

GOVERNOR'S INTERAGENCY TRANSITION COUNCIL FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

2017 REPORT

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Education Division of Rehabilitation Services

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I. BACKGROUND

The Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities (IATC) was first created on December 7, 2000 to improve the postsecondary outcomes of youths with disabilities in Maryland. It was reconstituted on August 7, 2007 by Executive Order 01.01.2007.13.

The primary responsibility of the IATC is to review, revise and update annually the Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Youth with Disabilities to ensure effective interagency planning and delivery of services for secondary students with disabilities. Additionally, the IATC is tasked with identifying and reporting activities of each partner which impact the delivery, quality and availability of transition services. The IATC also serves in an advisory capacity to all transition-related federal grants.

The IATC met four times during the reporting period: October 11, 2016; January 10, 2017; April 11, 2017; and June 13, 2017.

State Agency Acronyms Used in this Report

- BHA – Behavioral Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health
- DBM – Department of Budget and Management
- DDA – Developmental Disabilities Administration, Maryland Department of Health
- MDH – Maryland Department of Health
- DLLR – Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
- DORS – Division of Rehabilitation Services, Maryland State Department of Education
- GOC – Governor’s Office for Children
- GWDB – Governor’s Workforce Development Board
- MDOD – Maryland Department of Disabilities
- MHEC – Maryland Higher Education Commission
- MSDE – Maryland State Department of Education

- OGPSHCN – Office of Genetics and People with Special Health Care Needs, Maryland Department of Health

II. SIGNIFICANT POLICY CHANGES

Workforce Investment Opportunities Act

The work of IATC partner agencies, particularly MSDE, DLLR, DHR, MDH/DDA, MDH/BHA, and GWDB, continues to be significantly impacted by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which went into effect July 1, 2015. The intention of this federal law was to improve employment outcomes for youth, particularly out-of-school youth (those who had left high school) and included a new emphasis on serving youth with disabilities.¹

WIOA places a priority on providing services to youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities ages 16 -24 who are not attending school are eligible for out-of-school services. Youth with disabilities up to age of 21 are eligible for in-school services if they are low-income or meet other eligibility criteria. WIOA also represents new opportunities for support for young job seekers with disabilities by increasing the responsibility of Workforce Investment Boards and American Job Centers to be fully accessible and offer necessary accommodations to provide job

¹ WIOA's Title I Youth Program funds, which are targeted at young adults classified as either "in-school" or "out-of-school," are intended to assist in career and educational development. These funds are allocated to states by the U.S. Department of Labor according to a formula. WIOA preserved many aspects of youth services previously provided under the Workforce Investment Act, but made key changes, including: increasing the amount of youth services funds that must be spent on out-of-school youth; expanding the age of eligibility for out-of-school services; making disability a core category for eligibility for all youth services; and expanding the required youth services program elements. Under WIOA, at least 75% of federally allocated Title I Youth Program funds now must be used for out-of-school youth, an increase from the 30% required under WIA. The types of services funded include training and youth development programs for young people who have left school, as well as after-school services and employment supports for young people still in school. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) now must spend at least 20% of WIOA Title I Youth Program funds on work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education.

seekers with disabilities effective and meaningful participation in the use of skills training and career development. Maryland state agencies continue to implement the new WIOA requirements.

Subminimum Wage Phase-Out in Maryland

In May 2016, Maryland passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (HB420), an advocate-driven law that phases out the use of “14(c) certificates,” which are certificates that allow sheltered workshops to pay workers with disabilities less than federal minimum wage (“subminimum wage”). Under HB420, over time, the 14(c) certificates authorizing this practice will no longer be issued, and sheltered workshops will not get reimbursements from the DDA for supported employment services provided to workers making subminimum wage. DDA and MDOD, in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders, will submit an Implementation Plan in October 2017 that includes plans for transitioning workers into competitive, integrated employment and other meaningful activities. Once this law has been fully implemented, youth with disabilities who are leaving high school will now be directed first towards competitive, integrated employment opportunities. This year several of the IATC members were also on the Equal Employment Act workgroup and worked in concert with DDA and MDOD in developing the plan.

