analysis of long-term statistics on the employment and use of work incentives among people receiving Supplemental Security Income. He has a PhD in economics from the Johns Hopkins University.

SUSANNE M. BRUYÈRE, PHD

Director, Employment and Disability Institute, ILR School
Cornell University

Website: <http://www.edi.cornell.edu/m-research.cfm>

Dr. Susanne Bruyère is currently Professor of Disability Studies, Director of the Employment and Disability Institute, and Associate Dean of Outreach at Cornell University's ILR School. She is Project Director/Co-Principal Investigator of federally- sponsored efforts focused on employment disability policy and effective workplace practices for PWDs including an RRTC examining employer practices around disability and a project studying the effect of social networks on employment outcomes. She is a past president of APA Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology), the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, and the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, and a past chair of GLADNET (Global Applied Disability Research and Information Network on Employment and Training). She holds a doctoral degree in Rehabilitation Counseling Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is an APA Fellow, a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance, serves as an Executive Board Member of APA Division 22, and a past-chair and current Board Member of CARF.

PATRICK COKLEY

Co-Director, Workforce Recruitment Program
Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
U.S. Department of Labor
Website: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/wrp/toolkit/>

Patrick Cokley is the Co-Director of the Workforce Recruitment Program which works with colleges and universities to connect students with disabilities to an opportunity for federal employment. Previous to this role he was an Employer Policy Advisor in the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor where he provided in depth analysis on current public policy, policy priorities, policy development, and policy coordination of topic concerning employers and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Some of his main points of expertise include emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities in the workplace, as well as the relationship between diversity issues and disability in the workplace. As a graduate of Howard University, Mr. Cokley believes that it is imperative that the disability and traditional diversity communities learn to work together as they both share the core values of inclusion. Only together can both communities realize the success of an America that is inclusive of all of its citizens.

JUDITH A. COOK, PHD

Professor and Director
Center on Mental Health Services Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago
Website: <http://www.psych.uic.edu/mhsrp/>

Dr. Judith Cook is a professor of psychiatry in the University of Illinois at Chicago's Department of Psychiatry, where she directs the Center on Mental Health Services Research and Policy. She is the principal investigator of a federally funded research center along with numerous grants focused on intervention science, services research, and psychiatric epidemiology. She works with federal, state and local authorities on behavioral health and rehabilitation service system redesign and alternative financing strategies. She directed the first national, multi-site, randomized controlled trial (RCT) of supported employment for people with psychiatric disabilities. Her recent work focuses on RCTs of evidence-based practice treatments for serious mental illness, and outcomes of rehabilitation services for individuals with co-occurring mental illness and chronic medical conditions. She also helps to design and implement innovative programs to enhance the health and behavioral health of vulnerable populations. She holds a PhD in sociology from The Ohio State University.

AMY DWYRE D'AGATI

Senior Associate, TransCen, Inc.

Website: <http://www.transcen.org/>

Amy Dwyre D'Agati provides training and TA in the area of job development, transition, discovery and assessment, and customized employment for people with intellectual disabilities. She is currently the Project Director for the ODEP funded Add Us In/ Maryland project, works with several CRPs and college-based transition programs to improve employment outcomes, and is a certified national ACRE trainer on job development and the employment process. She was Project Coordinator on the NIDRR funded Center for Postsecondary Education for Individuals with ID, conducting research and disseminating information on promising practices for students with ID in inclusive postsecondary education. Prior to that, she was the Project Coordinator on the Post-Secondary Education Research Center project funded by OSEP to provide TA and collect data on college-based transition programs for students with ID. She also managed materials for the ODEP Employment Toolkit and ePolicyworks Community of Practice for the Employment First.

AIDA FLORES

President

Hispanic Business Foundation of Maryland

Website: <http://hbfmd.org/>

Aida Flores has over 25 years of professional experience promoting sustainability and social progress in developing countries. Throughout her career she has held various managing positions, focusing her work on empowering vulnerable populations in Latin- American. Since 2012, she has been applying this experience as the President for the Hispanic Business Foundation (HBF).

