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Connecticut's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant:

Local Level Pilot Initiative Evaluation

Research Team

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Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

Abbreviations and definitions used in this report are listed below.

Abbr.	Definition
AT	Assistive Technology
BLN	Business Leadership Network
BRS	Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
C-A	Connect-Ability
CT	Connecticut
CBIA	Connecticut Business and Industry Association
DOT	Department of Transportation
DSS	Department of Social Services
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LLP	Local Level Pilot
MIG	Medicaid Infrastructure Grant
RFQ	Request for Qualification
SDE	State Department of Education
UCHC	University of Connecticut Health Center
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation

Executive Summary of Local Level Pilot Evaluation

The statewide Connect-Ability (C-A) Strategic Planning Local Level Pilot (LLP) Initiative was created to develop and implement innovative strategic plans locally to bring about change, improve access, build broad-based constituency, and increase employment for individuals with disabilities. A total of 10 LLPs were invited to prepare a strategic plan and 9 LLPs' plans were approved for implementation. Each LLP received $200,000 in total. Final approval of the strategic plans was completed by April 2009, and for the remainder of the year the LLPs conducted their planned activities. The grant period ended on December 31, 2009.

This evaluation of the LLP initiative includes an assessment of the structures and processes utilized by LLPs to develop their strategic plans and implement their planned infrastructure changes. The evaluation identifies common issues impacting the ability to implement the planned activities. The LLP activities were assessed based on planned outcome measures. Common features attributed to successful LLPs are described along with identification of the most successful activities. The findings of this evaluation provide guidance to C-A as the project implements ongoing infrastructure changes in the priority areas of transition, employment and transportation.

Structure Elements

The most frequently applied structures used by the LLPs were establishing a planning committee; adding staff, a consultant or contractors; hiring a new project coordinator, using subcommittees for needs assessment data collection, and involving an active in-house team throughout the project. All pilots had commitments of support from other organizations and significant organizational change occurred in 2 pilot sites that entered into contractual relationships with other organizations.

Process Measures

Processes reported during the strategic planning phase primarily focused on how committees were used, determining the service area, how needs assessments were done, and how stakeholders or gatekeepers were included. Committee processes focused on including diverse members as active participants in the preparation of the strategic plan, recording minutes for the committee meetings, receiving direct and immediate feedback from the committee members, and having frequent meetings. The majority of pilots planned to work in a limited service area of 1 to 2 towns. The most common needs assessment processes were focus groups and using available report data. Common objectives were achieved with open communications and direct involvement of stakeholders and gatekeepers on committees and in the needs assessment.

Processes reported consistently during the implementation phase included collaborating with a variety of organizations and frequent use of the strategic plan to guide their activities and to review progress with staff or committees. Further, pilots all received direct feedback from committees and C-A staff, and attempted to maintain open communications. Most LLPs reported having nearly enough time, though a few needed more time, to complete activities.

While the processes described above helped the LLPs accomplish their goals, LLPs identified a number of common issues that negatively impacted these processes.

1. Timing was a process issue identified by all pilots: slow processing of contracts, delay in final approval of the strategic plan revision, shorter time remaining than expected for implementation, and inappropriate timing for transition priority activities. To appropriately implement transition changes the project time should have spanned an entire school year with additional time before and after the school year for establishing relationships, planning and evaluation. A longer implementation period overall would have been beneficial in order to allow time to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and then adjust, repeat or expand activities. LLPs noted the lack of time for evaluation, for contingency planning if needed, and for sustainability planning before the end of the grant.

2. Difficulty attaining gatekeeper support for the LLP objectives and activities was a common concern, particularly for the transition priority. Gatekeepers are people who must approve or accept project activities, such as school administrators, before groups of participants, such as teachers, can participate in the project. Without the support of the gate keeping administration, many difficulties were experienced including: lack of time available for teachers to attend planning or committee meetings, inability to alter test schedules making it difficult to allocate time for student work experience in the transition planning, and inability to accommodate student needs for transportation.

3. Difficulty achieving and maintaining stakeholder buy-in was a common concern, especially for the transition and employment priority activities. Stakeholders in transition projects primarily included teachers and parents, and in employment projects included business organizations and employers. Difficulties experienced included a loss of momentum and stakeholder interest during delays and confusion about or lack of commitment to the C-A objectives.

4. Lack of clear and timely feedback from the central C-A team was reported. Earlier and more complete feedback during the strategic planning phase would have prevented some confusion, unnecessary work and program delays.

5. Need for more collaboration to support transition and youth-related objectives was reported, including: more involvement of One Stops with youth, more direct relationships with employers and schools, more support from school administration to ensure time is available for teachers and students for transition activities, and more intra-school collaboration with technology departments to better support assistive technology programs. Some LLPs noted missing collaborations that would have benefited the employment objectives including: more involvement of state agencies such as the Department of Labor and Department of Transportation, business groups and individual employers, private employment agencies, and the central C-A program.

Infrastructure Changes and Evaluation of Outcomes

Successfully implemented activities for each of the 3 priority areas were categorized by type of infrastructure change: new program or grant, change in existing program, new network or collaboration created, policy or procedure change, information dissemination, and added resources (see Table A). The most common type of infrastructure change was implementation of new programs with multiple activities attempted in each of the 3 priority areas. The majority of LLPs indicated that their implemented infrastructure changes were very likely to have permanent effects. LLPs overall expressed confidence that their infrastructure changes were effective, sustainable and replicable using the types of activities implemented by the LLPs.

Table A. Most Successful Infrastructure Changes

Type of Infrastructure Change	Activity Accomplished
New Program	• Evaluate transition programs and implement strategic planning to improve programs through a transition committee at 2 local high schools
New Program	• Researched and identified AT equipment needs to support employers, prepared 5 demonstration AT kits for business presentation and created lending library for businesses
New Program	• Implemented transportation voucher program with eligibility criteria for employment purposes which is managed through local One-Stop with individualized transportation plans
Additional Resources	• Implemented Career Assessment tools to be open to school population with support of the Special Education services, with 3-year seed funding and follow-up contract commitments from schools and provider to be expanded to additional schools
Additional Resources	• Developed Spanish curriculum for parent transition training
Policy Changes	• Implemented disability awareness and service training as required staff training for One-Stop • Implemented disability awareness as required orientation training at summer youth programs and in mentoring programs

Lessons learned were reported for each of the priority areas. The key factors identified that affect the ability to implement transition infrastructure changes were gatekeeper and stakeholder commitment to improvement of transition services, and the importance of making new resources accessible to the general school population. The key factors impacting employment infrastructure change were the need for strong relationships, need for knowledgeable expert resources, and more network support from state and private providers. Several issues were identified with regards to transportation infrastructure change including problems with regulation of para-transit services, need

for more involvement by high level policy makers with financial decision-making ability, poor quality of available transportation information, and recognition that the financial costs to improve transportation options are too great for local efforts alone.

All of the LLPs completed at least some of the planned activities for each of the priority areas defined by the Barriers-Outcomes-Measures document based on their strategic plans. In a subset of the LLPs, some of the work activities did not match their organization's expertise or in-house capabilities, making it even more difficult to achieve the planned activities. In cases where the LLPs' strategic plan goals closely matched to their organizational mission, their ability to initiate work and include the direct involvement of stakeholders was not impeded and they achieved their goals with more success. A few of the LLPs' strategic plans primarily focused on a single overall infrastructure change which meant all or nearly all of their activities were directed at accomplishing the overall goal. This more focused approach also lead to more successful outcomes.

Most LLPs attempted significant infrastructure changes for transition and employment priority areas. Only a few attempted ambitious transportation changes while most focused on improving transportation information dissemination or training opportunities.

Conclusions

The most successful infrastructure change initiatives had 4 common characteristics: they 1.) were comprehensive programs that affected a service or program overall; 2.) had permanent impact either by changing policy, by creating new programs or by adding broadly used resources with adequate financial planning to continue over the long-term; 3.) had active participation of others and not passive distribution of information; and, 4.) had potential for broad impact, with transferable activities.

The LLP initiative provided insights to key structures and processes for future planning of infrastructure changes to minimize possible negative issues of timing, gatekeeper support, stakeholder buy-in and feedback.

The key structure element of successful LLPs was the existence of a dedicated staff person responsible for achieving the planned goals with other collaborators, and the commitment of staff or committee stakeholders. These results indicate that achieving infrastructure change is not possible through a single person effort but through teams committed to specific goals.

The process measures findings indicate that to achieve successful infrastructure change it is not sufficient to have planning teams agree on a plan, it is necessary to also have active commitment from the stakeholders implementing the activities. An accurate assessment of available time compared to time needed is critical. Transition program planning requires adequate time to plan before the summer break. Implementation of new programs or procedures should coincide with the beginning of a school year and allow time to measure outcomes at the end of the school year.

Overall the LLP initiative was a successful program supporting the achievement of C-A goals as defined in 2008.

I. Background

A. Medicaid Infrastructure Grant in Connecticut

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provided a multi-year Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) to Connecticut (CT) with one of the intended goals being to identify barriers to employment for people with disabilities and create innovative solutions to increase employment for individuals with disabilities. The desired outcome is to increase the number of people with disabilities who achieve competitive employment.

In CT the MIG comprehensive employment grant is also known as the Connect-Ability (C-A) program, which has five key objectives identified including: [1]

1. Improve the ways young people with disabilities can make the transition from school to work

2. Increase career expectations for people with disabilities

3. Help employers learn how to recruit, hire and retain employees with disabilities

4. Address transportation issues, reducing the transportation barriers to employment

5. Provide ways to increase availability of technical assistance to jobseekers who need it.

The C-A program is administered through Department of Social Services' (DSS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) staff, which is referred to as the C-A staff in this report.

