

Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan

September 2006

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Introduction

Connecticut embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process in January of 2006. This process resulted in the development of Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan.

The plan begins with the needs of our key stakeholders: individuals with disabilities and employers. We were striving to create a one-page strategic plan that would guide Connecticut's efforts to maximize opportunities for self-sufficiency and full participation for its residents with disabilities.

In this document, we review the components of the plan and the process undertaken to create the plan.

Timeline

- ❑ November 2005: Award Notification
- ❑ December 2005 to January 2006: Steering Committee Formed
- ❑ January 2006: First Steering Committee Meeting
- ❑ January 2006 to Present: Expansion of Leadership Opportunities
- ❑ February 2006 to May 2006: Needs Assessment
- ❑ June 2006: Employment Summit
- ❑ June 2006 to August 2006: Plan Development
- ❑ September 2006: Plan Submission
- ❑ January 2007: Inclusion of MI G Strategic Plan into Connecticut's Long Term Care Plan

Details on each of these elements is presented on the following pages.

Award Notification

November 2005

Connecticut received notification of award for a Comprehensive Employment Systems grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on November 24, 2005. Development of the strategic plan began immediately. An initial meeting was held of existing project staff by the end of November. A draft process was developed and potential key stakeholders interested in providing leadership to the design, implementation and evaluation of the strategic plan were identified.

Steering Committee Formed

December 2005–January 2006

Strategy: Share decision making with stakeholders

Outcome: A strong leadership team to guide the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant.

Personal invitations to participate on the MIG steering committee were extended to key stakeholders in the state. State agency representatives were identified for both their demonstrated leadership and commitment to improved employment opportunities and their ability to influence their respective agency leadership. Representatives of consumer groups were selected based on similar criteria. There were 27 people who agreed to participate on the steering committee. From its inception, the Steering Committee has been an active and vocal group. Meetings have been held monthly, and occasional subcommittees have been formed to work on specific tasks.

1st Steering Committee Meeting

January 2006

Strategy: Share decision making with stakeholders

Outcomes:

- Organizational structure determined
- Distinct research areas identified
- Process for determining priorities established
- Strategies for planning process determined
- Employment Summit approved

As previously mentioned, the MI G project team met within days of the CMS award to identify potential members for the Steering Committee and to draft a process for developing a Strategic Plan. The process draft was presented to the Steering Committee on January 27 for approval. The process included several essential elements and a timeline for completion. An agreement on hosting an Employment Summit to assure participation and support of high-level state leadership was critical at this meeting.

High Level Leadership

June 2006 – Present

Strategy: Share decision making with stakeholders including high level leadership.

Outcome to date:

- Nine Commissioners and/or Deputy Commissioners participated in the Employment Summit

One of the requirements for the Strategic Plan is to involve a high-level leadership group in the planning process. Connecticut's Steering Committee involves a cross-representative group of consumers, advocates and state agency representatives. Members were chosen based on their involvement and influence.

Even still, the Steering Committee recognized a need to involve a different level of stakeholders, including business leaders, state agency Commissioners, and representatives of the executive and legislative branches of government. Despite significant interest in participating in plan development, their time is limited. The Steering Committee opted to involve these high-level leaders, beginning at the Employment Summit where all stakeholders would be involved in prioritizing the challenges that the plan would address.

Steering Committee Decisions

January, 2006

The Steering Committee elected co-chairs to provide leadership for the group. To date, decisions have been made by consensus. Regular monthly meetings provide the required structure and accountability for the planning process.

Information required for the determination of strategic priorities was discussed on January 27. It was decided that the planning process should be based on the needs of the people and on the needs of the employers. State agency personnel and providers also were identified as important stakeholders since they represent existing government funded support and service systems. Their input was important with respect to questions of capacity and internal system strengths and weaknesses. The needs of the people, however, had to be determined primarily by the people themselves.

The following questions were determined to be essential components of the needs assessment informing the strategic plan.

Steering Committee Questions

January, 2006

- **Extensive search of relevant literature:** How do people without disabilities find jobs? How do people with disabilities find jobs? Are there common barriers across all populations to obtaining successful employment? Can we determine economic costs and benefits to the system as more people become self-sufficient?
- **Analysis of census and Department of Labor data:** What are the current employment rates of people with disabilities at a local level? What are the projected jobs available by industry over the next 5 years? Where do people with disabilities live relative to job opportunities? What information exists at a local level relative to job opportunities?
- **Assessment of the needs of the people:** What are the unmet needs?
- **Assessment of the needs of employers:** What are the unmet needs?
- **Assessment of existing state councils, work force development boards, and other entities to identify opportunities for coordination:** What organizations have a common vision and goals? Will they partner with us?
- **Assessment of employment processes of four key state agencies:** Where are the opportunities and overlaps? What is the capacity of the existing system to collect information? What information is currently collected that we could use to measure change?

Needs Assessment Components

February 2006 – May 2006

The needs assessment included seven distinct research activities. This approach was used to gather information about multiple sources and stakeholders.