Maryland ABLE Program

Governor Hogan signed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act ([HB431](#)) on April 12, 2016 enabling Maryland to begin building an ABLE program. The Maryland ABLE program will be implemented by Maryland 529 and will officially launch Fall 2017. Maryland ABLE is pursuing a state-partnership to make available tax-advantaged savings accounts for Marylanders with disabilities, allowing individuals to save money for qualified disability expenses without jeopardizing state and federal means-tested benefits.

Maryland ABLE account features will include:

- Saving up to \$100,000 in your ABLE account before impacting SSI limits for cash benefits
- Saving money in your ABLE account without jeopardizing state and federal means-tested benefits such as Medicaid, food, or housing assistance
- \$2,500 state income tax deduction per filer and up to \$5,000 for joint filers

- \$14,000 annual contribution limit
- \$350,000 lifetime contribution limit

Since the beginning of 2017, Maryland ABLE has expanded outreach to Marylanders with disabilities, family members, and agencies and organizations. Through presentations, expos, and direct community outreach, the program has connected with nearly 800 Marylanders. In addition, we've established an active social media presence on Facebook & Twitter, expanded our email marketing list to over 1,500 contacts, and developed & distributed Partner Toolkits to nearly 30 agencies and organizations. As we move closer to launching ABLE savings & investment accounts, Maryland ABLE will host launch parties, pop-up enrollments, and online webinars to ensure that Marylanders who are interested in the ABLE program have an opportunity to engage, ask questions, and enroll conveniently.

III. GRANT AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

PROMISE

Maryland was one of six recipients of a national research grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Additional federal partners include the Social Security Administration, Department of Labor and Department of Health and Human Services. Maryland was awarded 31 million dollars for the five year grant in 2013. Over 2,000 youth on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families have been recruited, 996 of whom were randomly assigned to receive intensive interventions to increase the educational and employment outcomes of both the youth and their families. Key interventions include coordinated, assertive community-based case management, benefits counseling and financial education, and unpaid and paid work experiences for the youth. 340 Maryland PROMISE youth participated in paid employment experiences during summer 2017. PROMISE staff also engaged in 2684 direct employer engagement activities and provided youth and their families with 459 unpaid work experiences.

Evidence-Based Behavioral Health Programs

BHA began administration of Healthy Transitions (HT) in October 2014. HT continues as a program for youth ages 16-25 with serious mental health conditions. [1] The goal of the initiative is to create seamless transition for participants moving from youth to adult services.

Services include intensive treatment, community interventions, and family supports. Qualitative and quantitative data is collected. The grant covers Howard County and the tri-county region of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. MD-HT service providers are Humanim in partnership with Way Station (Howard County) and Pathways (Tri-county). As the Federal fiscal year 2017 comes to an end, MD HT served 175 unduplicated individuals to date with 78 referrals and reached 80% of their goal to serve 220 unduplicated individuals. MD-HT provided Outreach and Education to 13,981 individuals through at least 365 events.

BHA continues to participate in the work to conduct a feasibility study for the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). BHA works with researchers on adaptations to the model and fidelity tool for Supported Employment in Maryland for use with Transition -Age Youth and Maryland has entered into enrollment and development phase of this research.

The Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative

The Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative is a five year project funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Education and awarded to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). DORS will partner with the Local Education Agencies, Community Rehabilitation Partners, American Job Centers, the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, the University of Maryland, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and employers to implement a comprehensive project featuring work-based learning components to improve career outcomes for youth with disabilities. These partnerships will maximize resources, address systemic barriers, and ensure that collaborative efforts are linked to desirable post-school youth outcomes. This project will inform the field about key considerations associated with the application of specific Pre-Employment Transition Services required under WIOA. It will also further identify how the knowledge acquired over years of transition-related research can be effectively implemented through collaboration between VR and its partners.

Think College

Maryland, in partnership with the University of Maryland, has received a \$25,000 grant from the Think College National Coordinating Center to enhance postsecondary options for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The grant follows an additional \$250,000 funding

commitment from Governor Larry Hogan during the 2017 General Assembly to be included in the state health department's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) budget and an additional set-aside from the state education agency to expand postsecondary opportunities for students transitioning from Maryland schools.