B. Local Level Pilot Initiative

In mid-2006, the C-A Steering Committee started discussions on using a Local Level Pilot (LLP) initiative to create innovative solutions to identified barriers at the local community level. A request for proposals was publicly distributed in October 2007, and organizations were identified as potential local pilots. As of 2008, the goals of the Statewide Connect-Ability Strategic Planning Local Level Pilot Initiative included:[1]

1. Improve the transition process for young adults moving from school to post-secondary education or employment

2. Increase expectations for individuals with disabilities in achieving career potential

3. Increase the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals with disabilities in Connecticut businesses

4. Increase access to transportation including a person-centered voucher system

The expected outcome of the LLP initiative was to develop and implement 10 creative and innovative strategic plans locally to bring about change, improve access, build

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[1] Information reported in the Aug. 25, 2008 Continuation Application to the Connecticut Comprehensive Employment Grant

broad-based constituency, and increase employment for individuals with disabilities.[1] The hope was that the LLP initiative would produce new solutions to removing barriers which could be considered by the statewide C-A program for implementation in other regions or across the state.

C.   Local Level Pilot Evaluation

The purpose of the LLP evaluation was to review the effectiveness of the LLP efforts to develop successful infrastructure changes within a local region to address identified barriers in the three priority areas: youth school-to-work transition, employment (recruiting, hiring and promoting) and transportation.   The LLP evaluation plan included assessment of each pilot with regards to strategic planning, plan implementation, and success in achieving their anticipated goals.

Evaluation of the overall administration of the LLP initiative, including an assessment of the C-A staff management structures and processes, is reported elsewhere in the overall MIG C-A evaluation report, *Connecticut's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant: "Connect-Ability" 2007-2009 Evaluation*.

The following report details information on the Local Level Pilots; reports the structure and process methodologies used by the pilots; describes the activities planned for and completed by the pilots to address the planned infrastructure changes; identifies issues encountered with processes and activities; and, identifies the successful activities, whose outcomes have the potential to address the priority barriers if implemented beyond the pilot region. Keys to successful infrastructure change at the local level and lessons learned from the pilot accomplishments and difficulties are addressed.

II.   Local Level Pilots Project Information

A.   Summary of Procedures

 The LLP initiative was a 2-part grant intended to have local organizations first conduct a local level needs assessment to identify barriers to the priority areas and complete a strategic planning phase to identify novel, local level infrastructure change solutions. Part 2 was the implementation phase to implement the activities to support these infrastructure changes by the last date of the grant period, December 31, 2009. The LLPs were to identify successful infrastructure changes with plans to sustain and/or expand these after the grant period ended. This 2-part process mirrors the 2-part process used by comprehensive MIG grantees on the national level.

A Request for Qualification (RFQ) was prepared by the C-A staff and published on October 31, 2007 through DSS. A total of 15 organizations submitted RFQs to DSS by December 12, 2007, and after a review process was completed by the DSS application review team, 10 LLPs were awarded the grant to prepare a strategic plan.   The grant contract for each LLP was processed through DSS by May 2008. The total amount of the grant was $200,000 per LLP, with 31% ($62,500) of the funds allocated for the strategic planning phase and 69% ($137,500) for the implementation phase.

For the remainder of 2008, the 10 LLPs each conducted a needs assessment using various methods and prepared a strategic plan to address barriers to competitive employment for people with disabilities. Each strategic plan proposed local level activities that would address barriers to either 1) the school-to-work transition priority area or 2) the employment (recruitment, hiring and promotion) priority area, or 3) both priority areas. In addition, all LLPs included activities to address barriers to transportation. At the end of the grant period all LLPs identified which of their infrastructure changes had sustainability plans to continue after the C-A grant. The LLPs submitted their initial strategic plans to the C-A staff by December 15, 2008.

Nine of the 10 LLPs' strategic plans were accepted by the C-A staff by January 31, 2009. The 9 LLPs spent the beginning of the second year working with the C-A staff and evaluation team to complete outcomes and measures of the planned infrastructure change activities. Final approval of the strategic plan was completed by DSS by April 2009. The implementation phase began after acceptance of the strategic plans and continued through Dec. 31, 2009. The LLPs executed their planned activities attempting to meet the objectives and outcomes.

During the strategic planning phase, 2 web-based quarterly reports were submitted by the LLPs describing needs assessment activities, planning committee, staff and collaborator involvement, and issues encountered. During the implementation phase, 4 web-based quarterly reports were submitted by the LLPs describing the activities underway and status towards meeting the objectives and issues encountered. Technical assistance was provided by the C-A staff during both phases, including feedback regarding the grant expectations and dissemination of information.

B.   Selected Local Level Pilots

Table 1 lists the 9 LLPs selected to continue with the implementation phase, including the name of the lead organization for each pilot, the service areas, and the priorities addressed in the strategic plan. Additional details including the key personnel and additional collaborators are contained in Appendix A.

Table 1: Summary of Local Level Pilots

Pilot Site (abbreviation)	LLP Service Area	LLP Priorities Addressed
Arc of New London County (ARCNLC)	New London County focus on Norwich, Waterford and Lisbon public school districts	Transition Employment Transportation
Bristol Community Organization Inc. (BCOrg)	Bristol and Plymouth	Transition Employment Transportation
CT Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL)	Windham region (10 towns)	Employment Transportation
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)	Bloomfield and Rocky Hill	Transition Transportation
New England Assistive Technology Center at Oak Hill (NEAT)	Hartford region (10 towns)	Employment Transportation
City of New Haven (New Haven)	City of New Haven (focus on 14-20 year old population)	Transition Employment Transportation
Parents Opening Doors (Padres Abriendo Puertas) (PAP)	City of Hartford and New Britain	Transition Transportation
Workforce Alliance (WorkAll)	New Haven and Meriden (CTWorks One-Stop Career Centers catchment area)	Transition Employment Transportation
The WorkPlace, Inc. (WorkPlace)	20-town region lower Fairfield County and New Haven County (based in Bridgeport)	Transition Employment Transportation

C. Project Timeline

Figure 1 shows the LLP project timeline of events illustrating the steps in the initiative for the RFQ process, strategic planning phase, implementation phase, LLP administration activities and evaluation phase. LLPs that started activities in January 2009 based on their original strategic plan before receiving the final approval of the revised objectives are noted in lighter shading. A detailed list of the actual activities and dates completed during the LLP initiative is available from the UCHC Evaluation Team.

Figure 1: Local Level Pilot Project Timeline of Events

LLP INITIATIVE EVENTS	Year	2006		2007				2008				2009	
	quarters	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q
RFQ Process								_RFQ Process - LLP Selection - Contracts_					
SC discussion of LLP concept													
Prepare RFQ: Jan to Oct; published by DAS: Oct. 31, 2007													
RFQ period LLPs submit proposals: due Dec. 12, 2007								15 proposals					
RFQ review process by DSS; summary report to C-A on Jan. 25, 2008													
Award Letters to 10 LLPs: sent Feb. 29, 2008								10 awarded					
Contracts with LLPs completed by DSS: Jun 2 – 16, 2008													
Strategic Planning Phase										_Strategic Planning Phase_			
C-A staff & Evaluation Team Kick-off meeting with LLPs: Jul 8, 2008													
LLPs conduct needs assessments, SWOT analyses, develop mission statements, propose objectives and activities; Strategic Plans: due Dec. 15, 2008 C-A Strategic Plan review process: Dec. 29, 2008										10 LLPs			
Acceptance notice to 9 LLPs: Jan. 30, 2009											9 accepted		
C-A staff & Evaluation Team propose LLP Barriers-Outcomes-Measures for evaluation of strategic plan activities													
C-A meetings with LLPs to review Barriers-Outcomes-Measures with their Strategic Plans: Mar. 24 to Apr. 9, 2009													
Revised Strategic Plans with Outcomes-Measures: due Apr. 15, 2009													
Approved revised Strategic Plans: Apr. 24, 2009													

LLP INITIATIVE EVENTS	Year	2009												2010	
quarters or months		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb

Implementation Phase	*Plan Implementation Phase*
PAP - started work during strategic planning phase developing the curriculum, and ready to initiate training immediately after initial Strat Plan submission	PAP transition activities
NEAT -Started work immediately after submission of initial Strat Plan with AT equipment purchases	NEAT employment activities
CREC - started work immediately after submission of initial Strat Plan with transition committees and transition program evaluation	CREC transition activities
Workplace - started work immediately after submission of initial Strat Plan including researching transition materials, working with consultant, researching employment practices, and NFI grant application.	WORKPLACE transition activities & employment activities
Workforce Alliance - started work immediately after submission of initial Strat Plan including preparing marketing materials and planning workshop content	WORKFORCE Alliance transition activities & employment activities
BCO - started in-house activities immediately after submission of initial Strat Plan including transportation ADA service hour expansion.	BCO transition activities & employment activities
CACIL - started work mid-May, after final approval of Outcomes-Measures revision to Strat Plan and contracted payment receipt;	CACIL: employment activities
City of New Haven - started May 1, 2009 after final approval of revised Strat Plan and contracted payment received	New Haven: employment activities
ARC of NLC - started mid-May after final approval of revised Strat Plan and contracted payment received	ARC: transition activities
LLP Sharing Event to report on highlighted activities: Sep. 2, 2009	

LLP Initiative Administrative Activities	*Administrative Activities*
LLP Quarterly Reporting: #1-2 related to strat plan process; #3-6 related to activities and issues; #6 final report: due Jan. 15, 2010	R3 R4 R5 R6
LLP Payments processed	P3 P4 P5 P6
C-A staff liaisons regularly scheduled LLP calls and technical support	technical assistance with liaison team
C-A staff coordinate review committee and identify LLP Best Practices	

Evaluation Phase	*Evaluation Phase*
Evaluation Team site visits to LLPs to review processes and activities	
Survey Interview with LLPs for feedback on initiative management	
On-line anonymous survey with SC and C-A for feedback on LLP impact	
Evaluation Reports: due late Mar. 2010	

III. Methods

A. Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan proposed following a structure, process and outcome research framework which has been applied to healthcare assessment, quality improvement in healthcare, public health evaluations and quality of service for family-centered childhood disability services (Donabedian 1966; Close and Tierney, 1993; Pulcini and Howard 1997; Whittaker and Corthwaite, 2000; Trute 2007). The framework can be applied to evaluate a specific program, or a complex system with various agencies and organizations involved (Handler, Issell and Turnock, 2001). Advantages of this evaluation framework are the ability to identify reasons why programs do or do not work from review of the process information collected, and to evaluate the impact of the program from review of the outcomes reported.