1. Extensive review of relevant literature
2. Examination of Connecticut census and Department of Labor data
3. Assessment of existing state councils, boards and other entities
4. Needs assessment of individuals with disabilities: surveys and interviews
5. Needs assessment of individuals with disabilities: key informant interviews and focus groups
6. Needs assessment of employers: mail surveys and focus groups
7. Examination of employment processes of four key State agencies

Needs Assessment

February 2006 – May 2006

Strategies:

- Partner with local community organizations and businesses;
- Share decision making with stakeholders;
- Assure data driven change based on the needs of the people.

Outcomes:

- 35 focus groups hosted
- 6000 surveys mailed
- 36 key informant interviews conducted
- Partnering agreements signed with 4 regional chambers of commerce and 22 advocacy organizations
- 16 councils/commissions identified with common vision and goals.

The needs assessment was assigned to the University of Connecticut Health Center. Three methods for data collection were established including key informant interview, survey and focus groups. A parallel process for 7 components of the needs assessment - from the assessment of the needs of the people to the assessment of existing councils- began. Partnering agreements provided funding for community based organizations to arrange and host focus groups, identify key informants and mail surveys to members. Relationships with community based networks was essential to insuring access to information.

Common Themes: Needs Assessment

May 2006

The project team met several times in the last 2 weeks of May to finalize common themes from the Needs Assessment for presentation at the Employment Summit. These themes were presented at the Summit, and were prioritized by all stakeholders.

A list of the common themes is on the following slide.

Key Challenges

June 2006

Challenges facing Individuals (Job Seekers)

- Discrimination
- Lack of employers willing to hire; willing to make accommodations
- Mismatch between skills, interests, and job positions
- Hiring process
- Complexity of state and federal benefit programs
- Transportation
- Low expectations from birth
- Lack of school involvement (crosses many levels)
- Lack of access to post-high school training
- Limited availability of transition services
- Time limited service provision
- Disability imposes challenges

Challenges facing Employers:

- Lack of skilled, qualified people applying for jobs
- Lack of financial incentives for employers
- Concerns about expensive or difficult workplace accommodations
- Lack of knowledge about impact on health insurance rates, disability and other expenses for employers
- Lack of knowledge about the incidence and outcomes of lawsuits for employers
- Employers perceptions about disabled/older workers
- Lack of knowledge about specific disabilities/health conditions

Employment Summit

June 2006

Strategy: Partner with local community organizations and businesses; Share decision making with stakeholders; Assure data driven change based on the needs of the people

Outcome: 160 Stakeholders participated in determination of priorities for the plan including self advocates, business owners, Superintendents of public school districts, leadership of state agencies and providers.

The Summit was designed to solicit input from 160 key stakeholders, including business leaders, State Agency Commissioners, individuals with disabilities, students, teachers, Superintendents, leaders of Governor-appointed Commissions with a focus on disability, and leading advocates. These participants joined together at the Summit to determine the priorities for Connecticut's strategic plan.

Employment Summit Details

June 2006

Timing. The Summit was conducted as a morning event, starting with breakfast and networking at 8:00 a.m. The early start was designed to assure the highest participation of business representatives. The Steering Committee debated this start time extensively, as it posed some hardship for some of the participants with disabilities. People with disabilities were offered over night accommodations the night before the Summit to address the complications that an 8:00 a.m. start time might cause. By 8:30 a.m., the Summit was underway with a series of presentations.

Presentations. The Summit began with presentations that focused on the purpose of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, the goal for the Summit, and the results of the comprehensive needs assessment.

Small Group Discussion. To actively engage participants in prioritizing the challenges, participants spent time working at tables arranged by region of the state and representing a diversity of stakeholders. They were asked to reach consensus on the top challenges facing individuals with disabilities and facing businesses in relation to hiring individuals with disabilities.

Report Out. Facilitators from each group reported out on the key challenges identified during small group discussion.

Employment Summit Results

June 2006

The Employment Summit brought together key stakeholders to prioritize the multiple challenges identified in the Needs Assessment. The purpose of a strategic plan is to choose the most strategic beginning point. With that in mind, the Summit was designed to answer the essential question: Which challenge should we address first with our time, energy and resources?

The priorities identified at the Summit included the following:

- **Employee needs**
 - Transportation
 - School involvement
 - Transition services
- **Employer needs**
 - Employer perception
 - Workplace accommodations
 - Impact on insurance
 - Lack of skilled employees

Plan Development

June 2006 - July 2006

Strategy: Assure data driven change

Outcome: One page strategic plan draft to present to steering committee.

As the staff prepared to present information from the Summit to the Steering Committee, the priorities from the Summit were further collapsed into the following categories, which now form the basis for the Plan:

- School to Work Transition
- Stakeholder Education
- Recruitment, Employment and Retention
- Transportation
- Technical Assistance

Strategic Plan Components

The following components are included in Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan:

- Core Values
- Purpose
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Goals and Objectives
- Quarterly Action Steps
- Strategies
- Baseline Data

Note: A copy of the plan is included as the next page in this document, but only for reference purposes. The plan should be viewed in its full-size, printed on 11X17 paper.

