



84.421D RSA Disability Innovation Fund Program Evaluation:

Project Comparisons (Deliverable 4.2)

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Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APSE	Association of People Supporting Employment First
ASPIRE	Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment
CIE	competitive integrated employment
CIL	Centers for Independent Living
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
DIF	Disability Innovation Fund
FTE	full-time equivalent
FPL	federal poverty level
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HCBS	home and community-based services
I/DD	intellectual/developmental disability
n.d.	no date
NEON	National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network initiative
NYS PIE	New York State Partnerships in Employment Systems Change project
ODEP	Office of Disability Employment Policy
pre-ETS	pre-employment transition services
PIE	Partnerships in Employment
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
SWE	subminimum wage employment
SWTCIE	Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment
TA	technical assistance
VOICE	Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment
VR	vocational rehabilitation
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

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I. Introduction

In 2022, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) awarded grants to 14 state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to promote competitive integrated employment (CIE) for people with disabilities (Exhibit I.1). These five-year Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) projects, authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260) and funded through the federal fiscal year 2022 Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) program, will help people with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating, subminimum wage employment (SWE) to obtain CIE.¹ These projects will create innovative models for dissemination and replication that do the following:

- Identify strategies for addressing barriers associated with accessing CIE
- Provide integrated services that support CIE
- Support integration into the community through CIE
- Identify and coordinate wraparound services for project participants who obtain CIE
- Develop and disseminate evidence-based practices
- Provide entities holding section 14(c) certificates with readily accessible transformative business models for adoption

The SWTCIE projects will develop and implement models to promote CIE in the following industries: essential workers; green jobs; home and community-based services; arts; transportation; and field initiated (which applies when a grantee plans to pursue multiple industry areas).

Exhibit I.1. VR agencies awarded SWTCIE projects



SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

¹ RSA uses the definition of CIE from 34 CFR 361.5(c)(9) established for purposes of the VR program. CIE is work performed in a location (1) that is typically found in the community and (2) in which the individual with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other people (such as customers and vendors) who do not have disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or people who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who do not have disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons.

RSA contracted with Mathematica to conduct a national evaluation that measures the SWTCIE projects' successes in meeting the DIF program's objectives. The purpose of the SWTCIE national evaluation is threefold: (1) to identify *how*, for *whom*, and in *what context* the projects and their strategies are most effective, (2) to document how other state VR agencies and partners can replicate the successful aspects of the projects, and (3) to make findings from the evaluation useful for policymakers and practitioners. The SWTCIE national evaluation, guided by a conceptual framework, will include implementation, participation, impact, outcome, and benefit-cost analyses.

A. Policy context

Federal policies and initiatives have shaped the employment outcomes of people with disabilities for decades. Notably, section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 ([29 U.S.C. 201](#)) permits employers that receive a certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division to pay special minimum wages—less than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour—to workers if the worker's disability limits their capacity to work (Curda 2023). Although the number of employers authorized to pay subminimum wages under the 14(c) certificate regulation has decreased substantially, from 3,117 in 2010 to 1,567 in 2019, nearly 1,050 14(c) certificate holders employed around 35,000 people with disabilities in SWE as of October 2022 (Curda 2023).

In recent years, federal policies have evolved to promote CIE among people with significant disabilities. In 2014, Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to strengthen the public workforce development system and maximize CIE opportunities for people with disabilities. Specifically, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act encouraged service providers to strengthen their internal capacities to offer services and supports oriented to CIE for people with disabilities. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act also imposed new restrictions on the use of subminimum wages by limiting employers' ability to pay workers with disabilities below minimum wage and requiring people with disabilities to obtain career counseling services by the dedicated state unit, typically the state VR agency, before they begin working in a job paying less than minimum wage (Curda 2023). Such counseling must occur every six months during the first year of 14(c) employment and annually thereafter. The counseling is designed to allow the person to explore, discover, and attain CIE.