Trute's definitions were used as a basis for defining the framework including: structure components as "the settings and instrumentalities that support resource services"; process components as "the steps taken or procedures followed in the delivery of services"; and, outcome components as "the result or product of professional intervention" (Trute, 2007). In addition, the July 2008 training information provided to the LLPs by the MIG C-A evaluation team from the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) was used to develop a list of questions for assessment of the structure, process and outcome measures from the Strategic Plan planning phase and the implementation phase. Refer to Appendix B for the evaluation components training information.

After describing the structures, processes and outcomes for the LLPs, the evaluation identified successful practices to achieve infrastructure change by priority area. Data collected from the site visits and LLP interviews are used to describe lessons learned. An evaluation of the key successes is summarized.

B. Data

Independent data collection and review was conducted by a member of the UCHC evaluation team. Data sources included: (1) review of the quarterly reports and documentation submitted online by the LLPs; (2) in-person site visits to the LLPs to review processes used, activities initiated and products produced; and, (3) structured interviews with the LLP project coordinators and leaders to report insights about processes, successful activities and lessons learned. In addition to these data, the LLPs' responses to the RFQ and strategic plans were reviewed to provide background information about the LLPs' expectations for participating in the grant.

Data review began in mid-October 2009 with in-house documentation review, and in-person site visits were conducted between November 20 and December 23, 2009. After the strategic plans were approved, the evaluation team developed a strategic plan summary document delineating the identified barriers, infrastructure changes, and outcome measures for each LLP (referred to as the "Barriers-Outcomes-Measures document"). This template was used to review the associated quarterly activities, outcome results, issues identified, overall success and continuation plans for each LLP.

Another data collection tool was used to identify activities, products, issues, overall status and sustainability plans. A final data collection tool and questionnaire was used to document information for structure and processes utilized by the pilot sites. The LLP interview questionnaire was submitted for review and approval by the UCHC Institutional Review Board prior to implementation. LLP interview data were collected either by phone or during the in-person visits between December 14 and 23, 2009.

The final quarterly reports from the LLPs, due January 15, 2010, were reviewed upon receipt and clarifying questions were submitted to the LLP project leader or coordinator as appropriate, with final responses returned by February 4, 2010.

The data collected for each pilot from the quarterly reports and site visits were compiled for analysis. Data were coded into 5 categories: 1.) structure measures during planning and implementation phase, 2.) process measures during planning and implementation phase, 3.) outcome measures for completed activities, 4.) products and sustainability plans, and 5.) outcome measures for activities not done or incomplete and reasons reported.

Data from the LLP interview questions were also compiled for the process and outcome measures. The frequencies of categorical responses were tabulated and themes were identified from the qualitative response questions.

The data were further coded, noting commonalities and differences. The most common structure and process features were tabulated. Similarly, issues reported were coded by process measure or by priority activities and summarized. The most common issues were listed.

The LLP activities were coded by type of infrastructure change for each priority. The most frequent activities by priority were tabulated and summarized. Lessons learned information was collected from the LLPs interviews and from site visits.

IV. Results

A. <u>Description and Evaluation of LLPs' Structures</u>

For evaluation of the structure measures, data were collected from review of the quarterly reports and during the site visits. Structure measures included internal staff involvement and any needed staff changes, external volunteers and organization commitments, and organizational roles of any committees. Structure measures were assessed separately for the strategic planning phase and the implementation phase. Table 2 summarizes the structure measures.

Table 2: Summary of Local Level Pilots' Structure Measures

Structure Measure	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase
Staffing grant project coordinator role	• 4 pilots hired new role as project coordinator • 5 pilots assigned role to existing staff	• 1 pilot hired new role of project coordinator for implementation
Additional staffing or organizational changes	• 2 pilots hired consultants for strategic plan needs assessment and/or writing • 2 pilots contracted directly with partner organizations at time of RFQ • 1 pilot hired a contractor for a specific activity (asset mapping)	• 2 pilots hired additional support staff for implementation of activities (training academy staff, vocational advocates) • 1 pilot hired a contractor for a specific activity (audio reading for CD) • 2 pilots continued with same contract partners through implementation
Staff team involvement	• 8 pilots actively involved more than 1 staff member on working team	• 3 pilots disengaged active role of staff other than project coordinator
Commitments from external volunteers and organizations	• 9 pilots had commitments from 4 to 21 different organizations and volunteers who were actively involved in planning phase	• 2 pilots had fewer organizations and volunteers committed as active participants in implementation; other 7 pilots had same or more committed
Committees	• 7 pilots established a planning committee that had an active participatory role in the strategic plan development • 2 pilots established planning committees for with informational role only • 5 pilots (including the 2 pilots with informational role only committees) established smaller working groups or subcommittees to actively participate in needs assessment and strategic plan development for specific priority sections • 1 pilot used open-public forum during committee meetings	• 3 pilots had planning committees evolve into steering committees or subcommittees with active roles, of which 1 pilot had an active committee until April and then became informal advisors only • 4 pilots had planning committees evolve into advisory committees with informational role only • 2 pilots had planning committees dissolve and members became advisors with no formal meetings • 1 pilot continued open-public forum during committee meetings

Most pilots required additional staffing to conduct the planning and implementation activities. Of the 9 pilots, 4 hired a new staff member as the grant project coordinator to lead activities in the strategic planning and implementation phases, and another pilot hired a project coordinator for the implementation phase only. Additional staff was hired by 6 pilots including 2 staff members for implementation activities at 2 pilots, consultants for plan writing at 2 pilots, and contractors to complete a specific activity at 2 pilots.

A significant organizational change occurred in 2 pilots that entered into contractual relationships with 2 other organizations to be collaborators throughout the pilot project. One of these pilots only involved the executive director as the project lead and worked with staff from the 2 other collaborators.

Other organizational changes included involvement of more than 1 staff member in strategic planning in 8 pilots. In 3 pilots, staff members other than the project coordinator later disengaged from active participation during the implementation phase. Of these, 2 project coordinators also did not have the additional support of active steering committees during the implementation phase.

All pilots had commitments from 4 to 21 organizations and/or volunteers actively involved in the strategic planning phase, and only 2 pilots later reported that fewer organizations and/or volunteers were involved during the implementation phase.

A key structure component to all pilots was the formation of committees to support the strategic planning phase. Most pilots, 7 of 9, established a planning committee with an active participatory role during the strategic planning phase while the remaining 2 pilots established committees with an informational role only. In addition, 5 pilots established smaller working groups or subcommittees, including the 2 with informational only planning committees. However, during the implementation phase, most pilots did not rely on active committee participation, with only 2 pilots evolving the active planning committees to active steering committees or subcommittees throughout the implementation phase. The remaining pilot planning committees evolved into advisory committees with informational or informal advisors roles.

In summary, the most frequently applied structures were establishing a planning committee, adding staff or consultant or contractors, hiring a new staff role as project coordinator, using subcommittees for needs assessment data collection, and involving an active in-house team throughout the project. Table 3 reports the most frequently applied structures.

Table 3: Most Frequently Applied Structures

Structure	Total Pilots (N=9)
• Established planning committee with active participatory role for strategic planning	7
• Hired staff or consultants or contractors to support activity execution	6
• Hired new staff as Project Coordinator	5
• Established subcommittees or groups for needs assessment	5
• Included active in-house staff on working team throughout pilot project	5

B.   Description and Evaluation of LLPs' Processes

For evaluation of the process measures, data was collected from review of the quarterly reports, during the site visits and from a subset of questions in the LLP Interview Questionnaire. Process measures were reviewed separately for the strategic planning phase and the implementation phase. Appendix C displays a detailed summary of LLP reported process measures. The following process measures were assessed:

- area and constituents served by pilot activities
- committee meetings
- strategic planning and needs assessment activities (reported for planning phase only)
- how common objectives were achieved
- what efforts were made to work with gatekeepers (reported for planning phase only)
- how stakeholder buy-in was achieved
- what sources of feedback were used
- how the strategic plan was used
- how much time was needed for activities
- how much and what types of collaborations were used
- what other collaborations would have been helpful

Most LLPs focused their service area to 1 or 2 towns or school districts versus working with a multi-town catchment area.

All the LLPs had planning committees with members from diverse backgrounds to accommodate the different priorities, who typically met 4 or more times during the year. All pilots used the planning committee or subcommittee activities to prepare information for the strategic plan as active working groups. At least 3 pilots held committee members accountable to complete assignments between meetings. Minutes were recorded for all but 1 of the pilots. During the implementation phase, 3 pilots met

frequently, almost monthly, with their steering committees, of which 2 were active working groups held accountable to complete assignments and the other was an informational meeting for advice only.

During the planning phase, needs assessment data was collected through a variety of methods and all but 1 pilot used multiple methods. The most common methods were focus groups used by 5 pilots and report references used by 4 pilots. Surveys and individual interviews were used by 3 pilots each, and subcommittee meetings were used by 2 pilots.

Multiple pilots during the planning phase reported achieving common objectives among the committees and staff by ensuring open communications and feedback, using agendas and strategic plans to focus on the objectives and building consensus. Similarly, during the implementation phase, 5 pilots reported continuation of common objectives was achieved by open communications and feedback. In addition, regular staff meetings were reported by 3 pilots during the planning phase and 4 pilots during the implementation phase to maintain common objectives and review progress toward meeting the strategic plan goals.