Strategic Plan

1-Page Strategic Plan

Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

Date: October 2008

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities in current plan | Threats to making plan |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Person-Centered Planning | 1 Alliances | 1 Employer Readiness for Change | 1 Alliances/Low Expectations |
| 2 Key Staff | 2 Transportation | 2 Technology and Interest | 2 Liability Concerns |
| 3 Measurement/Systems Change | 3 Compliance/Gap in Benefit Programs | 3 Business/Community Partnerships | 3 Accommodation Concerns |
| 4 Medicaid Policy | 4 Transition Linkage | 4 Job Growth/Expansion | 4 Lack of Active Engagement |
| 5 Individual Employment Support | 5 Time-Limited Employment Supports | 5 Large Scale Corporate Initiatives | 5 Need for Training |
| 6 Evaluation | 6 Lack of System Coordination | 6 Personal Support Systems | 6 Lack of Private Transportation |
| | | | 7 Struggle: Depression and Stagnity |

| Core Values/Beliefs | Purpose (Why) | Key Themes/Capabilities | Themes | Goals Annual Priorities | Actions (How) Quarterly | Baseline/Measures |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Full participation in community includes opportunity for employment.</p> <p>There must be a mutual benefit to the employee with a disability and the employer.</p> <p>Individuals have the right to choose their employment and their employer.</p> <p>Employers have the right to choose whom they hire.</p> <p>Success is defined by the individual.</p> <p>The individual's employment choices and resulting services and supports should be based on individual person-centered desires.</p> <p>Anyone, regardless of disability, must have the opportunity to participate in the labor force and have the right to fair treatment.</p> | <p>Purpose 2008</p> <p>To maximize opportunities for self-sufficiency and full participation.</p> | <p>1 1 School to Work Transition</p> <p>2 2 Stakeholder Education</p> <p>3 3 Recruitment, Employment & Retention</p> <p>4 4 Transportation</p> <p>5 5 Technical Assistance</p> | <p>Strategies To Make the Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local communities and business; Coordinate state level policy change, initiatives and resources with local level initiatives; Share decision-making with stakeholders; Assure data driven change; Expand definition of disability to include the aging workforce. <p>Annual Theme Name</p> <p>Preparation</p> <p>Celebration/Reward</p> <p>Stakeholder Recognition Event</p> | <p>Key Initiatives Annual Priorities</p> <p>School to Work Transition</p> <p>Curriculum based work opportunities; Integration of Assistive Technology that can follow to work; Understanding of Employer Opportunities for Mentoring; Ensure all needs are met</p> <p>Stakeholder Education</p> <p>Outreach campaign to increase expectations for people with disabilities in achieving career potential including video, printed materials, media</p> <p>Recruitment, Employment, Retention</p> <p>Central Information System for Employers; Outreach Campaign to address insurance and liability concerns; Innovative strategies for workplace accommodations</p> <p>Transportation</p> <p>Improve access to transportation through innovative initiatives including a person centered voucher system</p> <p>Technical Assistance</p> <p>Coordinate state level resources including systems; Address gaps in state level policy including health care policy; Support local level initiatives with technical assistance</p> | <p>Risks and Accountability Quarterly Priorities: First Quarter October - December 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Establish workgroups for each of the annual priorities including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) School to Work Transition, 2) Stakeholder Education, 3) Recruitment, Employment and Retention, 4) Transportation, 5) Technical Assistance/Community Implementation. *Establish additional workgroup for Evaluation activities. *Establish workgroup meeting schedule and organizational structure for steering committee; *Determine design of pilots and relevant policies for Connecticut based on literature review at workgroup level. *Develop and distribute RFP for local level pilots to demonstrate priority-based innovation at a community level. *Design state level evaluation plan. *Establish baseline data at state level. *Design structure and methods for collecting and storing cross-agency data. | <p>Baseline Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *% of people competitively employed, statewide and in each of the local demonstration sites *% of individuals with disabilities in competitive employment compared to % of individuals without disabilities in competitive employment *employer attitudes *job seeker attitudes *customer satisfaction relative to the interventions for employers and employees *current employment practices *state data collection capacity |
| | <p>Goal, Measurable Goal</p> <p>A job for everyone who wants one!</p> | | | | | |

Core Values

The Steering Committee agreed early in the process on the following core values to guide the development and implementation of Connecticut's plan:

- ❑ Full participation in community includes opportunities for employment.
- ❑ There must be a mutual benefit to the employee with a disability and the employer.
- ❑ Individuals have the right to choose their employment and their employer.
- ❑ Employers have the right to choose whom they hire.
- ❑ Success is defined by the individual.
- ❑ The individual's employment choices and resulting services and supports should be based on individual person centered designs.
- ❑ Anyone, regardless of disability, must have the opportunity to participate in the labor force and have the right to fair treatment.

Purpose

The purpose of Connecticut's plan is to maximize opportunities for self-sufficiency and full participation. In simple terms . . .

**A job for everyone
who wants one!**

S.W.O.T. Analysis

MI G staff spent many hours studying the comprehensive needs assessment to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as defined by the people. The analysis was presented to the steering committee at a retreat. It includes an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses internal to the system, and the opportunities and threats posed by external factors. This analysis will allow the plan to build on the assets identified in the needs assessment and to ensure that any challenges are addressed up-front.