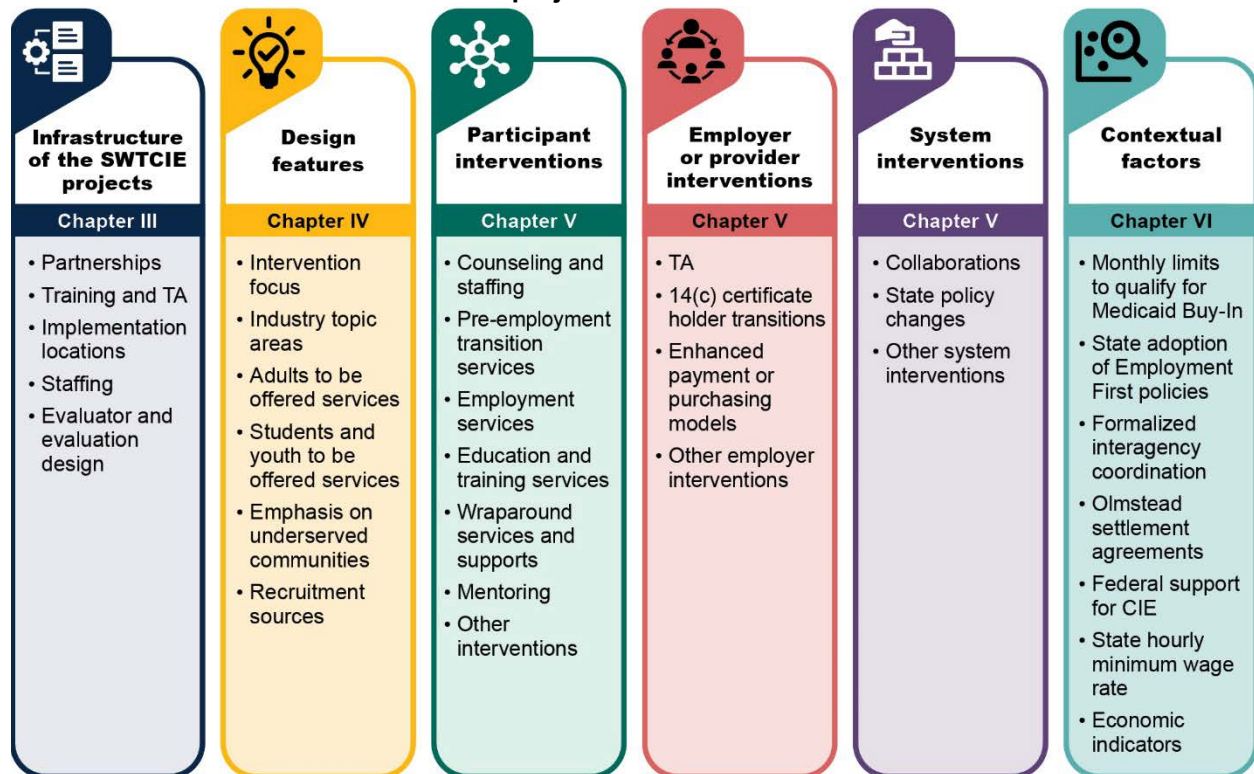
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which administers the Medicaid program, issued the Home and Community-based Service (HCBS) Settings Rule in 2014 to ensure that people with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting possible. Medicaid is the largest federal funder of day and employment services and supports for people with disabilities under its HCBS waiver program (Winsor et al. 2019). Through the HCBS waiver programs, states can offer people services that prepare them for and sustain their employment. These services might include personal assistant services, day habilitation services (such as prevocational services), supported employment, and career planning services, as long as the service is not otherwise available through a program funded under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act or, in the case of youth, provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Denny-Brown et al. 2013). CMS issued the HCBS Settings Rule to ensure that people with disabilities using federally funded services have “full access to the benefits of community living and are able to receive services in the most integrated setting” (CMS 2014). The HCBS Settings Rule addresses the issue of many states and service providers offering federally funded community-based supports that were institutional in nature (LeVeille 2018).

B. Report purpose

The purpose of this report is to compare salient features of the 14 SWTCIE projects. Specifically, the report documents the strategies and intended outcomes of each project as initially designed by the DIF grantees. Drawing on the literature documented in the systematic evidence review for the SWTCIE national evaluation (forthcoming), along with implementation best practices, it also offers feedback to and considerations for RSA and DIF grantees about the effectiveness of their strategies and proposed interventions. Finally, this report will inform the conceptual model that guides the SWTCIE national evaluation’s examination of the DIF program.

We developed a framework for identifying the strategies and effectiveness of the SWTCIE projects that we used to shape the structure of this report (Exhibit I.2).² The framework’s six domains include the infrastructure of the projects, the projects’ design features, proposed participant interventions, proposed employer interventions, proposed system-level interventions, and contextual factors (that is, things outside the projects that could influence their efforts). Appendices A to G capture the project characteristics for each of these domains.