Various methods to work with gatekeepers during the planning phase and to achieve stakeholder buy-in throughout the project were reported by the pilots. Most pilots, 5 out of 9, indicated involving the gatekeeper/stakeholder directly in the planning meetings and maintaining open communications to share information. Other comments included involving stakeholders already committed to the same mission and/or who would be involved in the implementation of activities, including stakeholders in the surveys or focus groups, contracting with stakeholders, and outreach with marketing materials to stakeholders.

Pilots all received some form of direct feedback from committees and C-A staff, through surveys and focus groups, and in one-on-one meetings. The direct feedback was used to plan and implement the pilot activities. Pilots worked with C-A staff to revise plan goals as needed. In addition, 3 pilots received indirect feedback from evaluations after trainings or presentations, and as a result of the feedback the pilots modified their training formats.

Table 4 displays the LLP responses to interview questions about strategic plans, project timing, and collaborations. Most of the LLPs, 6 out of 9, reported always referring back to the strategic plan to guide their activities and to review progress with staff or committees. Some reported following the revised objectives while 2 reported using the original strategic plan during meetings with staff and committees to plan work activities. At least 2 pilots considered the strategic plan to be too complicated to use with advisors or committee meetings. Some pilots considered the revised plan goals as less vigorous and easier to accomplish than their original strategic plan.

Most of the LLPs, 7 out of 9, reported having nearly enough time and 2 LLPs reported needing more time to complete their planned activities to achieve the expected outcomes.

All of the LLPs reported that collaboration with other organizations helped to meet their organization strategic plan objectives, with 7 out of 9 reporting a lot of collaboration and 2 reporting some level of collaboration. Many LLPs commented positively on the value of networking, indicating that the C-A grant allowed their organization to create long-lasting relationships with other organizations. Some LLPs found that by collaborating with stakeholders in the strategic planning process they were committed and took ownership of implementing the pilot activities. Successful collaborations were reported with a variety of organizations including: governing bodies, state agencies, transportation organizations, employer groups, school districts and education organizations, non-profit service agencies and private employers.

Table 4: Categorical Responses to Process Measures

Question	Categorical Responses % (n)		
During the implementation of your grant activities, how often did you use your strategic plan to guide your activities?	Always **67%** (6)	Sometimes 22% (2)	Seldom 11% (1)
During the implementation of your grant activities, how much time was available to you to complete the planned activities to achieve your expected outcomes?	Lots of time 0% (0)	Nearly enough **78%** (7)	More time needed 22% (2)
How much collaboration did your organization have with other organizations to help meet your transportation or transition or employment objectives?	A lot **78%** (7)	Some 22% (2)	Very little 0% (0)

In summary, processes reported in the strategic planning phase primarily focused on how committees were used, determining the service area, how needs assessments were done, and how stakeholders or gatekeepers were included. The most frequent processes related to committees were using committees as working groups actively participating in the preparation of the strategic plan, recording minutes for the committee meetings, receiving direct and immediate feedback from the committee members, and having frequent meetings. The majority of pilots planned for a focused service area of 1 to 2 towns or school districts. The most common needs assessment processes were focus groups and using available report data. Open communications with and direct involvement of stakeholders and gatekeepers on committees and in the needs assessment data collection activities were the most frequently reported processes to achieve common objectives and buy-in.

Processes frequently reported during the implementation phase included using collaborations with other organizations, using the strategic plan (particularly the revised objectives) to guide work activities, and ensuring open communications with stakeholders. Table 5 shows the most common processes instituted by the LLPs.

Table 5: Most Frequently Applied Processes

Process	Total Pilots (N=9)
• Use committees as working groups to prepare strategic plan	9
• Record minutes from committee and working groups	7
• Receive direct and immediate feedback from working committees	7
• Have frequent meetings 4 or more times in the year with committees	5
• Limit activities to focused service area of 1 to 2 towns or school districts	5
• Use focus groups for needs assessment	5
• Use available report data for needs assessment	4
• Involve stakeholders and gatekeepers on committees and in data collection (i.e. focus groups, surveys, interviews)	5
• Ensure open communications with stakeholders on committees and involved in activities	4
• Use collaborations a lot to achieve objectives	7
• Use strategic plan to always guide work activities	6

1. *Issues Impacting Processes and Implementation of Priority Activities*

As part of the process review, issues that were encountered during the planning and implementation phase were identified. Refer to Appendix D for a summary of the reported issues categorized by process feature and priority area and Appendix E for issues described in the interviews regarding strategic plan use, project timing, and extent of collaborations.

During the planning and implementation phases, several issues were identified impacting the processes and affecting the ease or success of implementing the planned activities. The most common issues impacting processes that were reported by multiple LLPs included: timing for the grant activities, lack of gatekeeper support with transition projects, difficulty maintaining stakeholder buy-in, and lack of clear of feedback regarding C-A grant expectations.

Timing:

The most common process issue identified by all pilots was timing, particularly with regards to slow process time between acceptance of the RFQ proposal and receipt of the contract, delay in final approval of the strategic plan revision and associated reduced total project time from approval to last day, overall short implementation period, and inappropriate timing for transition priority activities. Some pilots reported that receiving the contract 6 months after submitting the RFQ proposal delayed hiring staff to work on the planning phase and others incurred costs to begin activities prior to payment. Pilots noted the time from initial acceptance of the strategic plan to final approval with the revised objectives caused a delay from February to April 2009, resulting in a late start with the activities planned during the implementation phase. Most LLPs, 6 of 9, started to "work at risk" incurring costs to begin working usually on activities that only involved the project coordinator or staff team, including 1 pilot which began developing the program curriculum in parallel with the strategic plan development. There were 3 pilots that could not begin any work or hire the project coordinator until after the final approval was received.

Several LLPs commented that the transition priority area required a different time period since the implementation phase crossed over the end of a school year and summer vacation into the beginning of a school year. LLPs commented that to appropriately implement transition changes the project time should have spanned an entire school year, and preferably additional time before and after the school year for establishing relationships, planning and evaluation. An 18 month implementation phase could have accomplished more and allowed for evaluation, according to one pilot.

Mixed responses were noted with regards to timing for the employment priority area. One LLP commented that employer objectives may have had sufficient time but lacked employer interest due to the economy; whereas other LLPs commented that employer objectives did not have sufficient time to build relationships and synergies.

A common concern reported by most LLPs was the lack of time for evaluation, even though the LLPs reported having nearly enough time to complete the implementation of activities. Most LLPs, including those who started program activities before final approval, commented that a longer implementation period overall would have been beneficial in order to allow time to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and then adjust, repeat or expand activities. Similarly it was also noted by some LLPs that time was not available for contingency planning or to consider alternatives when activities or relationship building did not work as planned. Several LLPs had to change plans considerably when collaborations or contracts did not occur as expected. For example, one LLP did not have an ADA transit contract renewed, and another LLP did not have a printer agree to continuation of prior printing work. Also, LLPs noted a lack of time to plan for sustainability before the end of the grant, which may cause a loss of momentum after ramping up activities at the end of the grant and then stalling while waiting to confirm additional funding. All the LLPs considered the available 9-12 month period to be too short to prepare programs; build relationships; implement, evaluate, modify and expand activities; and confirm ongoing funding sources. As a result, the LLPs focused on preparation and implementation of activities to meet the expectations of the revised

final objectives, but spent less time on developing relationships, expanding or modifying activities and confirming sustainable funding.

Gatekeeper Support:

A common concern among LLPs was difficulties attaining gatekeeper support for the LLP objectives and activities especially among LLPs working on the transition priority. Transition coordinators and special education teachers were reported to be interested in working on the transition priority, but frequently lacked the support of their director, principal or superintendent. The LLPs reported inviting the school and school district administrative leadership to planning meetings and sent project minutes or updates; however, usually the principals or administration did not choose to participate or support the initiatives. Without the support of the gate keeping administration, many difficulties were experienced including: lack of time available for teachers to attend planning or committee meetings, inability to alter test schedules making it difficult to allocate time for student work experience in the transition planning, and inability to accommodate student needs for transportation. For example, the parent transition training curriculum lacked support from the school district, which may result in frustrations when the parents seek transition planning but the schools do not have allocated funds. Similarly at another LLP the participating transition coordinator was willing to review and modify how she completes the transition planning form but without school district financial support there will be limited ability to include career experience in the student's individual plans. In contrast to a different LLP, the 2 school districts participating became directly involved with members on the transition planning committee and included the new transition strategic plans as part of their long-term district plans. These 2 school districts will have full support to provide quality transition planning for current and future students.

Stakeholder buy-in:

Another common concern was difficulty achieving and maintaining stakeholder buy-in to LLP objectives, which was reported multiple times for both transition and employment priority projects. Stakeholders in transition projects primarily included teachers and parents, and in employment projects included business organizations and employers. Difficulties experienced included: a loss of momentum and stakeholder interest during delays after the initial RFQ discussions until start of planning meetings, and after strategic plan submission until start of activity implementation. For example, committee members at one pilot disengaged from the project when LLP could not begin activities until May and the strategic plan revised objectives no longer met their personal interests.

Another difficulty was stakeholder confusion about the C-A objectives or lack of commitment to the LLP's objectives and purpose. For example, LLPs reported that parents would not approve student participation in nonacademic activities before the last semester of high school; teachers would not choose the transition training opportunities over other interests; and, a regional education service center was very reluctant to participate in co-hosting meetings given a lack of understanding that the intended purpose was to increase transition coordinator participation.

Also stakeholder buy-in was lost when persons involved on committees left their position and were replaced by someone not interested in the LLP activities or objectives. For example, one LLP's only interested contact at the school was promoted, she became too busy to participate and her replacement was not interested in the transition activities so no further participation occurred. Similarly, when the key representative at a Chamber of Commerce left, the chamber's interest in planning a meeting with the LLP and employers diminished.

