Division of Developmental Services: Employment First Project Plan
FY 2024-2026

North Star: Increase employment for individuals with DD, SMI and SUD

GOAL					
Outcome 1: Maintain collaboration between state agencies that facilitate employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD), Serious Mental Illness (SMI), & Substance Use Disorder (SUD)					
BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS					
Individual Agency policy difference do not impede provision of services to individuals; Memorandums of Understanding that include commitment to efforts to colloborate and resolve differences and inconsistencies; Alignment of state regulation and administrative policy with Employment First policies and values					
GOAL	**PARTY RESPONSIBLE & INTERDEPENDENCIES**	**OUTCOMES**	**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**	**REPORTING METHOD**	**DATE DUE**
1.1 Collaboration between state agencies to develop policies that do not impede employment services of the targeted population.	DBHDS, DMAS, DARS, VDOE, & VCU	1.1.a Identify data collected from all agencies that can be incorporated into the semi-annual data reports to provide a more comprehensive picture of transition and employment	1.1.a.i Review all data collected	N/A	
			1.1.a.ii Identify data that best represents the system	N/A	
			1.1.a.iii Update semi-annual report to include additional identified data	Semi-Annual Report	
	DBHDS, DMAS, DARS, VDOE	1.1.b. DBHDS collaborating with DARS, DMAS, VDOE regarding the IPS ASPIRE Grant for Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Population	1.1.b.i Participate in all meetings, trainings	Attendance Records	
			1.1.b.ii Participate in Fidelity Reviews	Fidelity reports	
			1.1.b.iii Provide information for grant	Emails	
GOAL	**PARTY RESPONSIBLE & INTERDEPENDENCIES**	**OUTCOMES**	**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**	**REPORTING METHOD**	**DATE DUE**
	DBHDS, DARS, VDOE, DMAS	1.1.c. DBHDS Collaborating with DARS & SME's Griffin and Hammis regarding Customized Employment (CE)	1.1.c.i Finalize proficiency training and organizational mentoring	Video Library and Documents	
			1.1.c.ii Identify ways to increase provider capacity;	Provider Development Plan	

			1.1.c.iii Establish a fidelity review process	Fidelity Tool	
			1.1.c.iv Review Value Based Purchasing options and ways to ensure financial stability of the EBP		
	DBHDS, DARS, VDOE, DMAS	1.1.c. DBHDS Collaborating with DARS & DOE and SMEs regarding EPIC grant	1.1.c.i Participate in Meetings and trainings	N/A	
			1.1.c.ii Work with team to increase access to supports and services to increase	N/A	
			1.1.c.iii Report data from EPIC project in the semi-annual employment data report	Semi-Annual Report	

Quarterly Summary: DBHDS and DARS and DMAS continue their interagency partnerships through the SELN Monthly meetings and are discussing ways to improve collaboration, work has been done on rate setting for IPS employment. In addition DBHDS and DARS continue to collaborate on IPS Fidelity Reviews.

GOAL

Outcome 2: Consistent understanding of community-based employment by stakeholders throughout Commonwealth to support Virginia's Employment First Initiative.

BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS

Tools and trainings that help stakeholders to have meaningful conversations that lead to employment; Increase capacity and competence of employment providers (school, CSB, ESO, etc.)

GOAL	PARTY RESPONSIBLE & INTERDEPENDENCIES	OUTCOMES	SUPPORT ACTIVITIES	REPORTING METHOD	DATE DUE
2.1 Provide training consistent with the best practices in the field of employment	DBHDS	2.1.a Ensure case Managers have the most current information on employment and employment supports and services.	2.1.a.i Review previously developed training material for case managers and	N/A	
			2.1.a.ii Identify any gaps in training materials for case managers,	List of Gaps	
			2.1.a.iii Develop training to fill in the gaps;	Training Materials	
			2.1.a.iv Distribute training and FAQ with memo.		
GOAL	**PARTY RESPONSIBLE & INTERDEPENDENCIES**	**OUTCOMES**	**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**	**REPORTING METHOD**	**DATE DUE**
	E1AG Policy Committee	2.1.b Ensure providers of services understand the benefits of employment and do not discourage participation in employment based on Myths and Misconceptions	2.1.b.i Develop appropriate training material for providers	Training Materials	
			2.1.b.ii Create ESO provider FAQ;	FAQ	
			2.1.b.iii Create FAQ's on Employment Options Discussion for Case Managers	FAQ	
			2.1.b.iv Create provider FAQ for Supported Employment with WorkPlace Assistance;	FAQ	
			2.1.b.v Distribute training FAQs with recorded scenarios and companion memo.	FAQ	

	E1AG Ad Hoc Behavioral Health Committee	Ensure providers, individuals and families, understand the benefits of employment for people with BH needs and people in recovery.	Create FAQ for IPS Providers, Individuals and Families	FAQ	
			Create Provider FAQs for IPS	FAQ	
	E1AG Training Committee	2.1.c Ensure people with developmental disabilities and their families understand the benefits of employment as well as common myths and misconceptions	2.1.b.i Develop appropriate training material for providers	Training Materials	
			2.1.b.ii Update exiting FAQ's for family members and self-advocates	FAQ	
			Update FAQ document for SCs	FAQ	
			Update FAQ for DARS VR Counselors	FAQ	
			Update FAQ for DARS Residential and Day Providers	FAQ	
			2.1.b.iv Distribute trainings to accompany FAQs with companion memo.		

