



**STATE of  
the SCIENCE  
2017**

**Defining the  
employment  
research agenda**

A project of

**ThinkWork!**

at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston



RRTC on Advancing Employment for Individuals  
with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities:  
Building an evidence-based, holistic approach for  
moving integrated employment forward

November 28, 2017

Arlington, Virginia

Welcome to the State of the Science Conference!



# Feedback from stakeholders:

- Early engagement & anticipatory guidance to build high expectations
- Parents (& other family members) as authentic partners. System needs to meet families “where they are.”
- Address discontinuities among services and between agencies
- Clarify roles and expectations for the employment process. How can formal supports best intersect with personal supports?



# Feedback from stakeholders (continued):

- Building social capital for individuals and families
- Evolving role of case-managers in engaging with families
- Relationship between employment and guardianship status
- How can systems make choosing employment seem like less of a risk for families?



# Feedback from the field

- ❖ Provider organizational change
  - Expectations/culture of the organization- everyone can work
  - “Employment is everyone’s business”
  - Focus on long-term career development
  - Infusing data into decisions
  - Not just closing workshops, but tools to evolve service delivery
  - Networking with employer customers



# Feedback from the field – continued

- ❖ Employment consultants
  - Increase efficiency of direct support staff/reduce admin burden
  - Smart use of tech
  - Better supervisory structures
  - Increased staff competencies
  - It's about connections and relationships (with individuals, families, employers)



# Feedback from the field

- ❖ Data and its relationship to state systems and policy
  - Need a “deeper dive” into existing data
  - The value of longitudinal data
  - Triangulation at all levels
  - Shared definitions of employment?
  - Tracking employment outcomes not tied to formal services.



# Findings from the field- continued

## ❖ Leadership

- Development of regional communities of practice
- Organic growth of leaders
- Identifying and supporting champions

## ❖ Communication/collaboration

- Shared agendas across agencies- shifting from competition to collaboration
- Engaging all stakeholders so “they are the messengers”



Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment  
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[www.ThinkWork.org/rrtc](http://www.ThinkWork.org/rrtc)

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