In this capacity, she manages the HBF's overall strategy for activities and coordinates all programs supporting the small-business sector, as well as underserved youth in Montgomery County, Maryland. Under Ms. Flores' leadership, the HBF won the 2014 Nancy Dworkin Award for Outstanding Youth Service. Moreover, Ms. Flores' role in the HBF has been instrumental in supporting youth in their transition to independence, facilitating programs that connect youth to internships and entry-level jobs. Recently, she became Board member for the Montgomery Community Media, the Montgomery County primary public access TV, and has been elected as the Vice-president of the Board.

SUSAN M. FOLEY, MD

Senior Research Fellow

Institute for Community Inclusion, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development University of Massachusetts

Website: <http://www.communityinclusion.org/>

Dr. Susan Foley is the principal or lead investigator for multiple national centers studying Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services for persons with disabilities. Her areas of research include management of state VR agencies, dual customer strategies and improved employment services for VR jobseekers who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. She received her doctorate from Heller School of Social Welfare Brandeis University and leads a team of researchers and senior policy fellows working with over 35 state VR agencies across the

country. Dr. Foley is expanding efforts to engage American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation projects into the Institute for Community Inclusions' (ICI's) ongoing research and technical assistance activities.

WAYNE S. GORDON

Director, Division of Research and Evaluation
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
Website: <http://www.doleta.gov/>

Wayne S. Gordon is the Director for the Division of Research and Evaluation, in the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). He has been involved with research and evaluation his entire career with ETA, first as an economist with the Unemployment Insurance Service; followed by ten years as supervisor for the Research Unit within OPDR. Mr. Gordon received his B.A. in Labor Economics from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. His areas of focus are unemployment insurance, reemployment services, and testing new service delivery strategies.

ARUN KARPUR, MD, MPH

Research Director NYS PROMISE/Extension Faculty
Employment and Disability Institute, ILR School Cornell University
Website: <https://www.edi.cornell.edu/p-promise.cfm>

Dr. Arun Karpur currently leads research and program evaluation of a large-scale randomized trial in NY State, with the aim of examining effectiveness of services and supports for youth with disabilities receiving supplemental security income (the NYS PROMISE initiative). His research spans across the areas of educational, workforce development and health policy evaluation impacting inclusion, economic development and well-being for people with disabilities in the U.S. and internationally. Dr. Karpur has led needs assessments for NY State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and has extensively analyzed VR's administrative data to study the impact of various VR practices and policies on employment outcomes of people with disabilities.

DOUGLAS KLAYMAN, PHD

President
Social Dynamics, LLC.
Website: <http://www.socialdynamicsllc.com/>

President and founder of Social Dynamics, Dr. Klayman has conducted research on numerous disability employment and public workforce investment programs. He is co-author of Aging into Disability Beyond 50: The Impact on Labor Force Participation and Earnings and Community Kids Wraparound Mental Health Program: An Effective Approach to Working with Families in Crisis. Dr. Klayman has served as Project Director for the USDOL's Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Evaluation since 2010 and leads the implementation evaluation for the Demonstration and Evaluation of Community College Interventions for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities and the evaluation of the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program funded by Office of Disability Employment Policy. Dr. Klayman has served as Board Member of the Journal Contemporary Sociology, the American Sociological Association Task Force on Public Sociology and the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology. He holds a PhD and M.A. in Sociology from American University and the University of Massachusetts, respectively.

MINDY LARSON

Senior Program Associate
Institute for Educational Leadership
Website: <http://iel.org/home>

Mindy Larson is a Senior Program Associate at the Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Workforce Development, where she serves as project manager and technical assistance liaison for the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. Ms. Larson's prior experience includes managing youth workforce programs in a local juvenile justice system, conducting research and program evaluation in the out-of-school time field, and managing various national projects focused on professional development, quality standards, program improvement, and policy analysis in youth workforce development. She holds a Master of Arts in Public Policy from Johns Hopkins University, Institute for Policy Studies, Baltimore, MD and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and minor in Human Development & Family Studies from Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