Quarterly Summary: DBHDS and DMAS developed and provided training to SC's on a host of topics mandated by CMS, including DD and VR employment services in Virginia. The training was vetted by the E1AG, DMAS, and DARS and sessions were scheduled throughout 2024-2025. Questions posed during trainings were developed into a customized FAQ document reviewed and vetted by DARS, DBHDS, and DMAS staff. A dedicated meeting was held on 6/18/2025 to reset the group. The goal of the reset was to plan and prioritize committee work, review past projects, both completed and incomplete, and discuss future projects. Input was solicited about ways to focus committee time and individual projects that will advance competitive integrated employment for individuals via self-employment, IPS, supported employment, customized employment, and pre-ETS. Efforts of the Policy and Education and Training Committees were refocused on updating existing educational content for plain/accessible language, and clarifying content. A focus will also be on using recordings and video content to share information and stories about employment. The E1AG reviewed the tool for ongoing monitoring of employment settings for compliance with the HCBS Settings rule and recommended additional information to help determine choice, person-centeredness, inclusion and other areas are present (as relevant) to DD supported employment. New narrative was posted to the employment page of the DBHDS website as part of a mini website refresh. Narrative focused on simplied text and headings with expanded drop downs. The format of the webpage, include addiing graphics and photos will be revieweind and discussed during the October E1AG meeting.

GOAL

Outcome 3: Track and analyze existing and new data to increase employment opportunities for the targeted population

BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS

Increased number of individuals are employed in competitive integrated employment.

GOAL	PARTY RESPONSIBLE & INTERDEPENDENCIES	OUTCOMES	SUPPORT ACTIVITIES	REPORTING METHOD	DATE DUE
3.2 Develop base line for individuals who receive new waiver slots by 07/2018 that are employed by 12.31.2019 broken down by age	Data Committee	3.2.a Submit data request to obtain information;	3.2.a.i Data request submitted;	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.2..ii Data reviewed;	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.2.iii Data included in Semi-Annual Report	Semi-Annual Report	
3.5 Ensure appropriate provider capacity across the state to serve indviduals seeking employment	Data Committee	3.5.a Identify areas of the state that need additional capacity for employment and develop an implementation plan.	3.5.a.i Review current providers and capacity;	Survey and Map	
			3.5.a.ii Review current need;	Survey and Map	
			3.5.a.iii Identify processes to increase timely access to supports.	Survey and Map	

		3.5.b Identify areas of the state that need additional capacity for IPS employment and develop an implementation plan.	3.5.b.i Review current providers and capacity;	Survey and Map	
			3.5.b.ii Review current need;	Survey and Map	
			3..5.b.iii Identify processes to increase timely access to supports.	Survey and Map	
		3.5.c Identify areas of the state that need additional capacity for Customized employment and develop an implementation plan.	3.5.c.i Review current providers and capacity;	Survey and Map	
			3.5.c.ii Review current need;	Survey and Map	
			3.5.c.iii Identify processes to increase timely access to supports.	Survey and Map	
3.7 Ensure the Commonwealth establishes data targets to meaningfully improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities	Data Committee	3.7.a Identify data targets for individuals with developmental disabilties	3.7.a.i Review national trends for employment of people with developmental disabilities.	Utilize NCI/ICI Data Reports and Highlights	
			3.7.a.ii Update targets based on current numbers in comparison to national	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.7.a.iii Identify specific waiver targets for DD in addition to overal target above	Semi-Annual Report	
		3.7.b Identify data targets for individuals with SMI	3.7.b.i Review national trends for employment of people with developmental disabilities.	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.7.b.ii Identify sources of SMI data between projects with DBHDS , DARS and DOE	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.7.b.iii Establish targets based on current numbers in comparison to national	Semi-Annual Report	

		3.7.c Identify data targets for individuals with SUD	3.7.c.i Review national trends for employment of people with developmental disabilities.	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.7.c.ii Identify sources of SMI data between projects with DBHDS , DARS and DOE	Semi-Annual Report	
			3.7.c.iii Establish targets based on current numbers in comparison to national trends	Semi-Annual Report	

Quarterly Summary: A data dashboard was developed to allow community members to view employment data from the employment page on the DBHDS website. Data was collected for the semi-annual report and the semi-annual report completed. With the Commonwealth achiveing 25% of people with DD employed during this reporting period. The Commonwealth also met 84% of the waiver target.

