

Supporting the Lives We All Want: Using Employment for Integration and Success

HCBS Conference 2021

December 2021

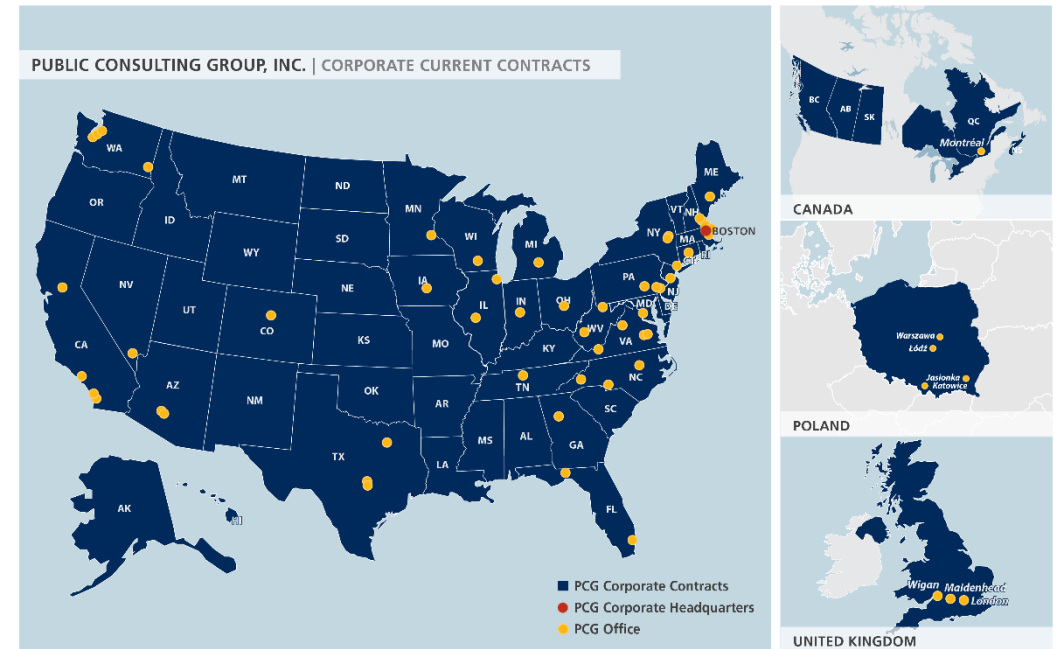
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Overview of PCG

- Founded in 1986, PCG is headquartered in Boston, MA and employs more than 2,600 professionals in 60 offices
- Management consulting to assist public sector agencies better serve their targeted populations
- Five Practice Areas
 - Human Services
 - Health
 - Education
 - Technology Consulting
 - Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL)



Introductions



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Strategies for Supporting People with Disabilities to Work and Live in Their Communities

Federal Regulations that Drive Systemic Changes Strategies

HCBS Final Rule

Ensures “that individuals [who] receive Medicaid HCBS in settings that are integrated in and support full access to the greater community...”

- Includes opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive and integrated settings
- Leverages Person-Centered Planning
 - Document needs, goals, and preferences of an individual
 - The plan must include services to address the needs, goals, and preferences

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Increases access for people with disabilities to high-quality workforce services that prepare them for competitive, integrated employment (CIE).

- Defines competitive, integrated employment and customized employment
- Students with disabilities will receive pre-employment transition services
- Increased strategies to reach CIE
- Increased coordination with WIOA partners and employer engagement



Focus on Employment

Both HCBS and WIOA focus on community inclusion and participation through typical roles.

- **Employment** is a social determinant of health, and a typical role used by most adults to improve their lives and get what they need
- While employment for people with disabilities has been an ongoing conversation, it hasn't always been prioritized from a policy or funding perspective
- There are populations that have been disproportionately impacted
 - Individuals with a high impact of disability
 - Transition-aged youth

Now more than ever, agencies must work with their partners as well as with the individuals they support, using a common and shared vision to ensure people with disabilities achieve employment.