SHARON LEWIS

Principal Deputy Administrator
Administration for Community Living (ACL)
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Website: <http://www.acl.gov/>

Sharon Lewis serves in the dual roles of Principal Deputy Administrator of the Administration for Community Living, as well as HHS Secretary Burwell's Senior Advisor on Disability. From March 2010 to November 2013, Ms. Lewis served as the Commissioner of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Prior to her appointment as Commissioner, she served as the Senior Disability Policy Advisor to U.S. House Committee on Education & Labor, advising members of the Committee on legislative strategy and disability-related policy issues in education, employment and healthcare, and as a Kennedy Public Policy Fellow for U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children & Families. Sharon is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2010 Distinguished Leadership in National Disability Policy Award and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Chairman's Award.

In Oregon, she worked on public policy for the Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition and for the Arc. She served as the co-chair of the Oregon Family Action Coalition Team, founded DisabilityCompass.org and managed the Oregon Partners in Policymaking Program, working with individuals with disabilities and family members to participate in policy decisions at all levels. Sharon is a parent to three daughters, including one with disability. She is a native of Michigan and a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis.

SERENA LOWE, PHD

Senior Policy Adviser
Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
U.S. Department of Labor
Website: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/media/newsroom/employmentfirststates.htm>

Dr. Serena Lowe is a Senior Policy Adviser at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). In this capacity, Dr. Lowe is responsible for a number of federal

policy initiatives focused on promoting the socioeconomic advancement of citizens with disabilities, including the Department's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP). Through this initiative, ODEP provides access to mentoring and technical assistance to state governments in aligning policy and funding to emphasize competitive integrated employment as a priority outcome for citizens with disabilities.

Prior to joining ODEP, Dr. Lowe was the Founder of AnereS Strategies LLC, a consulting enterprise focused on developing innovative public policy strategies aimed at promoting the socioeconomic empowerment of low-income working families, citizens with disabilities, and other at-risk populations. During this time, Dr. Lowe also served as the Executive Director of the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD). Early in her career, she worked as a legislative advisor to two Members of the U.S. Congress. Dr. Lowe holds a B.A. in International & Public Affairs from Westminster College; an M.P.H. in International Health Policy and M.A. in International Development Policy from George Washington University; and a PhD in Public Administration from American University.

MICHAEL MORRIS, JD

Director

Burton Blatt Institute and National Disability Institute (NDI)

Website: <http://bbi.syr.edu/about/index.html>

Michael W. Morris, J.D. has more than 35 years of experience in research and system change activities advancing community participation and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. He has served as an expert advisor to the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Treasury, and Education.

Mr. Morris has an undergraduate degree in political science, with honors, from Case Western Reserve University and a law degree from Emory University. He was the first Joseph P. Kennedy Fellow in Public Policy.

In 2005, Mr. Morris established the National Disability Institute to advance the social and economic independence of persons with disabilities. In 2008, he became Director of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University. For the past ten years, Mr. Morris has been part of training and technical assistance activities funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to better engage the workforce development system to meet the needs of jobseekers with disabilities.

KATHLEEN MURPHY, PHD

Senior Researcher

American Institutes for Research

Website: <http://ktdrr.org/>

Dr. Kathleen Murphy is a Senior Researcher at American Institutes for Research in the Workforce and Lifelong Learning program. Dr. Murphy is research director for SEDL's Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research and the evaluation and technical assistance manager for the Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research. In these capacities, she leads research and evaluation activities about knowledge translation among policymakers, the business community, vocational rehabilitation professionals, and people with disabilities. She has been an assistant research professor at Baylor University and a visiting assistant professor at the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Murphy was an I.I.E. Fulbright Scholar at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, and a Rotary International Scholar at the

Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland. She received a Ph.D. in social anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin.

MICHAEL MURRAY

Principal Advisor

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Website: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/>

Michael Murray serves as the principal advisor to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Government-wide disability policies and programs. In this role, he works closely with senior level officials throughout the federal government to implement Executive Order 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities. Mr. Murray, who has had a disability since childhood, has a proven track record of increasing the inclusion of people with disabilities at the federal, state, and local levels.