GOAL
Outcome 4: Reduce Barriers to Employment for All Populations

BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS
Policy recommendations that lead to increased employment; Best practice implementation guides; Communication materials for stakeholders

GOAL	PARTY RESPONSIBLE &	OUTCOMES	SUPPORT ACTIVITIES	REPORTING METHOD	DATE DUE
4.1 Identify barriers to competitive integrated employment for individuals with developmental disabilities	Policy/Education Committee	4.1.a Develop a plan to address known barriers to employment.	4.1.a.i Gather information from people with DD, families, support coordinators and providers to identify common barriers.	Reference NCI Survey Data for barriers shared by individuals/families, Implement Individual/Family Benefit Webinar in collaboration with VBPD.	

			4.1.a.ii Identify potential solutions to those barriers.	Update Individual and Family FAQ, Create Provider FAQ and SC FAQ	
			4.1.a.iii Identify individuals who can help bust those barriers.	Update Peer Mentor Training to incorporate myths and misconceptions	
			4.1.a.iv Develop plan to address those barriers.	Schedule DBHDS listening sessions/forums with DD Community members, Refresh DBHDS website with plain/accessible language information and resources on employment, Collaborate with other community partners to host webinars and trainings focused on busting myths and misinformation, Develop recorded videos focused on addressing common myths and misconceptions	
4.2 Identify barriers to competitive integrated employment for individuals with SMI	Ad Hoc Behavioral Health Committee	4.2.a Develop a plan to address known barriers to employment.	4.2.a.i Gather information from people with SMI, families, support coordinators and providers to identify common barriers.	Develop CSB survey to assess the need for supported employment resources and supports Schedule DBHDS listening sessions/forums with SMI Community members,	
			4.2.a.ii Identify potential solutions to those barriers.	Develop QII addressing SMI barriers	
			4.2.a.iii Identify individuals who can help bust those barriers.	SMI Peer Mentor Activities/Training	
			4.2.a.iv Develop plan to address those barriers.	Plan	

4.3 Identify barrier to competitive integrated employment for individuals with SUD	Ad Hoc Behavioral Health Committee	4.3.a Develop a plan to address known barriers to employment.	4.3.a.i Gather information from people with SUD, families, support coordinators and providers to identify common barriers.	Schedule DBHDS listening sessions/forums for individuals with SUD	
			4.3.a.ii Identify potential solutions to those barriers.	Create Behavioral Heath FAQ	
			4.3.a.iii Identify individuals who can help bust those barriers.	SUD Peer Mentor Activities/Training	
			4.3.a.iv Develop plan to address those barriers	Plan	

Quarterly Summary: A dedicated meeting was held on 6/18/2025 to reset the E1AG. The focus of the reset is explained in the summary of the policy committee work.

GOAL
Outcome 5: Assure an active and committed membership that will help advance the Employment First Initiative for all.
BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS
Active member participation; Membership representative of all stakeholders

GOAL	PARTY RESPONSIBLE &	OUTCOMES	SUPPORT ACTIVITIES	REPORTING METHOD	DATE DUE
5.1 Assure current guidelines for membership that delineate roles and responsibilities with supporting application	DBHDS	5.1.a Review and update materials at least annually	5.1.a.i Review guidelines & E1AG Membership Application	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.1.a.ii Update as needed.	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
5.2 Ensure an active and committed membership that is mission driven.	DBHDS	5.2.a Recruit members that are committed to employment First	5.2.a.i Review member participation after each meeting.	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	

			5.2.a.ii Contact members who missed the meeting an ensure their health, safety and welfare if they did not communicate absence.	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.2.a.iii Maintain information about presence and absence.	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.2.a.iv Communicate with members when absences becoem chronic and determine desire to remain on committee	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.2.a.v Recruit members for vacancies	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.2.a.vi Provide new members with orientation	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
5.2 Ensure a membership selection committee that is focused on Employment First	DBHDS	5.3. a Identify members of E1AG willing to sit on membership committee	5.3.a.i Gather applications and send them to the members identified	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.3.a.ii Provide members with scoring matrix to individually score applications	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.3.a.iii Have members submit score to staff at DBHDS for compilation and discussion at meeting	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.3.a.iv Schedule meeting for committee to scores and selection	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	
			5.3.a.v Notify new member of selection and schedule orientation	Membership application materials and review/adherence to application process/metrics	

Quarterly Summary: New members representing the BH community were added to the E1AG and have been meeting alsongside E1AG members. They also meet via an Ad Hoc

Behavioral Health Workgroup with updates reported out during the full E1AG meeting. New Member orientation was provided. New format was developed for the agenda with a E1AG roster created to facilitate tracking of member attendance. Committee meeting attendance facilitated through dedicated Teams meeting link for each committee.