Employment First

- U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Employment Policy (ODEP)
- Systems change – premise that all people, including individuals with disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life
- Systems that are publicly financed are encouraged to align policies, service delivery, and reimbursement structures
- Defines integrated employment as “work paid directly by employers at the grater of minimum or prevailing wages with commensurate benefits, occurring in a typical work setting where the employee with a disability interacts or has the opportunity to interact continuously with coworkers without disabilities, has an opportunity for advancement and job mobility, and is preferably engaged full-time.”
- States have committed to Employment First



Opportunities for Meaningful Change

National

HCBS and WIOA require states to provide equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities and people without disabilities.

State

State WIOA unified plans and HCBS Statewide Transition Plans can **align leadership and vision** that result in meaningful change by redesigning existing systems through **policy, funding, and coordinated efforts** across agencies and funding streams.

Program

Sequenced and coordinated services support community integration and employment.

System alignment can support people with disabilities living their lives like- and alongside- those without disabilities



Indiana

Indiana is an Employment First State

Timeline	Activity
April 2017	Legislation passed to support Employment First
September 2020	The Commission on Rehabilitation Services Adopted an Employment First Plan
May 2021	Presentation to key state agency leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlight strategies• Data collection



IN VR is a partner in Employment First

Changes in policy to reduce access barriers

- Continuous
- Zero exclusion
- Focus on specific populations including individuals with substance use and mental health conditions

Training opportunities

- Strategic training across partners including VR staff, providers, stakeholders
- Coordination with partners to maximize impact
- Inclusive service delivery

Enhanced Services Supporting Education:

- Pre-ETS
- CCIR
- WIOA Section 511 requirements for youth seeking subminimum wage employment
- CCIR



Career Counseling and Information & Referral (CCIR)

Career Counseling and Information & Referral (CCIR) – individuals of any age working at subminimum wage

- Continued partnership with The Arc of Indiana and Self Advocates of Indiana (SAI)
 - Peer to peer approach in group setting
 - Onsite in 14(c) facilities
 - One-on-one available as needed
- Use of technology to expand access to CCIR during pandemic
- Region 1 pilot – enhanced VR staff participation



Career Counseling and Information & Referral (CCIR)

Youth seeking subminimum wage employment

- October 2020 - more robust process for completing requirements
- Training to staff
- Increased access to experiences and information to support an informed choice
 - Information about full array of services and supports available
 - Opportunity to participate in discovery and work experience
- Individuals with disabilities who want to work, should be provided access to services to support an employment goal
- Messaging to stakeholders to align expectations and communication



Changes in VR Policy Related to Substance Use

- ✓ Reduce barriers/restrictions to accessing VR services
- ✓ Address stigma
- ✓ Individual case review – no automatic assumptions that substance use is a barrier to employment
- ✓ Employment as part of recovery
- ✓ Harm reduction



Cross Agency Collaboration



DOL/ODEP Technical Assistance

VOICE project

- Webpage [Employment and Mental Health Resource Hub](#)
 - Employment and wellness
 - Stigma
 - Lived Experience
 - Work and public assistance
 - Data highlights
- Task force