Exhibit I.2. The six domains of SWTCIE project characteristics



Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

CIE = competitive integrated employment; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; TA = technical assistance.

² The framework of Exhibit I.2 is an adaptation of the one used by the Government Accountability Office to document factors that influenced the progress of 14(c) certificate holders in shifting away from SWE to CIE (Curda 2021). Available at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-260.pdf>.

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II. Data Sources and Methods

The national evaluation of the SWTCIE projects requires a clear understanding of the projects and the state environments in which they operate. This understanding includes the interventions the projects will pursue and the evidence about the interventions' effectiveness to decrease SWE and increase CIE. Our data sources and methods underscore our interest in assessing the potential of the projects to have their intended effects on promoting CIE among participants, 14(c) certificate holders, employers, service providers, and system changes. A particular focus of this report is whether projects will pursue interventions that have rigorous evidence (that is, evidence that confirms a *causal* relationship between an intervention and an employment outcome) as to their effectiveness and how we can leverage the projects to build the strongest evidence regarding services and practices to promote CIE.

A. Data source

We drew from a range of data sources to assess the SWTCIE projects. The sources include information from DIF grantees, literature findings, and relevant state and national data.

1. SWTCIE grant applications

To understand the SWTCIE projects' plans for designing and developing their proposed models, we reviewed information included in their applications and project status charts and summarized each project. SWTCIE project leaders reviewed these summaries, along with Appendices A to G, to ensure an accurate understanding of their project plans and suggested necessary updates. We also held initial conversations with the project staff to verify key aspects of their implementation plans and collected information from the RSA project status charts, which contain each projects' goals for enrollment and outcomes.

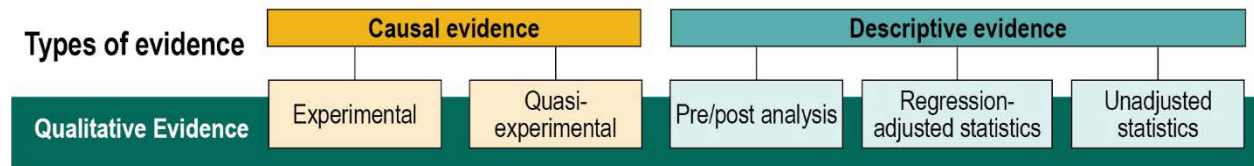
2. SWTCIE evaluation plans

The grant applications include details about the SWTCIE projects' evaluation plans, but the information for many plans is limited at this early stage. Grantees are refining their projects, establishing relationships with key partners (including evaluators), and formulating and refining evaluation plans. We describe the evaluations as currently defined, and we verified this information with project leaders. We expect that we will obtain additional information from the projects about their evaluation plans and timelines to inform our understanding as those plans develop.

3. Evidence from existing literature reviews

Members of the evaluation team are currently systematically reviewing the evidence to identify research on the effectiveness of strategies that encourage CIE for people in or considering SWE. The review will include causal and descriptive evidence that informs our knowledge about what works and will consider the qualitative information that accompanies and explains the evidence (Exhibit II.1). Specifically, the review will draw on evidence from published peer-reviewed studies, existing literature reviews, gray literature, organizational websites, and sources cited in the SWTCIE grant applications. For this deliverable, we considered existing evidence, such as any causal evidence of interventions that have been rigorously tested, when assessing the interventions proposed for the SWTCIE projects.

Exhibit II.1. Evidence on transformation strategies for competitive integrated employment



For this report, we include the initial results of the evidence review to present the latest evidence on interventions proposed by the SWTCIE projects. Our goal is to connect the projects to highly relevant evidence that could inform the implementation of their interventions. We will share the full evidence review report with RSA in July 2023.

4. Data on the use of 14(c) certificates

Data from the U.S. Department of Labor provide trends in employers’ use of 14(c) certificates nationally and among the states with SWTCIE projects. These data informed our understanding of the prevalence of SWE, the types of entities that hold 14(c) certificates in each state, and the potential effect projects could have in reducing SWE in their states and nationally.