Feedback:

The fourth process measure for which LLPs commonly reported issues was not receiving adequately clear and timely feedback from the central C-A team. Some LLPs reported initiating plans for activities identified in the initial approved strategic plan but later receiving feedback that the planned activities were considered to be services and were not allowed to be paid with the grant. As a result LLPs either changed their plans to exclude the activity or identified alternate funding sources which sometimes delayed implementation plans. For example, one LLP approached the City of Hartford for funding for a summer youth program, and although funding was eventually secured it was too late to initiate the program which was then deferred until after the grant period.

Another point of confusion was the requirements concerning marketing materials. After submitting materials for approval, one pilot learned that the LLPs could not use the same photographs as central C-A. Another LLP experienced a delay in launching its outreach program while reworking marketing materials.

Earlier and more complete feedback during the strategic planning phase would have prevented the confusion some LLPs experienced during the implementation phase resulting in rework for LLP staff and committee members, and program delays.

Table 6 lists the most common issues related to process measures.

Table 6: Most Common Issues for Process Measures

Process	Issues Reported
Timing	• Slow process time between RFQ acceptance and receipt of the contract • Shorter than planned for implementation time compared to expectations resulting from the delay in final approval of the strategic plan revisions • Overall short time period for implementation phase time used to focus on implementing activities but was insufficient to build relationships, implement changes, evaluate effectiveness, modify programs, expand programs and confirm funding for sustainability • Inappropriate timing for transition priority activities given project activities did not span a full academic year
Achieving Gatekeeper Support	• Lack of school administrative support with transition activities, such as the special education director or principal or superintendent
Achieving Stakeholder Buy-in	• Loss of momentum and stakeholder interest to participate in the planning and implementation phases as a result of delays waiting for the contract and waiting for final plan approval • Confusion about the C-A infrastructure change objectives • Lack of commitment to LLP's revised objectives • Change in personnel at organizations resulting in a loss of interested persons on committees when replacement person not interested in the LLP activities or C-A objectives
Receiving Feedback	• Lack of clarity in feedback from C-A staff regarding grant expectations including acceptable objectives and measures, allowable activities and product uses that could be paid for with grant funds, allowable logo and photograph usage for marketing

2. *Missing or Lacking Collaborations*

As part of the LLP interview, respondents were asked to comment on collaborations that would have been helpful during the implementation phase. All LLPs identified additional collaborations that would have improved the LLPs' ability to implement and maintain their activities and infrastructure changes attempted.

Several LLPs reported the need for more collaboration to support transition and youth-related objectives including: more involvement of One Stops with youth, more direct relationships with employers and schools, more support from school administration to ensure time is available for teachers and students for transition activities, and more intra-school collaboration with technology departments to better support assistive technology (AT) programs.

Some LLPs noted missing collaborations that would have benefitted the employment objectives including: more involvement of state groups such as One Stops and

Department of Transportation (DOT), business groups and individual employers, private employment agencies, and the central C-A program. LLPs noted that collaborations with non-profits do not always work well and that considering alternative relationships with motivated private agencies may be helpful. For example, one LLP noted the need to work more with private for-profit employment agencies who have the expertise to support hiring people with disabilities into competitive employment. Some LLPs noted that more collaboration with the central C-A program could have promoted referrals to pilot organizations working on the employment priority.

C.   Description and Evaluation of LLPs' Outcomes

 For evaluation of the outcome measures, data was collected from review of the quarterly reports, during the site visits and from a subset of questions in the LLP Interview Questionnaire. Interview questions pertaining to outcome measures included impact of infrastructure changes for transition, employment and transportation.

Below is a summary for each of the priority areas (transition, employment and transportation) of the successfully implemented activities by type of infrastructure change. The categories for type of infrastructure change included: new program or grant; change in existing program; new network or collaboration created; policy or procedure change; information dissemination; added resources; and other activities that did not meet one of the above categories. The frequency and sustainability plans are reported. A discussion of which activities created effective infrastructure change and potentially sustainable impact is provided. Refer to Appendix F for a summary of LLP completed activities and sustainability plans by type of infrastructure change for each of the 3 priorities.

Following this review of successfully implemented activities is a summary of responses to interview questions assessing how likely it is that the infrastructure changes will be permanent and how easily the infrastructure changes could be replicated. In addition, issues identified during the implementation phase and comments on lessons learned from the pilot interviews are discussed. Refer to Appendix G for a summary of the lessons learned interview responses.

Activities that were planned but not implemented or incomplete at the end of the grant period are reviewed with reasons for difficulties reported.

Finally, there is an overall evaluation of each LLP's success in achieving the outcomes for the planned infrastructure changes. The LLP activities were reviewed and evaluated according to the Barriers-Outcomes -Measures document finalized as part of the strategic plan for each LLP, and is included as Appendix H. The detailed list of all activities and sustainability plans by LLP is included in Appendices I, J and K.

1. Transition Priority Area

For the transition priority area, the most common type of infrastructure change was implementation of new programs with 7 different activities reported, 6 of which had sustainability plans in place to continue at the end of the grant. All of the new programs have the potential to create long-lasting positive impact on transition planning for

students with disabilities currently and in the future. The key activities included: implementing a process and workbook for evaluating and improving transition programs; providing career assessment tools for students; providing trainings on disability awareness in youth-related programs; conducting workshops with youth-specific audiences; initiating a youth mentoring program; implementing career portfolios in transition planning; and implementing a Spanish curriculum for training parents on transition planning and advocacy. Only the training program for parents did not have confirmed funding for continuation and sustainability in 2010; all the other activities will continue and some will be expanded in 2010.

Providing additional resources was another common infrastructure change that will have long-lasting impact for transition programs in schools. The key activities included: purchase of AT for schools; providing toolkits with transition resource information either directly to transition coordinators or by public access websites; and providing funding to support teacher attendance at transition-related trainings. Only the financial support for teacher transition training activity does not have sustained funding after the end of the grant; however, the expectation is that the participating teachers have increased awareness of transition training opportunities and will be able to use what they learned and may choose to attend or recommend that others attend such trainings in the future.

There were 4 activities associated with information dissemination, of which only implementation of a parent transition information night directly distributes information to the target audience. This new activity will be continued after the grant period by the participating schools. The other activities included youth outreach, business directory and asset maps, all of which only provide information passively if others choose to use the resource.

Program changes included: working with a school transition coordinator to review the transition planning process and revise the form to better meet the local needs; and partnering with summer youth work programs by improving the recruitment process to include youths with disabilities, and identifying additional grant funds to support youth compensation. The program change activities could have long-lasting positive impact for youths but the activities are dependent on continued involvement by teachers or organizations and availability of resources.

Finally, policy changes were instituted by a few LLPs as part of their transition infrastructure change activities and included: new procedures to promote an earlier start to the vocational rehabilitation (VR) referral process for students in their final year of high school, as a means to ensure there is no gap in support after high school; and new procedures to include accommodation needs as part of the application for summer work programs. The advantage of policy changes, compared to program changes, is that they are inherently sustained even after the proponents of the changes are no longer involved. Table 7 summarizes the transition activities implemented by the LLPs.

**Table 7: Successfully Implemented Infrastructure Change:
Transition Priority Area**

Type of Infrastructure Change	Key Activities - Transition
New Program or Grant	• Process and workbook for evaluating and improving transition programs in high school • Career Assessment tools provided for students • Training on disability awareness for youth-related programs • Workshops specific to youth audience • Career portfolios as part of transition planning • Mentoring program match high school youth and college student • Spanish curriculum training parents on transition planning and advocacy
Additional Resources	• Purchased AT for schools • Toolkits with transition resource information • Allocated funds to support attending transition related training
Information Dissemination	• Parent Transition information night • Directory of youth-friendly businesses • Outreach to youth • Asset map of disability resources locally
New Network or Collaborations	• Partner with local businesses for Disability Mentoring Day • Transition Committees in 2 school districts • Participant in local stakeholder meetings
Program Change	• Revised IEP forms locally • Partner with existing summer youth work programs
Policy Change	• New procedures for earlier start to student VR referral process • New procedures for youth summer program application asks for accommodation needs

2. Employment Priority Area

For the employment priority area, the most common type of infrastructure change was creation of new programs with 7 types of activities reported. Although all the activities created programs that addressed needs identified in the LLP strategic plans, only 4 have sustainability plans that may allow the programs to be long-lasting and potentially effective. These sustainable plans included: creation of AT demonstration kits and lending library for business from which fees will support long-term sustainability; restructuring workflow at One-Stops to create integrated resource teams which are a

permanent process change to better serve clients; implementing staff training programs with current staff resources which is a permanent change after gaining director support to make disability awareness and service training mandatory; and creation of an annual employer recognition award which is funded by other long-standing grants and private sources who may have a vested interest in promoting the award.

The remaining activities have sustainability plans which are highly dependent on the organization having available grant funds including: implementing a Job Club training curriculum for job seekers which requires an available sponsor organization and staff to conduct meetings; implementing a job referral program with expanded para-transit options which requires collaboration funding for transportation and staff resources; and, conducting disability awareness and ADA workshops for employers which requires a sponsoring organization and staff resources.

Some of the attempted activities to provide additional resources will have a long-lasting impact including: purchase of new AT equipment for One-Stops; and creation of a job developer role at a local Adult Resource Center which will be self-funded through new contracts received. The other additional resource activities have the potential to address immediate needs but require active involvement by job seekers and employers including: webpage with job referral links for employers to post job openings, and an employment toolkit.

Information dissemination was another commonly attempted activity for the employment priority and included 5 different activities. Of these activities, only the presentation of AT demonstration kits and materials ensures some degree of active participation by employers given the employer will have to make a request for and pay a fee. The other activities can effectively communicate new information but are indirect forms of communication with passive involvement of the recipient. These passive activities included: distributing a hiring best practices guide, employer outreach marketing and cold-calling, distributing a directory of businesses, and presenting to employer groups such as Chambers of Commerce.