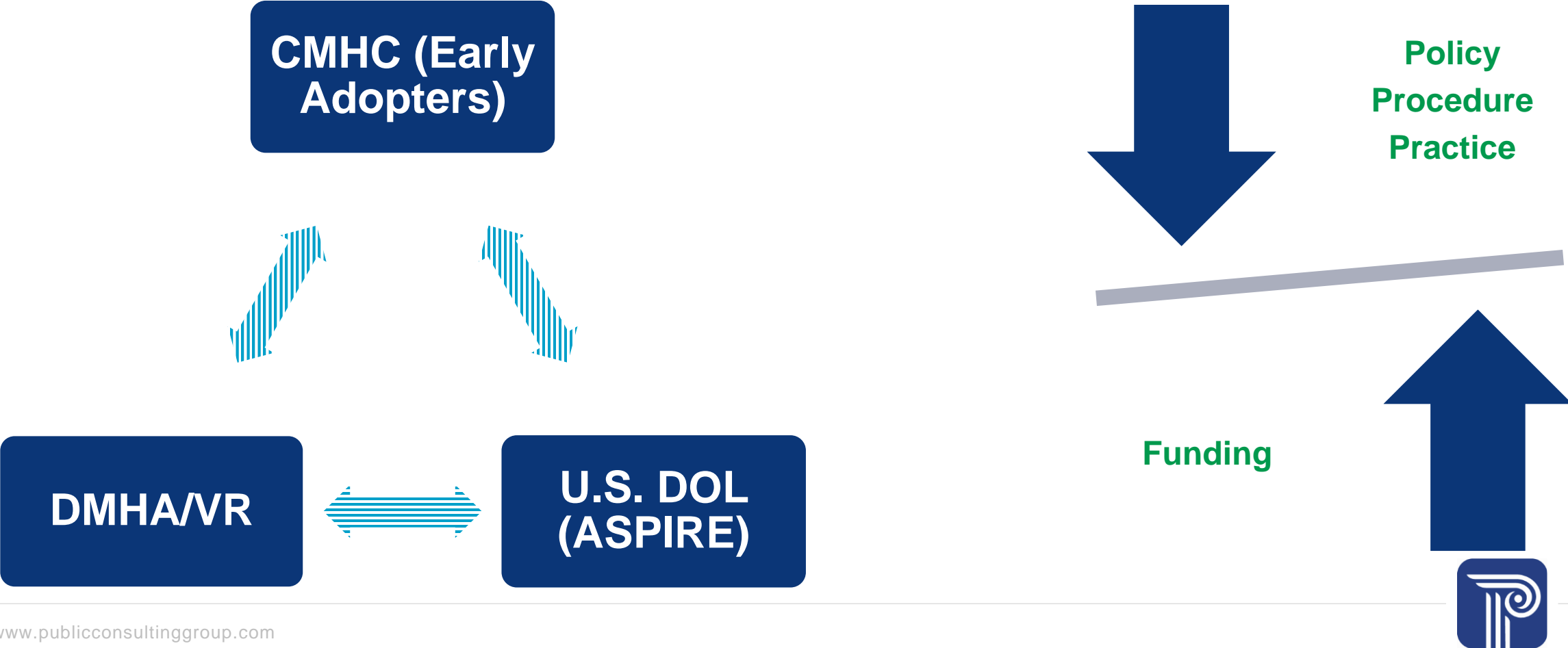
ASPIRE project

- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) implementation
- Strategic Plan



Feedback Loop – IPS Implementation

- ✓ IPS implementation involves local, state, and national partners.
- ✓ IPS Early Adopters will help to inform infrastructure and systemic change needed to align funding with policy/practice to better support employment access and expand and sustain IPS.



Training

All Stakeholders

○DOL/ODEP
Technical Assistance

Online Resource Hub

Mental Health
Employment Summit –
inaugural event held
May 2021

VR Staff Training

○Employment as part
of recovery

Mental Health and VR
eligibility

Harm reduction

VR Provider Training

○Inclusive Service
Delivery



Colorado

Colorado is an Employment First State

- June 2016 **Senate Bill 16-077, Employment First For Persons With Disabilities** signed into law
 - Collaborative multi-agency approach to increasing competitive integrated employment opportunities
- May 2018 **Senate Bill 18-145 Implement Employment First Recommendations** signed into law
 - Implementation of employment first advisory partnership recommendations
 - Required Department of Labor and Employment and Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to promulgate rules requiring all providers of supported employment to obtain nationally recognized training certificate or earn a nationally recognized certification
- July 2019 Colorado Legislature **approved funding to initiate the state's Office of Employment First**
- July 2021 **Senate Bill 21-039, Elimination of Sub-Minimum Wage** signed into law



Employment First Advisory Partnership (EFAP)

- **Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF)**
 - State Medicaid agency, 2 HCBS waivers offering Supported Employment
- **Colorado Department of Education (CDE)**
 - Supporting transition age youth, state system design to ensure CIE the 1st option individuals with disabilities have during and after high school
- **Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE)**
 - Supporting Inclusive Higher Education & educational opportunities that leads to viable employment
- **Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS)**
 - Supporting CIE for the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) Community through Individual Placement & Support Model, individuals residing at Colorado Regional Centers & individuals with brain injury through MINDSOURCE, Colorado's Brain Injury Network
- **Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (CDLE/DVR)**
 - Supporting youth and adults with disabilities obtaining CIE



Employment First Advisory Partnership (EFAP)

Also represented on EFAP -

- People with disabilities seeking employment
- Families of people with disabilities
- Advocates for people with disabilities
- Service Providers
- Others focused on cross-disability interest



Office of Employment First



COLORADO OFFICE OF
EMPLOYMENT FIRST
— *Work Elevated* —

Our vision...