5. State policies designed to promote CIE

We collected information on state policies promoting CIE to understand contextual factors that could influence SWTCIE projects’ efforts to phase out the use of SWE and increase CIE. This information includes income and asset limits set by states to qualify for Medicaid Buy-in coverage from the Kaiser Family Foundation, Employment First policies, and related interagency coordination. We reviewed information about states that entered into Olmstead settlement agreements with the U.S. Department of Justice as well as projects’ involvement with federal initiatives designed to promote CIE. We also examined policies governing state hourly minimum wage rates because this could influence the projects’ effects on participant outcomes, such as the number of people who secure CIE and their earnings levels.

6. Economic indicators

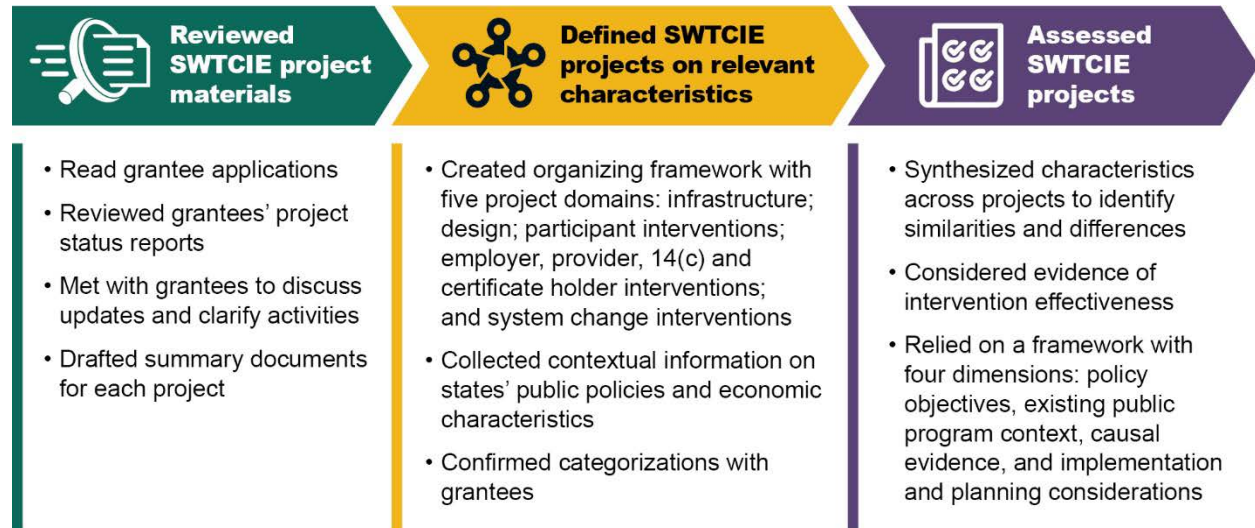
From the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, we obtained employment and unemployment rates among people with and without disabilities in the states with SWTCIE projects. These data allow us to identify notable differences in these statistics across the projects that could affect implementation and outcomes.

B. Methods

The 14 SWTCIE projects contain a range of differing characteristics reflecting best practices, local environments, and staff knowledge and experiences in promoting CIE outcomes, which prompted our systematic approach to assessing the projects. As shown in Exhibit II.2, we used a three-stage approach for our assessment. First, we reviewed the available project materials (including the applications and project status reports that show their expected goals), met with grantees to obtain updates on project development, and drafted documents summarizing our understanding of the projects. Second, we distilled that information into a series of tables (Appendices A to G), defining the projects on relevant characteristics organized into five domains: infrastructure; design; participant interventions; employer, service provider, and 14(c) certificate holder interventions; and system change interventions. We also

collected contextual information on states' public policies and economic characteristics that could affect project implementation. During this stage, we offered grantees opportunities to review and comment on our initial documents to ensure our understanding of the projects. In the third stage, we assessed the projects by comparing their characteristics and identifying similarities and differences among the projects. We also considered evidence of intervention effectiveness when assessing the interventions proposed for the projects.