Maryland's Think College collaborative will coordinate the efforts of State agencies, institutes of higher education, parents, and advocacy organizations to expand the quality and capacity of programs at four-year and two-year institutions for students who might otherwise not be able to gain access. Partners include the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Developmental Disabilities Administration, the Maryland State Department of Education Divisions of Special Education/Early Intervention Services and Rehabilitation Services, Maryland Department of Disabilities, Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and University of Maryland College of Education. A series of capacity building institutes with state partners begins this spring to identify best practices and provide a coordinated effort throughout Maryland.

Think College is part of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston and is funded by the US Department of Education to provide support, coordination, training, and evaluation services for transition and postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

IV. INTERAGENCY STATE PLAN FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES: GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Interagency State Plan underwent annual review at the June 13, 2017 meeting. The three major goals comprising the strategic plan are:

1. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school prepared for employment.
2. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school aware of postsecondary education and training program options.

3. Every student with a disability and their family will have information and support to successfully navigate the transition process.

The following pages contain descriptions of the strategies that were implemented to support these goals, and the progress IATC partner agencies have made in reaching these goals.

EMPLOYMENT

GOAL Every student with a disability will exit school prepared for employment.

STRATEGIES

Students will have support for and access to exploration of employment before leaving high school.

Each student will leave school equipped with basic knowledge of their own job skills, what it takes to get a job, and what resources are available to help with job training and placement.

The State will engage in the following systems change activities in support of Goal 1: MSDE's Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Service's strategic plan which includes the action imperative around secondary transition: evidence-based transition programs and services will be implemented to increase the number of youth with disabilities who are actively engaged in post-secondary activities such as employment.

PROGRESS

- **Supported Employment and Competitive Employment.**
- During the report period, 10,084 consumers ages 14-22 received services through DORS, of whom 1,434 were potentially eligible students receiving pre-employment transition services prior to applying for pre-employment transition services. 623 consumers attained competitive integrated employment

- In FY2016, BHA provided 151 transition-age youth with Supported Employment services.
 - DDA served 547 transition-age youth through the Governor’s Transitioning Youth Initiative in FY2016. DDA, administered the funds to provider agencies to support these Transitioning youth in Supported Employment, Community Learning Services, Day Habilitation and Discovery and Customization services. There were also a number of transitioning students and their families who chose to individualize their services through self-directed services.
- The QUEST Internship Program, a partnership of DORS, DBM and participating State agencies, affords State agencies the opportunity to provide mentoring services for persons with disabilities through unpaid part-time or full-time internships. In the past year, 35 individuals (8 of whom were ages 14-22) have participated in the QUEST Internship Program.
 - Summer Employment. Approximately 192 youth served by DORS participated in Summer Employment program in FY 2016. Additionally, in the summer of 2016, the Local Workforce Development Boards utilized the Summer Youth Connection and Youthworks grants to provide summer employment to 99 youth with disabilities. These were paid work experiences in competitive integrated settings and were provided to youth between the ages of 14-24. These opportunities also provided job readiness training and employment for 20-30 hours per week over a 5 to 6 week time period.

Project Search Expansion. Project Search, a business-led school-to-work program for students with significant disabilities takes place entirely at the workplace. DORS currently funds eight Project Search sites. Five sites are for students with disabilities three sites are for students and adults with disabilities. DORS is in the process of program expansion finalizing a ninth site for students with disabilities at Andrews Air Force Base.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

GOAL *Every student with a disability will exit secondary school aware of postsecondary education and training program options.*

STRATEGIES

- Students interested in pursuing postsecondary opportunities will have access to activities that support this goal.
- Students and their families will be provided with information on postsecondary education and training program opportunities and requirements.

PROGRESS

- **Graduation Rates.** According to the Maryland Report Card, 3.9 % of students with IEPs left school before graduating, compared with 2.4 % of students without IEPs. According to MD Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data & Related Tables, on October 1, 2016, there were 4,928 students ages 14-21 with disabilities exiting with a diploma (45.8%) and 714 students ages 14-21 with disabilities exiting school with a certificate of program completion (6.6%).
- **Career and Technology Education.** In the Class of 2016, 97.6% of the students with a disability that were Career Technology and Education concentrators completed high school
- **Postsecondary Supports.** DORS supported 487 students ages 14-22 in postsecondary education: 210 in College/University, 193 in Vocational and Occupational Skills Training; and 95 in Workforce Technology Center trainings.
- **DORS Pathways Program Expansion.** The DORS Pathways Program, an educational support program for students in postsecondary education with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, is available at all three Community College of Baltimore County sites, Howard Community College and Montgomery College.