For purposes of this plan, "internal" was defined as components of the government infrastructure, and "external" was defined as elements within the stakeholder environment, namely job seekers with disabilities and employers.

As each of the priority areas are developed into implementation steps, the workgroups will ensure that they are building on our internal strengths and external opportunities, while being mindful of our internal weaknesses and our external threats.

A description of each of the components follows.

Strengths

1. **Person Centered Planning:** There are components within the current system where the individual's employment choices and resulting services and supports are based on the individuals' person-centered designs.
2. **Key Staff:** Throughout the relevant government settings, there are key staff invested in building on the strengths and tackling the weaknesses within the system to achieve a common goal.
3. **Momentum from Systems Change Initiatives:** There are numerous systems change efforts currently underway, all tied together through the vision of the Long Term Care Plan. They include the following:
 - a. NGA Policy Academy for Young Adults with Disabilities
 - b. Mental Health Systems Transformation
 - c. Mental Health Waiver Impact Study
 - d. Quality Assurance/ Improvement
 - e. Nursing Facilities Transition
 - f. Real Choice Systems Change
 - g. Community Integrated Personal Assistance
 - h. Independence Plus
 - i. Autism Pilot

Strengths (continued)

4. **Medicaid Buy-In:** Connecticut has designed a progressive Medicaid buy-in through the Medicaid for the Employed Disabled Program. This program provides Medicaid coverage for working people with disabilities beyond the traditional income and asset limits for Medicaid, allowing for \$75,000 in gross earnings and \$10,000 in assets for an individual (\$15,000 for a married couple).
5. **Individual Employment Support Components:** The needs assessment identified successful components of the current system, including vocational counseling, supported employment and job coaching/job training.
6. **Evaluation:** This plan begins with a solid baseline through the project needs assessment and the system has the capacity to build an effective evaluation component through our partners at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

Weaknesses

1. **Attitudes:** There are a number of attitudes that get in the way of success, including low expectations of individuals and of the system's capacity to change.
2. **Transportation:** From the government side, the current system is described as inadequate and inflexible for meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
3. **Complexity and Gaps in Benefits Programs:** There are rules within the various benefit programs that serve as disincentives for employment, both in their complexity and in the gaps that they create in coverage among a wide array of programs.
4. **Transition Linkages:** There are gaps in the linkages between formal "institutional settings" and employment, including linkages for those exiting high school, post-secondary education, prison, or nursing facilities.
5. **Time Limited Employment Supports:** The employment supports that are provided to people with disabilities are often bound by time restrictions, and people feel there is a lack of ongoing employment supports.
6. **Lack of System Coordination:** There is an overarching theme that identifies a lack of system coordination within and among the systems designed to support employment and long term needs of individuals with disabilities.

Opportunities

1. **Employer Readiness to Change:** Through the needs assessment, employers identified some barriers to recruitment and retention of employees and expressed a readiness to change to address the needs of this untapped resource.
2. **Technology/Internet:** The use of technology and the internet were identified as opportunities for the planning process.
3. **Business and Community Partnerships:** The foundation for the needs assessment and the Employment Summit included local and regional partnerships that accounted for the needs of both businesses and job seekers in the local labor market.
4. **Job Growth/Economy:** The needs assessment has identified areas of job growth that are targeted over the next five to ten years, and these areas may be an opportunity to explore.
5. **Large Scale Corporate Initiatives:** There are a number of large scale corporate initiatives to consider. Two examples are Aetna's diversity agenda and the development of both a training and a distribution center for Walgreen's.
6. **Personal Support Systems:** Many participants in the needs assessment talked about having a strong support system that allowed them to become employed.

Threats

1. **Attitudes/Low Expectations:** The attitudes of employers and employees include the issues of low expectations, as well as a lack of understanding of abilities.
2. **Liability/Insurance Concerns:** Employers expressed concerns about increases in liability and in insurance costs resulting from hiring employees with disabilities.
3. **Accommodation Concerns:** Employers and job seekers expressed concerns about the cost and availability of accommodations.
4. **Lack of Active Engagement in Employment:** Although we talk about a high unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities, many of these individuals are not actively engaged in an employment search.
5. **Need for Training:** The needs assessment identified a need to do training with both employers and employees.
6. **Lack of Private Transportation:** Beyond the systems-level transportation issues, employees expressed concerns about the cost and availability of private transportation.
7. **Dependency/Security:** The struggle between dependency on benefits and economic security came up as a key threat, centering on the economic viability of staying on cash benefits and not working, staying on cash benefits and working part-time, and working at a level that will end cash supports.

Goals

- ❑ **Goal 1:** To improve the transition process for young adults moving from school to post-secondary education or employment.
- ❑ **Goal 2:** To increase expectations for people with disabilities in achieving career potential.
- ❑ **Goal 3:** To increase the recruitment, employment and retention of individuals with disabilities into Connecticut businesses.
- ❑ **Goal 4:** To increase access to transportation for individuals with disabilities.
- ❑ **Goal 5:** Provide technical assistance to support the development of effective strategies for increasing employment of people with disabilities.