Several LLPs reported on the merits of creating new networks and improving collaborations between the LLP organization and other organizations especially with employer groups such as their local Chamber of Commerce and CT Business and Industry Association. Another approach was to start or increase participation in meetings hosted by other stakeholders. Networks and collaborations are feasible to maintain without additional funding and have the potential to provide organizational support in the future. Table 8 summarizes the employment activities implemented by the LLPs.

Table 8: Successfully Implemented Infrastructure Change:
Employment Priority Area

Type of Infrastructure Change	Key Activities - Employment
New Program or Grant	• AT demonstration kits and lending library for businesses • Integrated resource teams for job seekers • Mandatory staff training on disability awareness, service, ADA at One-Stops • Employer recognition annually with Disability Employment Awareness Month • Job Club curriculum and meetings • Job referral program with collaborating transportation partner providing extended para-transit for employment purposes • Workshops for employers on Disability Awareness and ADA
Information Dissemination	• Presentation and materials for employers on AT kits • Best practices guide for hiring persons with disabilities • Employer outreach with marketing materials and one-one one cold calling efforts • Directory of disability friendly employers in local area • Presentations to local employer groups
Additional Resources	• Purchased AT and resources for 3 accessible One-Stops • New job developer role with partner agency • Webpage links to job referral sites for employers to post job • Employment toolkit for job seekers
New Network or Collaborations	• Local Chambers of Commerce collaboration to present to businesses • Collaborative relationship with CT Business and Industry Association (CBIA) • Participant in local stakeholder meetings

3. Transportation Priority Area

As with the other priority areas, the most common type of infrastructure change for the transportation priority was implementation of new programs or grants. A third of the LLPs participated in collaborations with other groups to submit grant applications for new transportation services, of which all were awarded. All 3 of the awarded grants will create permanent changes taking effect in 2010 with the support of the collaborating organizations. Two of the grants create new job positions including: a Mobility Ombudsman role with the support of Eastern CT Transportation Consortium, and a Mobility Manager with the support of the Locally Coordinated Human Service

Transportation Plan members in Bridgeport. The third grant has designated resources for accessible taxis and a voucher system in New Haven.

The other new programs or program changes implemented by the LLPs included: establishing a voucher system for employment-related transportation using available funds from another grant and existing infrastructure from the DSS voucher program; collaborating with another agency to coordinate client transfers between the 2 transit services to access a disability-friendly employer in another town; collaborating with local transit district and the Kennedy Center to conduct the transportation training module for the Latino parent transition academy; and, providing 3 different expanded para-transit services. Of the expanded para-transit services, one is for transportation to employment agencies in another town; another is for modified hours to meet ADA compliance; and the third was a demonstration project for employment-related transportation extending the eligibility distance for para-transit to 2 miles, increasing service hours earlier and later in the day, and providing service 7 days a week.

Although several of the new program or program changes provided effective improvements in transportation access, all the activities were very dependent on receiving additional grant funding to be sustainable. This suggests that improving services and access to transportation requires a substantial investment that may not be feasible at a local level, and that changes to statewide funding policies are necessary.

Several LLPs implemented infrastructure change by dissemination of information using two types of activities including: providing transportation training with client referrals to the Kennedy Center and a transportation seminar; and, distributing transportation information brochures by creating revised transportation materials with locally specific information and by posting materials on-line. With the exception of training seminars which requires additional funding to continue, all other activities will be sustained with existing resources in 2010.

One LLP implemented a process change by creating a student referral procedure at a local high school in collaboration with the Kennedy Center for transportation training. This process will be effective in 2010 and should be permanent without additional costs.

Lastly, an LLP created an audio-visual CD of the CT Drivers Education manual, in English, as a new resource type of infrastructure change. Although the effectiveness of this new resource is not yet evaluated, the downloadable CD has the potential to provide a long-lasting alternative resource to many students and adults with disabilities at no additional cost.

Several collaborations were noted in conjunction with conducting the transportation activities including collaborations with organizations to write a grant proposal, with the Kennedy Center for training, with the local transit district to provide training, and with para-transit agencies to provide alternate services. No other collaborations were noted. Table 9 summarizes the transportation activities implemented by the LLPs.

Table 9: Successfully Implemented Infrastructure Change:
Transportation Priority Area

Type of Infrastructure Change	Key Activities - Transportation
New Program or Grant	• New Freedom Initiative grants for Mobility Ombudsman (eastern CT) , Mobility Manager (southwest CT), and for accessible taxis with voucher program (New Haven) • New voucher system for employment-related transportation established with another grant paying for service • New transfer transit service with collaborating partner to access employer • Training on transportation options as module in Spanish parent transition training curriculum
Program Change	• Extended para-transit services including: - extended eligibility distance, hours and days of service - transportation outside region to access employment agency - modified hours to be ADA compliant
Information Dissemination	• Transportation training in collaboration with Kennedy Center • Transportation brochure revisions and locally specific information
Policy Change	• Student referral process for transportation training at Kennedy Centers
Additional Resources	• Audio-visual CD version of state drivers education manual
New Network or Collaborations	• (nothing in addition to the collaborations for grant proposals, information dissemination and program change)

4. LLP Interview Responses to Outcome Measures

The LLPs were asked to respond to the question of how likely will the infrastructure change implemented provide permanent improved access to jobs and how easily could these be replicated for each of the 3 priority areas. Overall, the LLP responses were very optimistic with the majority of LLPs indicating the infrastructure changes implemented were very likely to have permanent effects. For the transition priority area, 6 LLPs planned activities to attempt infrastructure changes of which 5 considered their changes were very likely to provide permanent improvements and 1 considered the changes were somewhat likely because of concerns for sustainability. For the employment priority area which involved 6 LLPs, 4 considered their changes were very likely to provide permanent improvements and 2 considered the changes were somewhat likely. The lower ratings were reported because of the need for strong collaborative relationships with employer agencies and employers, and the lack of

evaluation time to determine if activities were effective. For the transportation priority area, 7 of 9 LLPs considered their changes were very likely to provide permanent improvements and 2 considered the changes were somewhat likely. The reasons given for the lower ratings were reported by one LLP that to ensure substantive changes, more DOT involvement is needed as a leader to coordinate and approve changes; and the other LLP noted that changes are dependent on good relationships with transit providers and local planning agencies.

For the second question asking how easily the changes could be replicated, the response ratings in all 3 priorities were lower compared to the question asking how likely the changes would be permanent. For both transition and employment, 3 LLPs out of 6 considered that replicating their activities would be somewhat easy and 1 considered it would be not too easy. For transition activities, the LLP with the low rating noted that although statewide transition materials exist, there must be consideration of the local needs before implementing programs. For the employment activities, the LLP with the low rating noted that considerable resources and capacity are necessary in order to implement the changes.

For both questions regarding the 3 priorities, none of the respondents reported the worst response of "not at all likely" to provide permanent improvements and "not at all easy" to replicate changes, and only 1 LLP each for transition and employment priorities considered replication was "not too easy". These responses suggest that the LLPs were overall satisfied with the probability that infrastructure changes were effective, sustainable and could be repeated using the types of activities implemented by the LLPs. Table 10 displays the categorical responses from the interviews.

Table 10: Categorical Responses to Outcome Measures

Question	Categorical Responses % (n)		
How likely will the **transportation** infrastructure changes, implemented as part of your Connect-Ability grant, permanently improve access to jobs for persons with disabilities in your service area?	Very likely **78%** (7)	Somewhat likely 22% (2)	Not too likely 0% (0)
How easily could these **transportation** infrastructure changes be replicated or implemented in another service area?	Very easy 44% (4)	Somewhat easy **56%** (5)	Not too easily 0% (0)
How likely will the school to work **transition** infrastructure changes, implemented as part of your Connect-Ability grant, permanently improve access to jobs for persons with disabilities in your service area?	Very likely **83%** (5)	Somewhat likely 17% (1)	Not too likely 0% (0)
How easily could these **transition** infrastructure changes be replicated or implemented in another service area?	Very easy 33% (2)	Somewhat easy **50%** (3)	Not too easily 17% (1)
How likely will the **employment** infrastructure changes, implemented as part of your Connect-Ability grant, permanently improve access to jobs for persons with disabilities in your service area?	Very likely **67%** (4)	Somewhat likely 33% (2)	Not too likely 0% (0)
How easily could these **employment** infrastructure changes be replicated or implemented in another service area?	Very easy 33% (2)	Somewhat easy **50%** (3)	Not too easily 17% (1)

5. Lessons Learned During Implementation Phase

Transition

The key factors identified that affect the ability to implement transition infrastructure changes were the process issues of gatekeeper (i.e. superintendents and principals) and stakeholder (i.e. teachers and transition coordinators) commitment to improvement of transition services. Gatekeeper buy-in is necessary because without the allocation of finances, staff time and support for schedules to accommodate student career planning, implementing any real changes is very difficult. The stakeholder buy-in is necessary since these are the people who ultimately implement the activities.

Availability of resources from the state is not a problem, but the LLPs identified the need for continued support from the State Department of Education to distribute information to the teachers and parents, and to consider adjusting procedures and documents to meet local needs.

Another important lesson learned identified by one of the LLPs was to consider implementing new resources in schools to be accessible by the general population. This will improve access for students because there is less segregation and stigmatization of students with identified disabilities, more students who do not self-identify with a disability may find that some AT products are helpful, and students without disabilities can benefit from career planning tools increasing the return on investment for the school.

Employment:

The LLPs identified 3 key factors impacting employment infrastructure change including the need for strong relationships, need for knowledgeable expert resources, and more network support from state and private providers. For strong relationships the LLPs reported the need to include the active participation of business organizations (i.e. Chambers of Commerce), and direct involvement with various types and sizes of businesses locally and nationally. LLPs identified a need to involve experts to support job seeking clients on how to job search and how to get hired; and to support employers with plans on how to meet their needs.