Before joining OPM, Mr. Murray led efforts at the American Association of People with Disabilities, the NC Disability Action Network, NC's State Protection and Advocacy and a Center for Independent Living.

PAUL O'LEARY, PHD

Economist

U.S. Social Security Administration

Website: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/index.html>

Paul O'Leary is an economist with the U.S. Social Security Administration. He received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University. His research interests focus on policies to improve return to work outcomes for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients with disabilities. Other interests include workers' compensation and the cost and impact of such injuries and disabilities on employment and earnings. He has also developed several surveys for working-age disabled populations. Dr. O'Leary directed the Social Security Administration's effort to evaluate the Ticket to Work program and the development and implementation of the SSA's National Beneficiary Survey (NBS). He has published recently in the Social Security Bulletin and the American Journal of Industrial Medicine.

KIRSTEN ROWE, PHD

Grants and Systems Development Specialist/ VR ROI Project Coordinator

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Website: <http://vrroi.org>

Dr. Kirsten Rowe, Grants and Systems Development Specialist with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), is Project Coordinator for the NIDILRR-funded Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment (VR ROI) Project. She served as a member of the Prime Study Group for the recent Institute on Rehabilitation Issues study of ROI for VR. Dr. Rowe, who received her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Virginia (UVA), has held research and evaluation positions with the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment, the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Southeastern Rural Mental Health Research Center and the Center for Public Service at UVA. Much of her work has focused on increasing the utilization of applied research in the public mental health and vocational rehabilitation systems. She has a lead role at DARS in collaborating with other

organizations to conduct applied research on programs supporting employment of people with disabilities.

HANNAH RUDSTAM, PHD

Senior Extension Faculty Cornell University

Website: <https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/about-ilr>

After completing her PhD, Hannah Rudstam worked as a program designer in Stockholm, Sweden. Back in the U.S., she took a role as a Senior Research Scientist, researching a health-risk prevention program in Wisconsin. She then became a Senior Organizational Development Consultant at United Technologies, designing learning systems for hiring, retention and employee development. Nine years ago, she took a position as Senior Extension Faculty at Cornell University. In this role, she has designed programs on a broad range of topics related to disability and employment, focusing on the role of face-to-face leaders (managers) as arbiters of employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Over the past three years, she has designed an approach to knowledge translation for disability and employment practices called the “Just-in-Time” model. Now adopted by twelve major U.S. employers (both public and private), this model uses a situated learning approach to change organizational climate around disability inclusiveness.

DAHLIA M. SHAEWITZ

Principal Researcher

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Website: <http://www.air.org/program/workforce-and-lifelong-learning-program>

Dahlia Shaewitz leads the Disability and Rehabilitation practice area within AIR’s Workforce and Lifelong Learning Program to improve competitive employment outcomes for qualified adults with disabilities, and directs projects to support accountability, research, and professional development for adult literacy. Ms. Shaewitz is a co-Principal Investigator for Gallaudet University’s Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) to develop training and gather information about hearing assistive technology needs of consumers and technology providers. Ms. Shaewitz leads knowledge translation technical assistance tasks for NIDILRR’s Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center for rehabilitation researchers to support their work to improve outcomes for people with SCI, TBI, and burn injury. Ms. Shaewitz coordinates an education policy fellowship program for emerging public policy leaders to acquire new perspectives and skills needed to function effectively in the increasingly complex, political, and changing environment of local, state, and national policy.

MARLENE SIMON-BURROUGHS, PHD

Associate Division Director

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS)

U.S. Department of Education

Website: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>

Dr. Marlene Simon-Burroughs is an Associate Division Director in the Research to Practice Division of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). In this position, she provides leadership to develop and administer OSEP’s investments in model

demonstrations, technical assistance, technology, personnel development, and parent training, related to improving outcomes for youth with disabilities in secondary education, transition, and postsecondary education and training. Prior to joining OSEP, she worked for the National Transition Network as a technical assistance provider implementing community-based vocational programs and San Francisco State University as a research associate conducting studies on inclusion and community-based instructional programs. She has over a decade of experience working as a special education teacher and guidance counselor in public schools in Oakland, California and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Dr. Simon-Burroughs holds a PhD in special education from the University of California at Berkeley with emphasis in special education policy.

