

*Best and Promising
State Policies and
Practices for Achieving
Competitive Integrated
Employment for People
with Disabilities*

**State Exchange on
Employment &
Disability (SEED):**

*Advancing Policy for a
More Inclusive Workforce*

**September 11, 2019
Albuquerque, NM**

TESTIMONY TO:

The New Mexico Disabilities Concerns
Subcommittee

TESTIMONY BY:

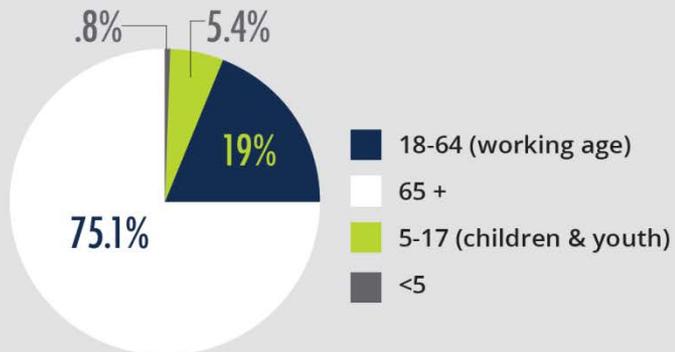
Robert "Bobby" Silverstein, JD
State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED)



Disability Snapshot

12.7% RATE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
IN THE U.S. POPULATION

AGE OF U.S. POPULATION WITH DISABILITIES



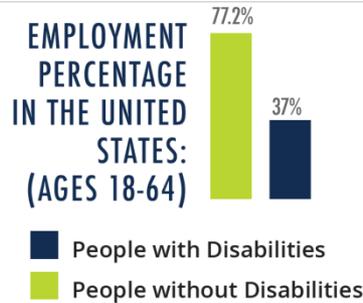
OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES



WORKING AGED PEOPLE (18-64)
WITH DISABILITIES



Disability Employment Snapshot



In 22 states, the employment percentage gap between those with a disability and those without was **40 percentage points or greater.**

EMPLOYMENT PERCENTAGE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: LOWEST VS. HIGHEST STATE

LOWEST **WEST VIRGINIA 26.1%** | **56.3%** HIGHEST **NORTH DAKOTA**

EMPLOYMENT GAP: LOWEST VS. HIGHEST STATE

LOWEST **NORTH DAKOTA 28%** | **46.5%** HIGHEST **MAINE**

EMPLOYMENT PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



EMPLOYMENT PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES



EMPLOYMENT GAP BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH VS WITHOUT DISABILITIES (18-64)



*Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2017 American Community Survey, American FactFinder, <http://factfinder.census.gov/>; University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability, Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2018, https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2018_Compendium_Accessible_AbobeReaderFriendly.pdf



Background

- ✓ People with disabilities are a key factor in states' ability to build strong, diverse and inclusive workforces that translate into economic success
- ✓ **Employment** addresses two challenges at one time: cost-effective means to empower individuals with disabilities and strengthens the workforce
 - Higher unemployment rate of people with disabilities
 - Disproportionate rates of poverty and economic insecurity



Background (cont.)

- ✓ States have adopted multi-faceted approaches to competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- ✓ National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and Council of State Governments (CSG), in collaboration with SEED, established the National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities
 - NCSL: Bipartisan organization representing and serving the legislators and legislative staff of all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories
 - CSG: Nation's only non-partisan, not-for-profit organization serving all three branches of state government



About SEED: The State Exchange on Employment & Disability

- ✓ Unique state-federal collaboration with goal to foster a nationwide workforce more inclusive of people with disabilities through a state policy-based approach
- ✓ Partners with state intermediary groups (such as NCSL, CSG) to facilitate state-federal engagement and expand capacity to offer disability employment policy and subject-matter expertise
- ✓ Assists states in policy adoption that creates economic opportunities, generates income, and promotes upward mobility for people with disabilities
- ✓ Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)



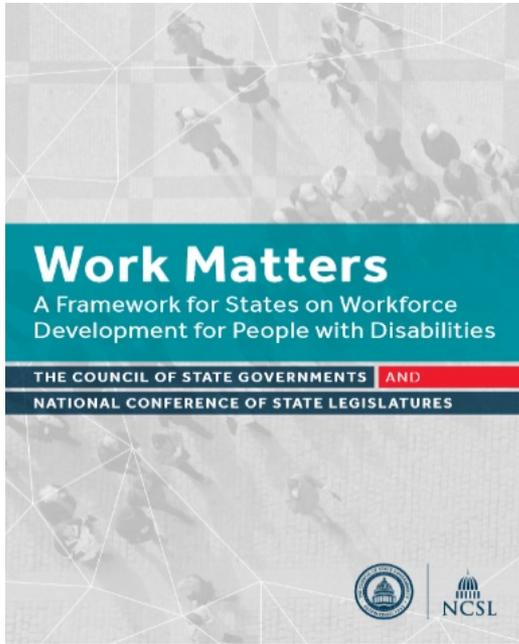
National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities

- ✓ Convened by CSG in partnership with NCSL
- ✓ Implemented under the auspices of the DOL/ODEP's SEED initiative
- ✓ Goal was to explore key issues around the employment of people with disabilities, identify key themes, and provide policy options for states
- ✓ Results served as the foundation for a disability employment policy framework for the states



Work Matters:

A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities



- Laying the Groundwork
- Preparing for Work
- Getting to and Accessing Work Opportunities
- Staying at Work
- Supporting Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

CSG.org/NTPWD/WorkMatters.aspx

NCSL.org/Research/Labor-and-Employment/Disability-Employment.aspx



Advancing Policy for a More Inclusive Workforce

Policy Framework: Guiding Principles

- ✓ Disability is a natural part of the human experience
- ✓ Four goals of disability policy—equal opportunity, full participation, economic self-sufficiency, and independent living
- ✓ Disability can develop at any time
- ✓ “Nothing about us without us”
- ✓ People with disabilities under-utilized in workforce and experience social and economic disadvantage
- ✓ Disability diversity and inclusion boosts bottom line



Policy Framework: Overarching Themes

- ✓ Leading by example
- ✓ Adopting robust reporting requirements—
“what gets measured gets done”
- ✓ Increasing coordination and collaboration
- ✓ Including universal design
- ✓ Extending diversity and inclusion initiatives to
include disability



Policy Options: Best and Promising Policy and Practices

- ✓ Task Force
- ✓ State as Model Employer
- ✓ Private Sector
- ✓ State Agency Coordination and Collaboration
- ✓ Youth Transition to Employment
- ✓ Stay-at-Work and Return-to-Work
- ✓ Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship



Task Force

A state-level **Work Matters Task Force** provides the mechanism to:

- ✓ Address the future of work (automation, artificial intelligence, gig economy) from a disability perspective
- ✓ Review innovative disability-related employment programs and policies adopted by other states;
- ✓ Compare and contrast these programs and policies to New Mexico's programs and policies; and
- ✓ Report findings and recommendations that work for the state of New Mexico and its residents with disabilities
- ✓ Establish comprehensive roadmap with benchmarks measuring progress



State as Model Employer

- ✓ Workforce analysis, goals, progress reports
- ✓ Fast track excepted services hiring authorities, internships
- ✓ Centralized reasonable accommodation fund and personal assistance services
- ✓ Accessible job applications
- ✓ Selective Placement Program Coordinators
- ✓ Mandatory interviews



Private Sector

- ✓ State contractors (plans, workforce analysis, goals, progress reports)
- ✓ Pipeline
- ✓ Inclusive apprenticeship programs
- ✓ Incentives for hiring
- ✓ Tax credits for accommodations



Interagency Coordination and Collaboration

- ✓ Employment First
- ✓ Medicaid waivers (Home and Community Based Services)
- ✓ Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act



Youth Transition to Employment

- ✓ VR Pre-employment transition services
- ✓ Benefits counseling
- ✓ IEPs and career planning
- ✓ Work-based learning experiences
- ✓ Parent education
- ✓ Inclusive higher education



Stay-at-Work and Return-to Work

- ✓ Stay-at-Work (SAW) programs (VR retention option)
- ✓ Return-to-Work (RTW) programs
 - ❖ Engage health care providers
 - ❖ Employer subsidies, incentives, grant programs
 - ❖ Employee incentive programs
 - ❖ Wellness and injury prevention
 - ❖ Implementation strategies
- ✓ Navigate the complexities of benefits and work incentives



Self Employment & Entrepreneurship

- ✓ State Procurement set-asides
- ✓ Certifications
- ✓ Financial Incentives for Disability-Owned Businesses
- ✓ Technical assistance



Conclusion

- ✓ **July 26, 2020** is the 30th anniversary of the ADA
- ✓ Window of opportunity
- ✓ Comprehensive approach to improving outcomes:
 - ❖ Review existing state policies and practices
 - ❖ Review best and promising policies and practices adopted by other states
 - ❖ Adopt roadmap for continuous improvement
 - ❖ Establish accountability mechanisms for measuring progress



Contact SEED

Bobby Silverstein

Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville PC

bobby.silverstein@powerslaw.com

202.872.6754

Nadia Mossburg

Office of Disability Employment Policy

U.S. Department of Labor

mossburg.nadia.i@dol.gov

202.329.2158