The LLPs also noted that state and private providers would benefit from more networking and job sharing to better meet the needs of clients, and more resources to address the lack of VR counselors.

Transportation:

Several issues were identified with regards to transportation infrastructure change including problems with administration and regulation of para-transit services and need for more involvement by high level policy makers with financial decision-making ability. LLPs reported having difficulty attempting infrastructure change due to limitation of current regulations for para-transit which do not adequately focus on providing services for employees, students or rural clients. Significant improvements to access to jobs and work experience would be realized if para-transit service rules were modified, as evidenced by the LLP which conducted a demonstration project with the local transit

agency to extend the distance eligibility requirement and provided consistent early morning and late day service. Such changes require not only cooperation from the transit agency but access to funding. Financial requirements are too great for local efforts alone and require the involvement and support of higher level policy makers in regional or state planning agencies to commit monies to improve services.

Other common issues impacting the implementation of transportation infrastructure change were related to the administrative challenges. These challenges included the need to have substantial resources available to administer a voucher program including staff and time to manage referrals, multiple transit agencies to offer services, and adequate funds to support clients for the minimum needed time. Another challenge was the poor quality of available transportation information. Although they contain a lot of information, the transit brochures tend to be very difficult to understand and contain information that is not relevant for the local needs of clients. A practical improvement to transportation infrastructure as demonstrated by several LLPs was creation of concise, locally relevant information for specific client populations available as brochures or on-line resources.

6. Activities Not Done or Incomplete

For the transition priority area, 7 planned activities could not be accomplished, generally because of a lack of commitment from school districts and staff, or a lack of time to achieve the steps needed for the activity. Planned activities not implemented for transition due to lack of commitment or interest included: a disability awareness workshop for educators; transition planning and transition goals form at local school; collaboration between schools and advocacy groups for student support; and training para-professionals as job coaches. Planned activities not implemented for transition due to lack of time available included: a youth summer work program and after school workshop, a transition resource webpage for Latino parents, and distribution of transition toolkits through a website.

For the employment priority, 4 of the 5 planned activities that were not accomplished were due to a lack of stakeholder buy-in, specifically employers and business organizations. Employers did not engage in posting job openings, did not respond to outreach attempts to offer training and information on employing people with disabilities, and infrequently participated in diversity and ADA training offers. Business organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, in some towns did not engage in attempts by the LLP to present to the business members or support identifying businesses willing to hire youths or adults with disabilities.   For one other LLP, a planned employment conference was not attempted due to lack of time.

For the transportation priority, only 3 reported planned activities were not fulfilled for various reasons. Planning for transportation of students to work experience was frustrated due to lack of school commitment to participate in one LLP and inability to identify feasible student transportation alternatives for a different LLP. Another LLP had planned to influence policy changes to reduce the barriers for obtaining public service drivers license certification with the hope that this would increase available transportation options, but the grant period was too short to fully achieve this objective.

Tables 11, 12 and 13 list the planned but not completed activities reported by priority area and categorized by type of planned infrastructure change.

Table 11: Summary of Activities Not Done or Incomplete by Type of Infrastructure Change for Transition Priority Area

Type of Infrastructure Change	Planned Activities Not Done or Incomplete
New Program or Grant	• Unable to implement work experience as part of transition planning: (1) summer youth program deferred; (2) after-school workshop deferred • Unable to verify effect of new programs: (1) youth focused One-Stops; (2) in-school mentoring program • Did not attempt educator awareness training modules / workshops
Additional Resources	• Unable to engage school para-professionals in training for job coaches • Unable to complete transition resource webpage for Latino families • Unable to complete website distribution of transition toolkits before end of grant
Program Change	• Unable to engage school district to participate in transition goal planning
New Network or Collaborations	• Lack of collaboration with advocacy groups to include youth participation

Table 12: Summary of Activities Not Done or Incomplete by Type of Infrastructure Change for Employment Priority Area

Type of Infrastructure Change	Planned Activities Not Done or Incomplete
New Program or Grant	• No employer response to actively participate with job postings on referral website
Information Dissemination	• No employer response to outreach offering information on employment of people with disabilities • Lack of employer participation in diversity and ADA trainings • Unable to conduct employment conference
New Network or Collaborations	• Difficulty gaining interest from employer groups (Rotary Clubs, Chambers)

Table 13: Summary of Activities Not Done or Incomplete by Type of Infrastructure Change for Transportation Priority Area

Type of Infrastructure Change	Planned Activities Not Done or Incomplete
New Program or Grant	• Unable to engage school district to participate in transportation options for work experience • Unable to identify alternative transportation option for students to attend work experience
Policy Change	• Unable to change policy for public service drivers license certification, but some influence to change law/policy for fingerprinting services of applicants

7. Evaluation of LLP Results Compared to Planned Infrastructure Changes

The LLPs completed an extraordinary amount of work effort in the 9-12 months available, depending on whether their staff started work in advance of the final approval, to implement the strategic plan activities. All of the LLPs submitted strategic plans with multiple infrastructure change objectives and outcomes planned. All of the LLPs completed at least some of the planned activities for each of the priority areas defined by the Barriers-Outcomes-Measures document as per their strategic plan during the pilot period.

For some of the LLPs some of the work activities did not match their organization's expertise or in-house capabilities, making it even more difficult to achieve the planned activities.   For example, a few of the LLPs committed to working on transition goals but did not have any background experience in working with youth and the schools. For the LLPs whose strategic plan goals were closely matched to their organizational mission, their ability to initiate work and include the direct involvement of stakeholders was not impeded as evidenced by earlier implementation of actual activities. For example, PAP is an organization already committed to advocacy for parents of children with disabilities and was able to create a training curriculum and involve parents within the first half of the year for the transition priority area. Similarly, CREC is an educational resource organization very familiar with transition planning and NEAT is a resource organization to persons with disabilities and very familiar with evaluating assistive technology; as a result both of these organizations were able to immediately begin work after submitting their plans for the transition and employment priority areas respectively.

A few of the LLPs' strategic plans primarily focused on a single overall infrastructure change which meant all or nearly all of their activities were directed at accomplishing the overall goal. In addition these activities were aligned with the organization's expertise. For example: an LLP focused on the process for evaluating and improving transition programs in 2 schools, another LLP focused on creating a training program for parents, and another LLP focused on creating an AT lending library to support employers. By focusing their organization's activities the probability of successful completion was increased.

A few of the LLPs used a committed team of staff to work on the planned activities which supported completion of work in the limited time available. Through the availability of multiple staff those LLPs were able to accomplish plans with multiple objectives or ambitious programs. For example: the Workforce Alliance employed various team members for the different activities of marketing, youth programs, employment and training; CACIL hired staff to do employer outreach, job seeker support and client follow-up; and PAP had multiple staff work to prepare and conduct the parent training program.

Most LLPs attempted significant infrastructure changes for transition and employment priority areas, but only a few attempted ambitious transportation changes while most focused on improving information dissemination or training opportunities. For example a single LLP implemented a voucher programs and a single LLP collaborated with the local transportation agency to expand services.

The table below indicates the overall results for each LLP compared to their plan. Plan details from the Barriers-Outcomes-Measures document are provided in Appendix H and details of activities by LLP are provided in Appendices I, J and K for transition, employment and transportation priority areas respectively.

Table 14: LLP Results Compared to Planned Activities

Pilot Site	LLP Priority Areas	Results Compared to Plan
Arc of New London County (ARCNLC)	Transition	• Successfully accomplished plans for toolkit and co-hosted transition coordinator meetings
		• Changed plans for advocacy with alternative Best Buddies mentoring program successfully achieved in fewer schools
		• Minimal success with mini-pilot involving 2 students instead of 3, did not use the Best Practices resources and lacked sufficient support from transition coordinator and transportation providers
	Employment	• Minimal success engaging employers given 3 out of 40 interested in participating in youth program after presentation
	Transportation	• Successful collaborative effort with grant for Mobility Ombudsman, but no involvement by LLP after grant approval

Pilot Site	LLP Priority Areas	Results Compared to Plan
Bristol Community Org. Inc. (BCOrg)	Transition	• Mixed success with plan to implement updated transition planning process and form to be used in next school year at 1 out of 2 schools • Successfully provided youth summer work experience
	Employment	• Successfully accomplished planned meetings with business organizations, created list of local employers • Successfully supported creation of Job Developer at a partner organization
	Transportation	• Successfully extended para-transit service hours but service contract expired; expanded service beyond local town to employment agencies • Unable to engage school district to expand transportation options • Unable to achieve policy changes to public service licensing
CT Assoc. of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL)	Employment	• Successfully achieved increased collaboration among local agencies to find work for clients, prepared employment kits, developed Job Club curriculum to support job seekers • Limited success with marketing campaign, website links and employer outreach • Did not achieve goal to engage employers in training related to hiring people with disabilities
	Transportation	• Successfully completed demonstration project for expanded para-transit service for employment purposes, including permanent transfer services with partner organization • Successfully provided transportation seminar

Pilot Site	LLP Priority Areas	Results Compared to Plan
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)	Transition	• Successfully achieved plans to evaluate and implement improvements to transition programs at 2 schools, implement career portfolios, implement new process for documenting businesses interested in youth work experience, and attain new AT resources • Successfully provided training opportunities to transition coordinators but limited success with job coach training unable to engage para-professionals • Successfully achieved new policy and procedure for student VR referrals
	Transportation	• Successfully completed plans for audio-visual CD of drivers manual and student training opportunities at the Kennedy Center • Did not achieve goal to identify additional transportation options for students
New England Assistive Technology Center at Oak Hill (NEAT)	Employment	• Successfully achieved plans to research and prepare demonstration AT kits for employers with business presentation and information • Limited success with website links for job posting given lack of employer engagement
	Transportation	• Successfully accomplished plan to prepare locally focused transportation brochure
City of New Haven	Transition	• Successfully achieved plans to revise processes with local Youth@Work program to be started in 2010, conduct self-advocacy youth workshop, and provide disability awareness presentations to youth audiences • Successfully provided media outreach to youths with press releases, local paper articles and TV spot
	Employment	• Successfully accomplished plans for 3 employer workshops and breakfast event with local Chamber of Commerce
	Transportation	• Successfully collaboration for New Freedom Initiative grant to purchase of 2 accessible taxis and voucher program in 2010 • Limited success with increasing family awareness of transportation options but successfully created referral process with local schools to The Kennedy Center in 2010