DEMETRA SMITH NIGHTINGALE, PHD

Chief Evaluation Officer
U.S. Department of Labor
Website: <http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/>

Dr. Demetra Smith Nightingale is the Chief Evaluation Officer for the U.S. Department of Labor. In this role, she is responsible for coordinating the Department's evaluation agenda and working with all agencies to design and implement evaluations. She is an expert in employment policy, workforce development, labor markets, and social policies and programs, and has conducted many evaluations of federal, state, and local programs aimed at increasing employment, skills, and income for workers and families.

Dr. Nightingale's most recent books are *Repairing the U.S. Social Safety Net* (with Martha Burt) and *Reshaping the American Workforce in a Changing Economy* (with Harry Holzer). Previously, Dr. Nightingale was a Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute and on the faculty at Johns Hopkins University's graduate program in public policy. She received her B.A. in Political Science and Ph.D. in Public Policy, both from the George Washington University.

V. SCOTT SOLBERG, PHD

Associate Dean for Research and Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development
Boston University School of Education
Website: <http://www.bu.edu/sed/>

Dr. V. Scott Solberg is Associate Dean for Research at Boston University's School of Education and Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development. His past experiences include development of Success Highways, a resiliency curriculum used in schools throughout the country, directing an online career information system (WisCareers) and leading an effort to localize it for Singapore (ecgcareers). In collaboration with the Rennie Center on Education Research and Policy, MassINC, and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Dr. Solberg has launched the Massachusetts Institute for College and Career Readiness that is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Educational Science. Dr. Solberg leads a range of college and career readiness research, practice and policy efforts in collaboration with the National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability for Youth that is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

PIMJAI SUDSAWAD, SCD

Knowledge Translation Program Coordinator
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Website: <http://www.naric.com/?q=en/home>

Dr. Pimjai Sudsawad is the Knowledge Translation Program Coordinator at NIDILRR. Dr. Sudsawad is responsible for developing and monitoring NIDILRR's knowledge translation funding portfolio, and she is the project officer of NIDILRR-funded knowledge translation grants as well as contracts.

SUE SWENSON

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)
U.S. Department of Education
Website: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>

Sue Swenson got involved with disability advocacy because her middle son, Charlie, had profound disabilities. She was active in the Minneapolis schools as well as in State and federal policy while working as a professional services marketing director before being named a Kennedy Fellow in the US Senate in 1996. She has served as the US commissioner for developmental disabilities in the US Department of Health and Human Services and now serves as deputy assistant secretary for special education and rehabilitative services in the US Department of Education. She served as CEO of The Arc of the United States and executive director of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. She was educated at the University of Chicago and earned an MBA at the University of Minnesota.

SAVI SWICK, MA, MSFS

Director of Policy Planning and Research
Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
U.S. Department of Labor
Website: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/about/>

Savi Swick is the Director of Policy Planning and Research at the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) of the Department of Labor (DOL) in Washington, DC. Ms. Swick manages the research and evaluation needs as well as agency performance for ODEP. Previously, Ms. Swick was at DOL's Office of Policy Development and Research in Employment and Training Administration (ETA) as a Supervisory Workforce Analyst. In ETA, Ms. Swick managed an extensive portfolio of federal evaluations of several programs employing experimental and non-experimental evaluation methodologies. Previously, Ms. Swick was an Organizational Development Manager and a Statistician at the County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency. Prior to that, she was the MIS Manager at Altam Associates, managing performance and evaluation of the Screening and Brief Intervention program funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. Ms. Swick received her graduate education from Colorado State University and Georgetown University in Political Science/Economics.