A culture of inclusive, meaningful, and competitive employment for all people.

Our mission...

Leading Colorado toward equitable employment reaching all people with disabilities through –

- Collaboration
- Systems Innovation
- Training Excellence



JFK Partners

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



Training & Learning Communities

- Employment First-focused curriculum
 - Benefits planning
 - Best practices for school-age youth & educators
- Skill training and on-going support for employment service providers

Resources and Technical Assistance

- Disability Benefits 101 (DB-101)
- Implementing best-practice, supported & customized employment models
- Pilot projects demonstrating best practice services & supports coordination

Colorado Office of Employment First

Communication

- Messaging on the power and importance of employment for all people with disabilities to varied audiences
- Engagement through the COEF website, newsletters, and social media
 - Success stories

Evaluation & Sustainability

- Implementation of Employment First initiatives
 - Financial sustainability
- Data sets on employment outcomes and COEF effectiveness
- Advancement of employment service system capacity and funding

Elimination of Sub-Minimum Wage

What Does The Bill Direct Colorado To Do?

Prohibits an employer to receive a 14-c waiver (special certificate) after June 30, 2021.

Phases out SMW by 2025 or earlier through transition planning and technical assistance given by the Department.

Shares on an annual public data on the progress of the elimination of subminimum wage.

Adds two new employment services to the SLS and DD waivers: Line of Sight and Ongoing Benefits Counseling.

Removes Job Coaching (individual) and Job Development (individual) from the Service Plan Authorization Limits (SPAL) for increased access for members.

Adds Medicaid Buy-In to the DD Waiver

Supported Employment Incentive Based Pilot

Goal

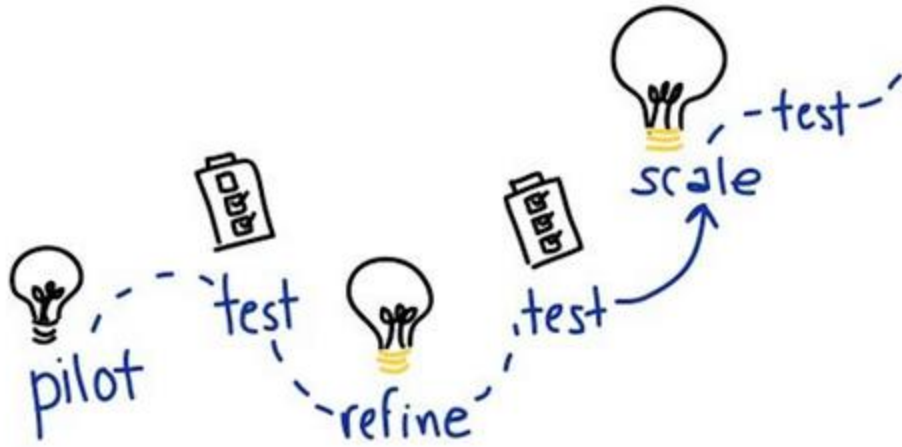
- Support Waiver Members to obtain Competitive Integrated Employment through value-based payments rather than fee-for-service

Funding

- Priority: R-16 Employment First Initiatives and State Programs for People with IDD FY 2019-20.
- Included in the Long Bill passed by General Assembly and funding initially authorized for Pilot through 2022
 - Provider services paid for with designated pilot funding, not waiver dollars
 - Funding has been extended utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds until July 2024



Innovative Practices Included in Pilot



- Incentivizes providers for positive job outcomes including Waiver Members working more hours, or a promotion or positive job gain.
- Reimbursement rates based on Waiver Member hours worked, not hours of coaching .
- Fading of job coaching over time through tiered outcome-based reimbursement structure.



Panel Discussion

Discussion Questions

- How do you work with your state partners to align opportunities?
- Has Employment First changed the way in which your agencies collaborate with other state partners who have a “stake” in employment for people with disabilities?
- Stakeholder engagement is critical to successful change. How do you approach stakeholder engagement related to employment for people with disabilities?
- What advice do you have for the agencies attending the conference who are interested in expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities?





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