Goal 1

Goal 1: To improve the transition process for young adults moving from school to post-secondary education or employment.

Objective 1: Develop curriculum-based work opportunities

Objective 2: Integrate AT that follows the individual from school to work

Objective 3: Increase student understanding of benefits

Objective 4: Provide opportunities for peer mentoring

Objective 5: Address the Independent Living needs of transitioning students

Objective 6: Develop community-level initiatives

Goal 2

Goal 2: To increase expectations for people with disabilities in achieving career potential.

Objective 1: Develop an outreach campaign to increase expectations.

Goal 3

Goal 3: To increase the recruitment, employment and retention of individuals with disabilities into Connecticut businesses.

Objective 1: Develop a central information system for employers

Objective 2: Develop an outreach campaign to address insurance and liability concerns

Objective 3: Develop innovative strategies for workplace accommodations

Objective 4: Develop community-level initiatives

Goal 4

Goal 4: To increase access to transportation for individuals with disabilities.

- Objective 1: Explore innovative transportation strategies, including the use of a person-centered voucher system.
- Objective 2: Coordinate with the Department of Transportation's strategic planning process.
- Objective 3: Develop community-level initiatives

Goal 5

Goal 5: Provide technical assistance to support the development of effective strategies for increasing employment of people with disabilities.

Objective 1: Coordinate state level resources

Objective 2: Conduct policy analysis and address gaps in state level policy

Objective 3: Support local level initiatives

Quarterly Action Steps

The following action steps will begin on October 1, 2006 to move the strategic plan into the implementation phase:

- ❑ Establish workgroups for each of the annual priorities including:
 - 1) School to Work Transition,
 - 2) Stakeholder Education,
 - 3) Recruitment, Employment and Retention,
 - 4) Transportation,
 - 5) Technical Assistance/Community Implementation.
- ❑ Establish additional workgroup for Evaluation activities.
- ❑ Establish workgroup meeting schedules and organizational structure
- ❑ Determine design of pilots and relevant policies for Connecticut based on literature review
- ❑ Develop and distribute RFP for local level pilots
- ❑ Design state level evaluation plan
- ❑ Establish baseline data at a state level
- ❑ Design structure and methods for collecting and storing cross-agency data

Strategies

The Steering Committee agreed on the following strategies to guide the implementation of Connecticut's plan:

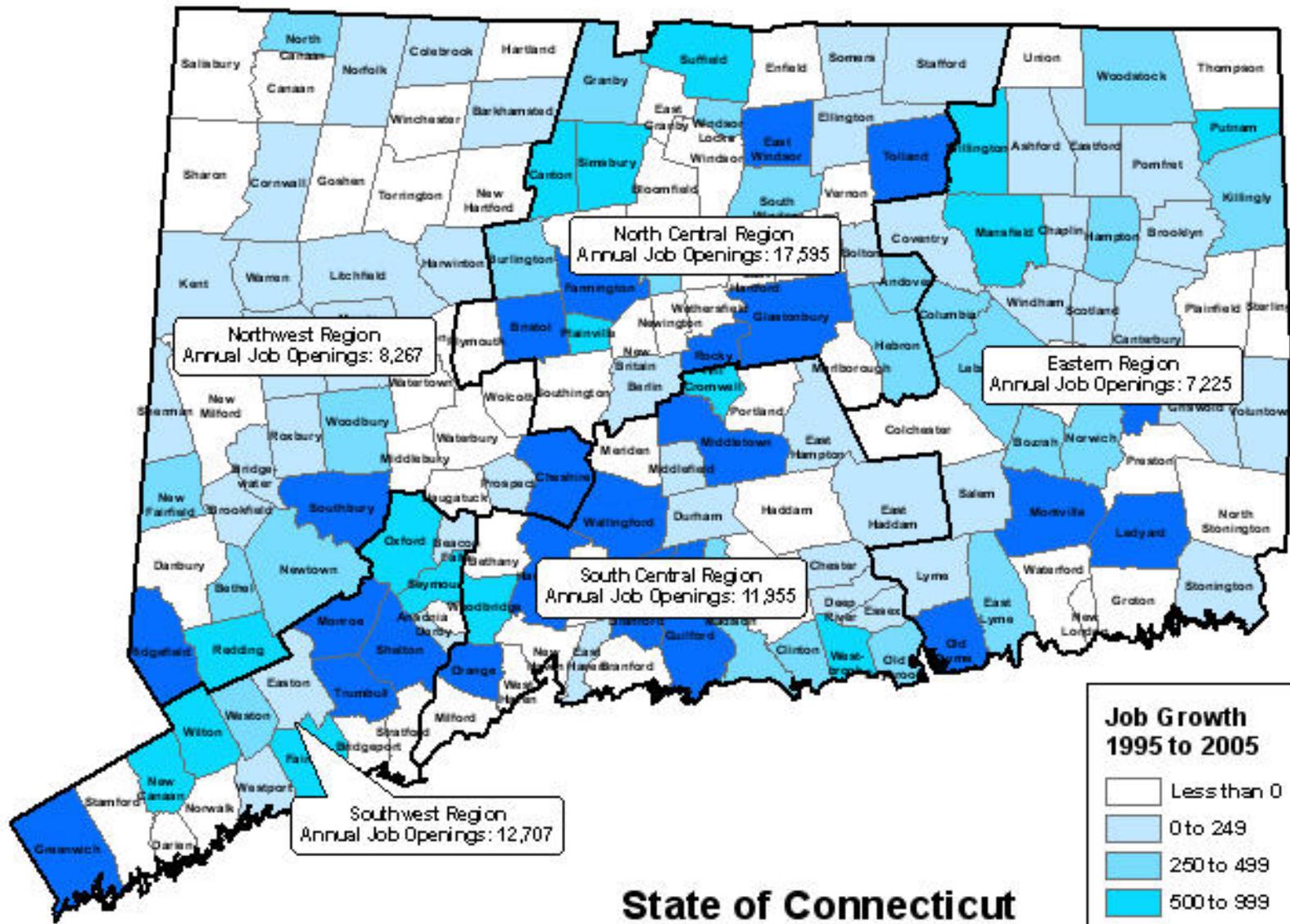
- Partner with local communities and business
- Coordinate state level policy change, initiatives and resources with local level initiatives
- Share decision-making with stakeholders
- Assure data driven change
- Expand definition of disability to include the aging workforce