Exhibit II.2. Three-stage approach for SWTCIE cross-project analyses



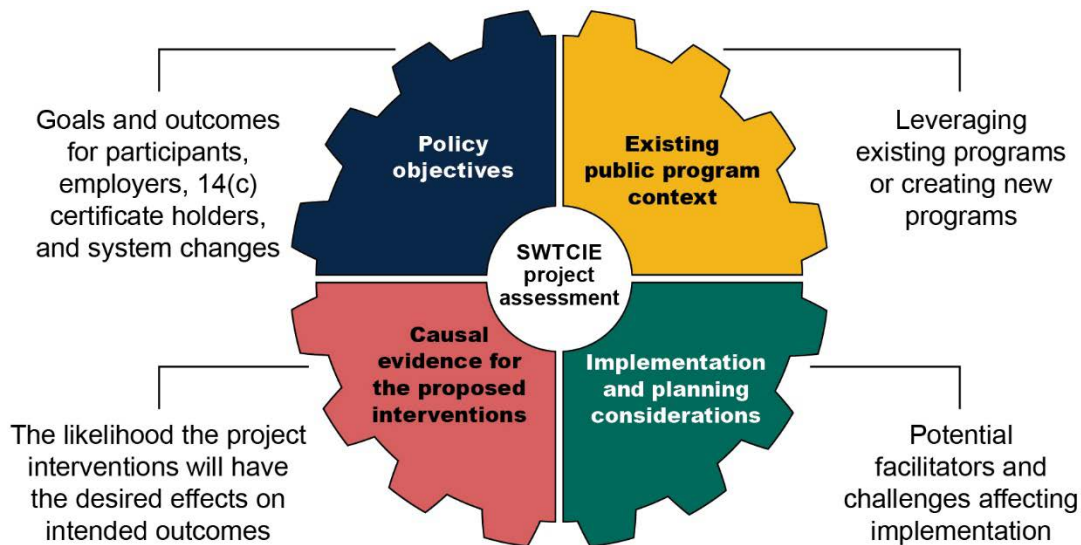
SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

We adapted a framework from the [U.S. Department of Labor's SSI Youth Formative Research Project](#) (Honeycutt et al. 2018) to assist with the third stage of our assessment. The framework, originally developed to help policymakers decide among interventions to implement and achieve a specific policy goal, presents a series of characteristics across three dimensions: policy objectives, the landscape for implementation, and criteria for selecting interventions. From these three dimensions, we identified four factors to compare the 14 SWTCIE projects in a consistent manner and identify which projects could be more effective at achieving their goals (Exhibit II.3):

- **Factor 1: Policy objectives.** Broadly, every project will offer interventions that promote CIE among people working in or considering SWE. The projects differ, however, in large and small ways with their approaches for (1) participants; (2) employers, service providers, and 14(c) certificate holders; and (3) system changes. These approaches affect their choices in project design to overcome specific challenges. We thus assess the goals, objectives, and outcomes across each of these three areas.
- **Factor 2: Existing public program context.** The projects will not exist in a vacuum; they will build on established VR services and current state policies, and they might involve services from multiple agencies and organizations. Grantees choose how to connect with existing policies and programs and where to locate their interventions. Our assessment characterizes whether the projects will modify their existing service structure or develop new approaches outside their existing service structure to achieve the project's goals.

- **Factor 3: Causal evidence for the proposed intervention.** The framework for the SSI Youth Formative Research Project identified three characteristics for selecting among interventions: (1) causal evidence; (2) costs; and (3) replicability, scalability, and sustainability. Because we cannot assess the second and third characteristics at this early stage, we consider only the causal evidence, or the extent to which the interventions proposed for the projects will have the desired effects on intended outcomes. Projects whose interventions reflect stronger evidence might have a better chance of having impacts, but other projects present opportunities to test interventions that do not yet have sufficient evidence as to their effectiveness.
- **Factor 4: Implementation and planning considerations.** In addition to the first three factors, we included a fourth factor beyond that of the original framework. We consider additional project characteristics related to implementation, such as enrollment criteria, recruitment sources, partnerships, and training and technical assistance (TA) providers, that could be a benefit or detriment to implementation.

Exhibit II.3. Assessing the SWTCIE projects along four factors



SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

III. Infrastructure for SWTCIE Projects



The SWTCIE projects must establish their infrastructure during the first year to successfully pilot their services and enroll participants in Year 2. Activities to develop the project infrastructure include assembling partnerships to support implementation and hiring and training staff to provide services and supports to SWTCIE participants, 14(c) certificate holders, and other entities. The projects will also connect with other organizations, such as evaluators, employers that offer CIE opportunities, and 14(c) certificate holders, that can serve as referral sources and implementation locations. This chapter highlights unique aspects of projects' plans and compares five dimensions of infrastructure: partnerships, training and TA providers, implementation locations, staffing, and evaluator and evaluation design. Details about these dimensions for each project are available in Appendix A.