TIMOTHY TANSEY, PHD

Professor
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Website: <https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/>

Dr. Timothy Tansey received his PhD in Rehabilitation Counseling Psychology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is an assistant professor in the Rehabilitation Psychology program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Tansey has over 15 years’ experience as a rehabilitation counselor and rehabilitation researcher. He has published in the areas of vocational rehabilitation of veterans with disabilities, self- regulation, and applying novel technology in vocational rehabilitation and rehabilitation counselor education. Dr. Tansey has extensive experience in adapting technology and utilizing social media for knowledge translation and dissemination activities. He is a principal investigator or co-investigator on projects supported by the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education- National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research.

DAVID W. TEST, PHD

Professor and Co-Director

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Website: <http://www.nsttac.org/>

Dr. David W. Test is a Professor of Special Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He teaches courses in single subject research, transition, and professional writing. The majority of Dr. Test’s publications have focused on self-determination, transition, community-based training, and supported employment. Along with Dr. Nellie Aspel and Dr. Jane Everson he wrote the first transition methods textbook titled Transition Methods for Youth with Disabilities. Dr. Test currently serves as a Co-Project Director (with Drs. Paula Kohler, Loujeania Bost, Deanne Unruh, Rich Luecking, and Mary Morningstar) of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition and Co-Director on the North Carolina Indicator 14 Post-school Outcomes Project and the IES CIRCLES project (with Dr. Claudia Flowers). Finally, he and Dr. Bob Algozzine currently serve as co- editors of Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals.

MARIA TOWN

Associate Director

Office of Public Engagement

The White House

Maria Town is the Associate Director in the Office of Public Engagement at the White House where she manages the disability and federal agency portfolios. Prior to this appointment, she was a policy advisor at the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy where she focused on issues related to youth with disabilities as they transition into the workforce. Ms. Town’s portfolio includes creating career development opportunities in the classroom, developing leadership in young people with disabilities, and building opportunities for inclusive volunteerism. She writes about fashion, disability, and design on her blog CP Shoes. She formerly worked for her alma mater, Emory University in the Vice Provost’s Office of Community and Diversity where she helped to develop programming and policies to improve access, equity, and inclusion on Emory’s campus. While a student at Emory University, she majored in Anthropology and served as the University-wide Student Government Association President.

JOHN TSCHIDA

Director

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

Formerly National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) Administration for Community Living

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Website: <http://www.acl.gov/>

John Tschida has spent the last 15 years using data and research to drive policy change. He comes to NIDILRR from Allina Health in Minnesota, where he served as director of public policy and innovation. In this role, he was developing integrated health delivery systems and financing models for people with disabilities. Allina Health recently merged Courage Center, Minnesota's leading nonprofit rehabilitation service provider, where for 14 years Mr. Tschida led a public policy and research team that focused on defining and achieving better outcomes for complex populations. His team received one of the first Health Care Innovation Awards distributed by CMMI at CMS. Prior to joining Courage Center, Mr. Tschida served as a research fellow at the National Rehabilitation Hospital Center for Health and Disability Research. Earlier in his career, he served as assistant director of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office. A graduate of Macalester College, Mr. Tschida holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and Health Services Research certificate from Georgetown University.

TARYN WILLIAMS

Acting Chief of Staff

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

U.S. Department of Labor

Website: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>

Taryn Williams was recently appointed as the Acting Chief of Staff at the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor after serving as the Associate Director for Public Engagement at the White House, on detail from the U.S. Department of Labor. She has worked at ODEP since 2009 and previously a Senior Policy Advisor delivering expertise on disability policy issues including workforce development, education, Medicaid, social security and transition outcomes of youth with significant disabilities. Prior to joining ODEP, Ms. Williams worked as the Research Coordinator for Leadership Programs at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) and as the Director of Programs at the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL) headquartered in Chicago. Ms. Williams holds a bachelor's degree in Public Policy with a concentration in Education from Brown University and a master's degree in Education with a concentration in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University.