Pilot Site	LLP Priority Areas	Results Compared to Plan
Parents Opening Doors (Padres Abriendo Puertas) (PAP)	Transition	• Successfully created, implemented and revised parent transition awareness training program with target populations from 2 towns and completed 2 semesters • Unable to achieve plan to implement website changes with limited resources • Unable to achieve youth summer and after school work experience with lack of timely funding, but successfully included youth in Disability Mentoring day activities and plan for after school work experiences with funding available for 2010
	Transportation	• Successfully implemented training module with collaboration from local transit agency and The Kennedy Center
Workforce Alliance	Transition	• Successfully accomplished plans to increase awareness and support for persons with disabilities at One-Stop with integrated resource teams to serve job seeking clients, marketing materials, staff training, and set-up AbilityWorks center with AT resources • Successfully implemented additional job seeker training workshops • Successfully created youth-friendly environment with marketing materials, extended hours
	Employment	• Successfully conducted employer disability awareness training workshop and collaboration with chambers of commerce
	Transportation	• Successfully accomplished plans to implement voucher system for employment purposes, provided individualized transportation planning, and added online resources with transportation brochures on website

Pilot Site	LLP Priority Areas	Results Compared to Plan
The Workplace, Inc.	Transition	• Successfully accomplished plans to provide career training and career readiness assessment tools to 3 schools, distributed transition resource toolkit, and provided disability awareness training to mentoring programs for youth • Changed plans for disability awareness training to provide materials only to schools, unable to confirm school willingness to attend training • Limited success with distribution of asset map resource on community website in 2010
	Employment	• Successfully achieved plans to publish hiring best practices, and conducted disability awareness training to employers • Successfully included youth in disability mentoring day • Established employer recognition award • Successfully collaborated in New Freedom Initiative grant for Mobility Manager
	Transportation	• Limited success with revision of locally specific transportation information brochures available in 2010 with changes in printing plans

V.   Conclusions

A.   Structure and Process Key Characteristics to Success

Structures:

Pilots who successfully achieved specific implementation goals within the grant time period shared the common characteristic of having effective and involved team members. The actual organizational structure varied between having primarily staff members involved or having a project coordinator and active committee members involved. However, the key trait was the existence of a dedicated role responsible for achieving the planned goals through others, and the commitment of the staff or committee stakeholders. These results indicate that achieving infrastructure change is not possible through a single person effort but through teams committed to specific goals.

Processes:

All pilots implemented planning committees with the most successful pilots integrating the feedback into their implementation plan with either the staff teams whose job roles were committed to achieving the plan or contracted partners committed to fulfilling the plans. This finding indicates that to achieve successful infrastructure change it is not sufficient to have planning teams agree on a plan, it is necessary to also have active commitment from the stakeholders implementing the activities. Defining job role expectations in line with the infrastructure change activities or contracting with partnering stakeholders who have a vested interest to fulfill the infrastructure change activities were two methods to ensure active commitment by successful LLPs.

The most common process-related issues identified by the LLPs included:

- project timing
- achieving gatekeeper support
- achieving stakeholder buy-in
- receiving clear feedback

Of these, project timing was common to all participants because the time delays pending the contract and final strategic plan approval was out of the LLPs' control. As a result of the time delays, LLPs reported a loss of project enthusiasm and momentum with their committees and stakeholders. For future program planning, projects using a 2-step strategic planning process should work to streamline the contracting process as much as possible. Additionally, anticipated down time between contract stages should be explained to all stakeholders.

 Another effect of the time delay was the shorter than expected actual time for the project implementation. Some LLPs made allowances by starting work and incurring expenses "at risk" prior to final approval. Some LLPs modified plans, including not attempting planned activities which required more time than available to complete; other LLPs completed as much as possible with costs expended in the grant period, but full implementation expected in 2010.   For future program planning, an accurate

assessment of available time and then a realistic review of what type and how many activities can be completed in that time period should be agreed upon early in the planning phase so that stakeholder expectations can be managed.

Timing was an issue also in terms of when the start and end dates of the grant period occurred, particularly for the transition priority area. LLPs noted that it would have been more effective and efficient to have the grant period extend over a school year. The LLPs, especially those who were unable to initiate activities until April, experienced difficulties engaging teachers at the end of the school year or continuing activities over the summer, and were only able to implement some activities in the last 3 months of the grant without time for evaluation. For future transition program planning, consideration should be given to allow adequate time to plan before the summer break, then to implement new programs or procedures to coincide with the beginning of a school year and measure outcomes at the end of the school year.

B.   Most Successful Outcomes of Local Level Pilots

The most successful infrastructure change initiatives were comprehensive programs that affected a service or program overall, versus initiatives that changed one piece of a program. For example, evaluation and improvement of the overall transition planning program, implemented through buy-in from a larger school committee, versus educating a single transition coordinator on transition planning with a modified form but without broader school administration support or other program changes.

Further, the most successful infrastructure changes will have permanent impact either by changing policy, by creating new programs or by adding broadly used resources with adequate financial planning to continue over the long-term. A program such as the AT business demonstration kits and lending library will have long-term impact as a new program and also as an added resource for business to support employment of people with disabilities. By contrast, other programs, such as the training curriculum for parents to understand transition planning, although very successful, is highly dependent on funding availability.

Several LLPs completed activities to disseminate information as their infrastructure change, the most successful of these have active participation of others and not just passive distribution of information. For example, mandated trainings require staff to take the disability awareness offered, compared to other LLPs offering training but relying on businesses or teachers to voluntary to take the program.

Finally, the most successful infrastructure changes have the potential for broad impact, which are the activities that can be transferred to other regions with the potential to be implemented successfully as comprehensive and permanent with active participation by stakeholders.

The programs listed in Table 15 can be moved from one region to another to be applied if there are adequate resources and commitment from staff and stakeholders to implement the activities.

Table 15: Most Successful Infrastructure Changes

Type of Infrastructure Change	Activity Accomplished	Local Level Pilot
New Program	• Evaluate transition programs and implement strategic planning to improve programs through a transition committee at 2 local high schools	CREC
New Program	• Researched and identified AT equipment needs to support employers, prepared 5 demonstration AT kits for business presentation and created lending library for businesses	NEAT
New Program	• Implemented transportation voucher program with eligibility criteria for employment purposes which is managed through local One-Stop with individualized transportation plans	WorkAll
Additional Resources	• Implemented Career Assessment tools to be open to school population with support of the Special Education services, with 3-year seed funding and follow-up contract commitments from schools and provider to be expanded to additional schools	WorkPlace
Policy Changes	• Implemented disability awareness and service training as required staff training for One-Stop • Implemented disability awareness as required orientation training at summer youth programs and in mentoring programs	WorkAll WorkPlace NewHaven

C.   Overall Results of the Local Level Pilot Initiative

The reported goals of the Connect-Ability Strategic Planning Local Level Pilot Initiative were to:

- Improve the transition process for young adults moving from school to post-secondary education or employment
- Increase expectations for individuals with disabilities in achieving career potential
- Increase the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals with disabilities in Connecticut businesses
- Increase access to transportation including a person-centered voucher system

There were several LLP activities that successfully addressed the first goal to improve transition processes, with new programs and additional resources identified as the most successful infrastructure changes.

The second goal listed, to increase individual expectations, was accomplished by several LLPs through new program infrastructure changes including youth training and

job seeker training and a few LLPs with policy changes to include disability awareness in youth programs which meet the criteria for most successful change.

The third goal to address employment barriers was attempted by several LLPs through various infrastructure change methods. One new program with the sustainable new program for business AT lending kits and presentations meets the criteria for most successful change.

The final goal to increase transportation access was demonstrated to be the most difficult infrastructure to achieve locally, with significant attempts by only a few LLPs. One LLP was successful in implementing a new program infrastructure change with a voucher program for employment-related transportation which met the most successful change criteria.

In summary, the LLP initiative demonstrated that the most successful infrastructure changes were those that had a comprehensive and permanent impact, included active participation by clients and had broad impact applicable across other regions or towns. New programs, policy changes and additional resources were the most successful type of infrastructure changes reported from this initiative. The LLP initiative provided key insights for future planning of infrastructure changes with regards to key structures and processes to be considered and necessary planning to minimize possible negative issues of timing, gatekeeper support, stakeholder buy-in and feedback.

Overall the LLP initiative was a successful program supporting the achievement of C-A goals as defined in 2008.

VI. References

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VII.   Appendices (*Printed Separately*)

Appendix A: Local Level Pilots Descriptive Information

Appendix B: Evaluation Components from July 2008 Local Level Pilot Training

Appendix C: Summary of Local Level Pilots' Process Measures

Appendix D: Summary of Local Level Pilots' Process Issues Reported

Appendix E: Local Level Pilots' Interview Qualitative Responses to Process Measures

Appendix F: Summary of Activities by Priority, by Type of Infrastructure Change and by Sustainability Plan

Appendix G: Local Level Pilots' Interview Qualitative Responses to Outcome Measures

Appendix H: Barriers – Outcomes – Measures Document from LLPs' Strategic Plans

Appendix I: Activities by Local Level Pilot for Transition Priority Area

Appendix J: Activities by Local Level Pilot for Employment Priority Area

Appendix K: Activities by Local Level Pilot for Transportation Priority Area