A. Partnerships

The SWTCIE projects must establish strong partnerships with outside entities to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions that can transition or divert participants into CIE from SWE. Building strong partnerships is critical because VR agencies alone might not have the necessary expertise and capabilities in employment service development, service system transformation, quality improvement, and evaluation required to achieve the intended goals. RSA requires projects to establish work groups that can advise on development and guide implementation. Work groups can provide formative feedback to refine the service models being developed, assess how close they are to coming into operation, participate in dissemination, and connect with potential employers.

The SWTCIE projects' partners include a range of entities to enhance their capabilities (Exhibit III.1). Most project work groups include the state offices of developmental disabilities and education. Their input might be necessary because these agencies oversee community-based supports for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DDs) and special education services for eligible students with disabilities. These state agencies can inform the service design, advise on implementation, and provide referrals. Most projects are also including 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers in their partnerships, which reflects the overarching purpose of the projects and their focus on systems transformations. Less common across projects are partnerships with state departments of employment or workforce development, local Arc chapters, and Centers for Independent Living. Local Arc chapters are partners for three projects and will contribute in a variety of ways, from coordinating project locations in Florida to building local coalitions in Indiana. Three projects will partner with Centers for Independent Living, which will support referrals and recruitment for the Connecticut project and deliver services in New York. In addition to the organizations shown in Exhibit III.1, other common work group members include people with disabilities, their family members, and service providers. Often, projects will build on their experience teaming with their partners to implement system changes to build the capacity of local service providers. For example, the Minnesota VR agency has an established relationship with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. They have collaborated on several disability initiatives in the past, such as assessing the accessibility of higher education for students with I/DDs (Grigal et al. 2022).

Exhibit III.1. SWTCIE project partnerships

Project	State office of developmental disabilities	14c certificate holders, other employers, and service providers	State office of education	State office of employment, workforce development, or labor	Arc chapter	Centers for Independent Living
California	X	X	X	X		
Connecticut	X	X	X	X		X
Florida	X	X	X		X	
Georgia	X	X	X			
Illinois	X	X	X			X
Indiana	X	X			X	
Iowa			X			
Minnesota	X		X			
New York	X	X	X			X
North Carolina	X	X				
Ohio	X	X		X		
Pennsylvania	X	X		X		X
Texas		X	X			
Virginia		X	X		X	

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

Successful partnerships with employers will establish referral sources, offer work-based opportunities, and employ SWTCIE participants. Some projects will partner with service providers that hold 14(c) certificates to provide services, including hiring staff, supporting participants’ transition to CIE, and providing feedback and guidance to the leadership team. Employers without 14(c) certificates will offer work-based learning and CIE opportunities to participants. Building strong partnerships with employers takes time, and projects that leverage existing relationships might be in a better position to quickly launch earlier. The Connecticut project has relationships with two 14(c) certificate holders and one non-14(c) certificate holder to implement its service model, support recruitment, and offer work-based learning experiences. The Georgia project has relationships with its two 14(c) certificate holder partners. Projects that have not yet identified their employer partners, such as North Carolina, could have difficulty starting services quickly, particularly if their service models are complex or rely heavily on provider transformation.

B. Training and TA

The SWTCIE projects will supplement their expertise by teaming with local and nationwide leaders in rehabilitation and employment services to deliver training and provide ongoing TA. The training and TA organizations will build staff capabilities for delivering high-quality services to participants. Eight projects will involve two to four TA providers to support implementation; the remainder will work with a single partner (Exhibit III.2).

III. Infrastructure for SWTCIE Projects

Organizations providing training and TA to multiple SWTCIE projects offer specialized expertise (Exhibit III.2). Griffin-Hammis Associates will train provider staff in five projects to become certified Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators. This certification and ongoing mentoring by the organization will enable provider staff to deliver customized employment services with high fidelity. The Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center will train and give ongoing TA to providers to promote high-quality VR services for three projects. The San Diego State University Research Foundation-Interwork Institute will provide TA on customized employment to three projects. The institute also directs RSA’s Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management, which provides TA to state VR agencies nationwide. The Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston will deliver training on job coaching tailored for transition-age youth to staff for two projects. Finally, two projects will team with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to deliver TA for arts and cultural organizations to create paid internships and employment opportunities.