Appendix III: About the ICDR

Mission

The Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) promotes coordination and cooperation among federal departments and agencies conducting disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research programs. The ICDR was established by the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in 2014. The specific duties of the ICDR are to:

- Identify, assess, and seek to coordinate all federal programs, activities, and projects, and plans for such programs, activities, and projects with respect to the conduct of research related to disability and rehabilitation research, including independent living, assistive technology, and universal design research;
- Obtain input from policymakers, representatives from federal agencies, individuals with disabilities, organizations representing individuals with disabilities, researchers and providers;
- Share information about research being carried out by members of the Committee and other federal departments and organizations;
- Identify and make efforts to address areas of research that are not being adequately addressed;
- Identify and establish clear research priorities;
- Promote interagency collaboration and joint research activities and reduce unnecessary duplication of effort;
- Optimize the productivity of Committee members through resource sharing and other cost-saving activities; and
- Develop a comprehensive government wide strategic plan for disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.

Organizational Structure

To achieve its mission, the ICDR is organized into an Executive Committee and five standing committees.

Executive Committee

The ICDR is chaired by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or her designee. The authorizing statute identifies the leadership from 16 other departments, agencies and offices, as well as others the President may designate, as statutory members who provide leadership and oversight for the committee. Statutory members include:

- Secretary of Health and Human Services,
- Director of National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research,
- Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration,
- Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services,
- Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy,
- Secretary of Defense,
- Administrator of Administration for Community Living,
- Secretary of Education,
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs,
- Director of National Institutes of Health,
- Director of National Institute of Mental Health,

- Administrator of National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
- Secretary of Transportation,
- Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs,
- Director of Indian Health Service,
- Director of National Science Foundation, and
- Administrator of Small Business Administration.

Other federal departments, agencies and offices can designate representatives to the ICDR as non-statutory members. ICDR standing committee co-chairs also participate. The Executive Committee meets quarterly.

Standing Committees

Standing committees carry out many of the ICDR duties, in their specific area of interest. Each standing committee is led by volunteer co-chairs representing different agencies. Membership is open to federal employees and external stakeholders. Standing committees meet regularly.

Standing committees can be created or discontinued in response to ICDR priorities. The current Standing committees are focused on five topical areas:

- Assistive Technology,
- Disability Statistics,
- Employment,
- Medical Rehabilitation, and
- Health and Health Disparities.

For More Information

The ICDR welcomes the participation of federal representatives, researchers, individuals with disabilities and their representatives and others with an interest in disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research. More information about the ICDR can be found at ICDR.acl.gov or by sending an email to ICDRinfo@neweditions.net.

Appendix IV: Overview of the Interagency Committee on Employment (ICE)

The goal of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) is to create and maintain a sustainable interagency coordination network on disability, rehabilitation, and independent living research. The ICDR currently maintains five standing committees, including the Interagency Committee on Employment (ICE). The ICE works to promote awareness and understanding of research gaps and synergies related to disability employment programs and research.

The ICE provides a forum for information sharing and dissemination between federal agencies to facilitate and promote a cohesive, strategic federal program of employment research that can help further opportunities and economic security for people with disabilities, identify research gaps and synergies, and alleviate unnecessary duplication of research efforts. The ICE also:

- conducts a public forum for people with disabilities and their representatives, researchers, and other stakeholders;
- provides leadership for the development of the federal employment research agenda and related programs;
- provides opportunities for public and private entities to meet with the ICDR and share information;
- provides support and resources that will enhance interagency information sharing, increase federal research partnerships, and enable the ICDR membership to engage in research capacity building activities;
- promotes increased awareness regarding research and knowledge gaps;
- promotes interagency cooperation to support, maintain, and enhance employment- related data systems; and
- creates greater awareness of individual members' missions and thereby explores opportunities for joint research funding activities.

The benefits of participation in the ICE include: (1) support for relevant agency agendas, proposed disability employment research topics, or other related initiatives; (2) access to tools and information about disability employment research programs, projects, and activities; and (3) mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships that can achieve your agency goals, address emerging topics, leverage resources, and result in cost-savings.

All are welcome to become part of the ICE. If you are interested in joining the ICE, please speak to a staff member at the symposium registration desk or contact us at icdrinfo@neweditions.net. For more information about the ICDR and to access reports and resources, please visit the website at ICDR.acl.gov.