Baseline Data

A comprehensive needs assessment has been conducted to collect baseline data. Key elements for Connecticut's plan include the following:

- # of people competitively employed, statewide and in each of the local demonstration sites
- % of individuals with disabilities in competitive employment compared to % of individuals without disabilities in competitive employment
- employer attitudes
- job seeker attitudes
- customer satisfaction relative to the interventions for employers and employees
- current employment processes
- state data collection capacity

The following pages include maps to illustrate the statewide and local baseline in terms of employment outcomes.



State of Connecticut

Eastern Workforce Investment Area



Total Jobs: 173,560



| Jobs by Industry | |
|--|----------------|
| Industry | Ann. Avg. Emp. |
| Government | 60,810 |
| Manufacturing | 24,297 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 20,783 |
| Retail Trade | 20,212 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 12,736 |
| Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 6,444 |
| Construction | 5,583 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 4,968 |
| Other Services (except Public Admin.) | 4,469 |
| Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remed. Svcs. | 4,160 |
| Educational Services | 3,520 |
| Wholesale Trade | 3,004 |
| Finance & Insurance | 2,700 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 2,180 |
| Information | 2,174 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 1,791 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 1,359 |
| Utilities | * |
| Management of Companies & Enterprises | 863 |
| Mining | * |

* = suppressed due to confidentiality

Total Annual Openings: 7,225

North Central Workforce Investment Area



Total Jobs: 497,190



| Jobs by Industry | |
|--|----------------|
| Industry | Ann. Avg. Emp. |
| Total Government | 71,632 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 65,271 |
| Manufacturing | 61,764 |
| Finance & Insurance | 55,850 |
| Retail Trade | 53,218 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 28,567 |
| Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 25,227 |
| Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remed. Svcs. | 23,726 |
| Wholesale Trade | 20,271 |
| Construction | 19,018 |
| Other Services (except Public Admin.) | 15,817 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 14,001 |
| Information | 10,653 |
| Educational Services | 9,225 |
| Management of Companies & Enterprises | 6,214 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 6,072 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 5,294 |
| Utilities | 3,454 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 1,691 |
| Mining | 157 |

Total Annual Openings: 17,595

Northwest Workforce Investment Area



Total Jobs: 213,226



| Jobs by Industry | |
|--|----------------|
| Industry | Ann. Avg. Emp. |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 32,333 |
| Manufacturing | 31,076 |
| Total Government | 30,793 |
| Retail Trade | 30,467 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 12,759 |
| Construction | 10,633 |
| Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 9,626 |
| Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remed. Svcs. | 9,340 |
| Other Services (except Public Admin.) | 8,006 |
| Wholesale Trade | 7,384 |
| Finance & Insurance | 7,082 |
| Management of Companies & Enterprises | 4,762 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 4,243 |
| Educational Services | 4,026 |
| Information | 3,827 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 2,913 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 2,060 |
| Utilities | 876 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 636 |
| Mining | 306 |