TRANSITION PROCESS

GOAL *Every student with a disability and their family will have information and supports to successfully navigate the transition process.*

STRATEGIES

- Families of students eligible for services from adult agencies will have the opportunity to participate in transition education by age 14 and will have information and knowledge about agencies which support adults with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities and their families will receive information on transitioning to adult health care services.
- Every student with a disability will exit school prepared to integrate into the community.

PROGRESS

- **Updated Transitioning Youth Handbook.** The Transition Planning Guide has been updated. Content includes information on eligibility requirements for adult services and transition planning strategies and resources.
- **Transitioning Youth Conference.** The 2017 Maryland Professional Transition Institute, organized and hosted by the IATC, was held in March 2017 in Colombia, MD. The conference, which was attended by over 150 professionals and advocates who work with transitioning youth, included interactive sessions covering transition planning, employment, postsecondary education, healthcare and supported decision-making.
- **Addressing Service Gaps.** GOC is taking the lead in working with IATC partner agencies to support Governor Hogan's goal of an economically secure Maryland by improving outcomes among disconnected youth ages 16-24 who are not working and not enrolled in school. Youth with disabilities are often disconnected and struggle to enter the adult workforce due to multiple systemic and individual barriers. As a member, GOC informs and supports the work of the IATC by providing analysis of State policies that impact youth disconnection, identifying gaps in services, and providing information on promising strategies for re-connection.
- **TAY Behavioral Health Care.** Core Service Agency (local mental health authority) representatives from 12 local jurisdictions with state grant-funded Transition Age Youth (TAY)-specific programs met together on June 14th for a policy forum to align local implementation with state-level model and policy development in order to address broader systemic and financing issues necessary for sustainability and expansion of the TAY initiative statewide. Funding of the TAY initiative continues into FY 2017.
- **Early Intervention Program.** The Maryland Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a specialized program with expertise in the early identification, evaluation, and

comprehensive psychiatric treatment of adolescents and young adults with psychotic disorders. The EIP is comprised of three components: (1) Outreach and Education Services; (2) Clinical Services; and (3) Training and Implementation Support. Research is integrated into each of these components and focuses on the development of objective methods for early detection and prediction of disease emergence, progress or recovery; and intervention development to enhance efficacy and effectiveness. All EIP activities are guided by a multi-disciplinary Advisory Council, including youth, family and consumer advocacy. Outreach and education activities were conducted at 18 events for 1,523 attendees. Services were provided to 128 individuals, and 38 consultations were provided.

V. LIST OF IATC MEMBERS

The membership of the IATC is provided for in Executive Order 01.01.2007.13. As of September 30, 2017, the membership of the IATC was:

Co-Chair: Carol A. Beatty, Secretary of Disabilities

Co-Chair: Suzanne R. Page, Assistant State Superintendent Rehabilitation Services

Appointed by Governor to 3-year terms (terms expire 2016)

- Rachel London
- Shannon Minnick
- Jennifer Moberly
- Christy Russell
- Mary Price
- One vacancy

Student representative appointed by Governor

- one vacancy

Representing State Dept. of Education

- Suzanne R. Page, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services
- Christy Stuart, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Special Education & Early Intervention Services
- Mary L. O'Connor, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Career & College Readiness
- Walter Sallee, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Student & School Services
- Adele W. Connolly
- Joyce Serio

Representing Maryland Department of Health

- Staci Jones, Developmental Disabilities Administration
- Anita Stokes, OGPSHCN
- Natalee Solomon, BHA

Representing Dept. of Human Resources

- Shannon McRae

Representing Dept. of Juvenile Services

- LaSandra T. Diggs

Representing Dept. of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation

- Michael R. DiGiacomo
- Carolynnette Scott

Representing Maryland Commission on Disabilities

- one vacancy

Representing Maryland Higher Education Commission

- Glennis Daniels-Bacchus
- Emily Dow

Representing Maryland Technology Assistance Program

- James D. McCarthy

Ex officio

- Carol A. Beatty, Secretary of Disabilities
- Karen Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools
- Christina E. Drushel, designee of Executive Director, Governor's Office for Children.

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