Total Annual Openings: 8,267

South Central Workforce Investment Area



Total Jobs: 318,754



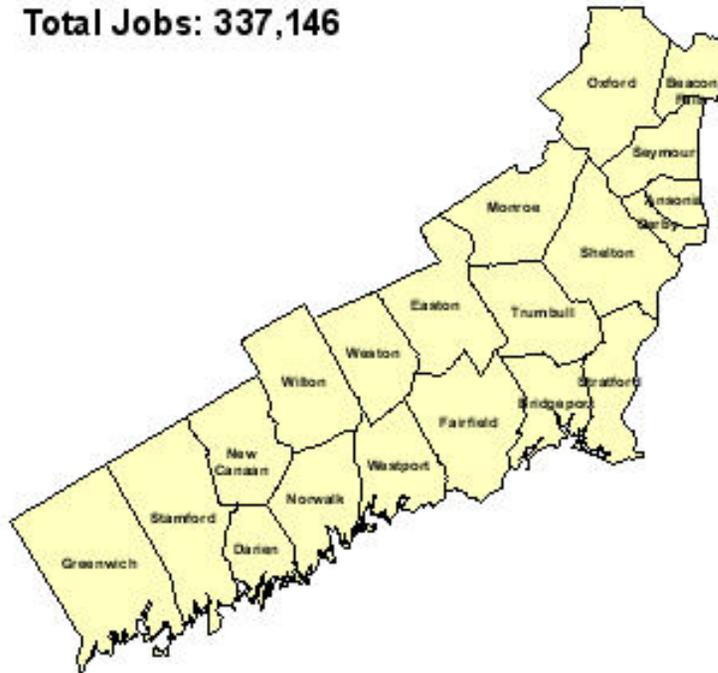
| Jobs by Industry | |
|--|----------------|
| Industry | Ann. Avg. Emp. |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 50,184 |
| Total Government | 41,989 |
| Manufacturing | 39,108 |
| Retail Trade | 37,137 |
| Educational Services | 20,622 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 20,296 |
| Finance & Insurance | 16,580 |
| Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remed. Svcs. | 14,300 |
| Construction | 12,994 |
| Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 12,543 |
| Wholesale Trade | 11,998 |
| Other Services (except Public Admin.) | 10,643 |
| Information | 9,369 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 7,838 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 4,480 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 4,312 |
| Management of Companies & Enterprises | 2,361 |
| Utilities | 987 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 914 |
| Mining | 33 |

Total Annual Openings: 11,955

Southwest Workforce Investment Area



Total Jobs: 337,146



| Industry | Ann. Avg. Emp. |
|--|----------------|
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 42,764 |
| Retail Trade | 39,552 |
| Total Government | 37,868 |
| Manufacturing | 33,378 |
| Finance & Insurance | 32,302 |
| Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 25,297 |
| Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remed. Svcs. | 21,806 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 18,362 |
| Other Services (except Public Admin.) | 13,341 |
| Wholesale Trade | 12,340 |
| Construction | 11,856 |
| Management of Companies & Enterprises | 9,979 |
| Information | 9,273 |
| Educational Services | 7,606 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 7,417 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 7,235 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 5,020 |
| Utilities | * |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 152 |
| Mining | * |

* - suppressed due to confidentiality

Total Annual Openings: 12,707

Steering Committee Adopted Plan

August 2006

Strategy: Share decision making with stakeholders

Outcome: One year benchmarks for the strategic plan. Adoption of vision, mission and core values.

Retreat. In early August, the Steering Committee spent a full day reviewing materials for the Strategic Plan and filling in the gaps. The focus for the day was on the missing elements of the plan, including the one-year benchmarks and quarterly activities necessary to move the plan forward. While for many months there had been an assumption regarding vision and mission, one of the priorities of the retreat was to assure consensus on a vision and mission statement.

Finalization of Plan. The Steering Committee has been clear in its belief that Connecticut will not have a “final” plan. This plan is meant to be a living document, one that provides a framework for action but is not binding in nature. It is a high-level plan that allows for improvements in the State’s employment system at the state, local and individual levels. To this end, the plan submitted to CMS will be the guiding framework but will continue to adapt to meet the needs of our communities.

Link to Long Term Care Plan

January 2007

Early in the planning phases, the group determined that it needed a vehicle for increasing the visibility of this plan, and for making stronger connections to other efforts in the State.

Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan will become part of the State's Long Term Care Plan when it is released in January of 2007.

Communication Plan

October 2006

Purpose: To share information from the planning process and the implementation of the strategic plan, the MI G has developed a communications plan. The plan is designed to do the following:

1. Maintain and strengthen connections,
2. Help people at the core of the project to have a good understanding of how the MI G is successfully improving systems and programs that serve people with disabilities who want to work,
3. Stimulate interest from people who can actually help make the necessary changes,
4. Satisfy the need to stay in touch with people who were brought in by the forums, surveys, Summit, and Retreat, and
5. Fulfill the need to reach a broader general audience with information and education about the employment of people with disabilities.

Communication Plan Details

October 2006

Objective 1 - Facilitate the flow of information among MIG leaders

Audience - Steering Committee, Workgroups

Message - Changes in context; new developments in project; materials that need feedback; information that needs to be transmitted through their networks

Distribution - Use electronic communication as a vehicle for intensive communication

Strategies - Adjust frequency and length of communications to maximize feelings of ownership in the project without overwhelming the members

Objective 2 - Transmit information about necessary changes

Audience - Policymakers in the State, educational, business, and service provider arenas

Message - Findings about legislative barriers and other changes that need to be made; opportunities for making those changes; best practices

Distribution - Use electronic communication and personal contact

Strategies - Create a series of concise, compelling pieces which describe a particular barrier and propose one or more solutions

Communication Plan Details

October 2006

Objective 3 - Maintain/strengthen connections with people who have helped us get to this point

Audience - Advocacy groups that sponsored forums; active participants in the needs assessment or plan development, Councils, Workforce Investment Boards, and other entities interviewed as partners

Message - Status updates; legislative barriers; pilot solicitations; opportunities for continued involvement

Distribution - Periodic newsletters or e-letters, targeted updates, personal networking

Strategies - Identify messages that appeal to people with various levels of involvement and encourage greater involvement

Objective 4 - Outreach to broader audiences in disability, business, provider, & policy arenas

Audience - Disability organizations, nonprofits, Chambers of Commerce, business networks, and legislators not already connected

Message - MI G project activities; upcoming events; opportunities for participation; updates on surveys/reports developed by the MI G; success stories

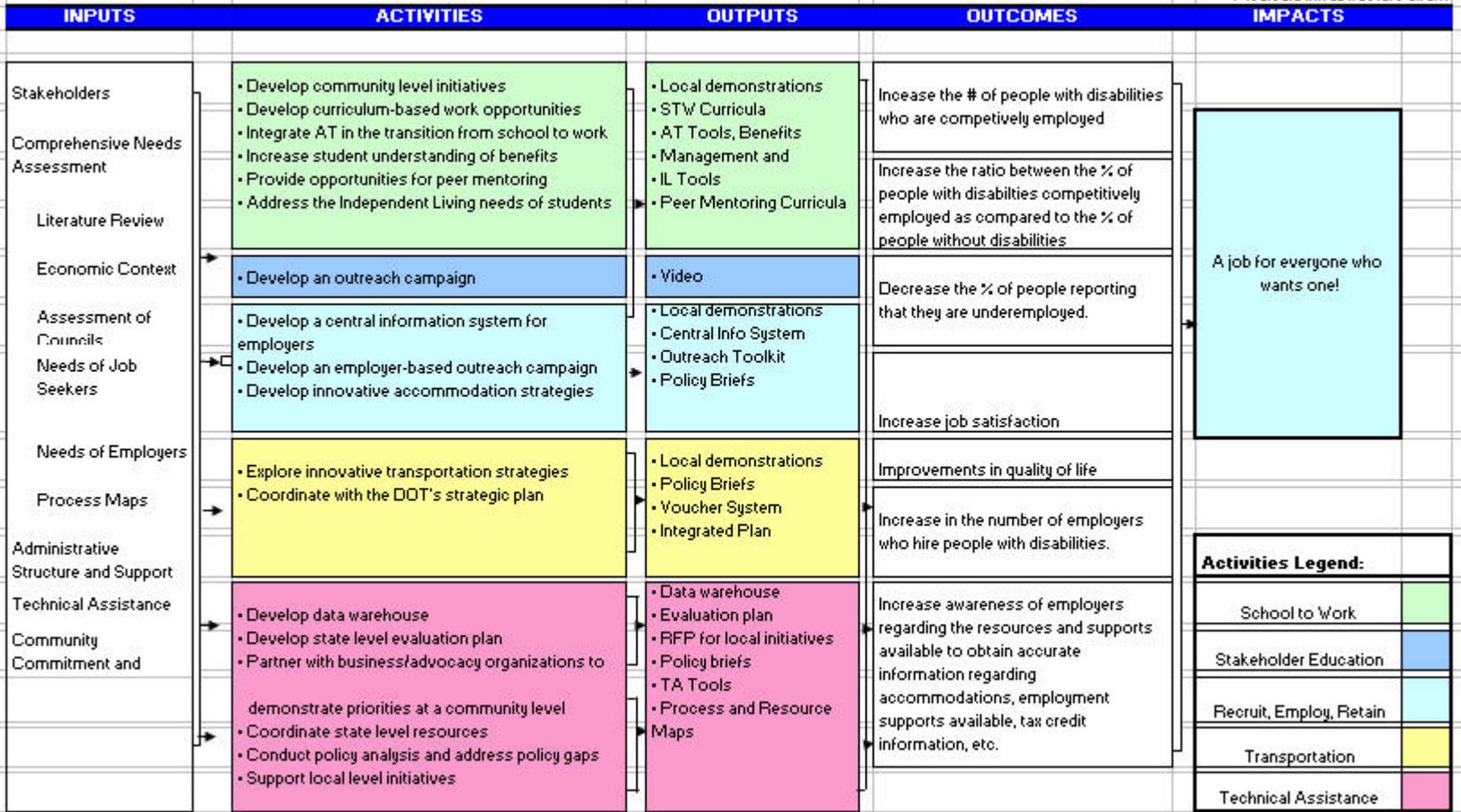
Distribution - Articles to audience newsletters or electronic forums; brochures; news media

Strategies - Create short, compelling pieces that are easy to absorb and motivate people to action

Logic Model

Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant



Supporting Documentation

Connecticut's Strategic Employment Plan is a one-page plan that will guide the state in its efforts to maximize opportunities for self-sufficiency and full participation. For those interested in learning more about the roots of this plan, the following documentation is available.

- Needs Assessment: Executive Summary
- Needs Assessment: Full Report
- Connecticut's Long Term Care Plan