Exhibit III.2. Training and TA providers that are providing support across SWTCIE projects

Project	VR agency providing TA	Number of external TA providers	Griffin-Hammis Associates	VCU	San Diego State University	ICI at UMass Boston	Kennedy Center
California	No	4	X		X		
Connecticut	Yes	1					
Florida	Yes	3	X			X	X
Georgia	Yes	1					
Illinois	No	2		X			
Indiana	No	1					
Iowa	No	1	X				
Minnesota	No	1				X	
New York	No	4	X		X		X
North Carolina	Yes	1					
Ohio	Yes	3+					
Pennsylvania	No	4					
Texas	No	4		X			
Virginia	No	4	X	X	X		

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

Note: The exhibit does not list all external training and TA providers for the SWTCIE projects. It highlights providers working across multiple projects.

ICI = Institute for Community Inclusion; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; TA = technical assistance; UMass = University of Massachusetts; VCU = Virginia Commonwealth University; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

C. Implementation locations

The SWTCIE projects will operate in a diverse mix of urban, suburban, rural, and Tribal communities (Exhibit III.3). Most projects will determine the specific implementation locations in the coming year, so the geographic mix and exact number of the implementation locations is not yet known. The Connecticut and Ohio projects anticipate providing services across the state. The California project will deliver

III. Infrastructure for SWTCIE Projects

services in a two geographically limited locations, and the Iowa project has not yet determined its implementation area. The remaining nine projects anticipate using three to eight specific locations dispersed throughout the respective states. Locations frequently specify employers that offer CIE and 14(c) certificate holders, with two projects (California and Texas) using community colleges or high schools.

RSA requires all SWTCIE projects to pilot their intervention during the second project year, and projects will take different approaches to test their proposed models before expanding to other locations. For example, Georgia will pilot its intervention in the metropolitan Atlanta area, which has a strong film industry presence to provide CIE opportunities in the arts topic area, the largest school systems in the state, and public transportation. These factors could enable the project to implement and refine its plans before expanding to rural areas. Pennsylvania is taking a similar approach by piloting services in the largest urban area in the state, Philadelphia, and a rural area before implementing services in four other regions. Alternatively, projects can start pilots at all intended locations: the Florida project will pilot its services in all three of its three intended counties, which it selected for their geographic and socioeconomic diversity.

Exhibit III.3. SWTCIE implementation locations

Project	Pilot locations	Total locations	Geographic spread
California		Two counties	Limited to one region
Connecticut		Three regions	Statewide
Florida	Three counties		Dispersed throughout state
Georgia	One 14(c) certificate holder	Four 14(c) certificate holders	Dispersed throughout state
Illinois		Six 14(c) certificate holders	Dispersed throughout state
Indiana	Four pilot locations with seven 14(c) certificate holders		Dispersed throughout state
Iowa			To be determined
Minnesota	Three locations		Dispersed throughout state
New York		Six counties	Dispersed throughout state
North Carolina	Three 14(c) certificate holders		Dispersed throughout state
Ohio		15 locations	Statewide
Pennsylvania	Two regions	Six locations	Dispersed throughout state
Texas		Six 14(c) certificate holders and two school districts	Dispersed throughout state
Virginia		Three 14(c) certificate holders located in two regions	Dispersed throughout state

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

D. Staffing to implement SWTCIE projects

The SWTCIE projects will assemble teams with diverse competencies, skill sets, and strengths to complement VR staff. The size, roles, and job functions of the teams vary based on their service models and existing VR capacity. All projects except Georgia have specified their staffing plans.

Four SWTCIE projects will invest heavily in new staffing to deliver services. The Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania projects will hire at least 18 staff for their projects. Most new staffing is for direct service staff. Early training of these staff will be critical to equip them with the skills and competencies they need to carry out the service models on time and with fidelity to the intended design. Although this staffing approach might support extensive intervention and service provision, the projects might be at risk of not being able to hire enough specialized staff or having staff with limited knowledge of the service and employment environments.

The remaining SWTCIE projects expect a more modest staffing investment, ranging from three to 11 full-time equivalents (FTE), with some differences by staff type. The Florida, Illinois, and Ohio projects plan to hire more direct service staff than administrative staff. Conversely, the California, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Texas, and Virginia projects anticipate staffing administrative roles equal to or more than direct service staff. This staffing plan raises a potential risk to implementation if the projects do not have sufficient staff capacity to deliver services to participants, particularly if the projects will rely mainly on existing VR staff for service delivery.

All SWTCIE projects except the Georgia and Texas projects will focus on more new staff than existing staff in their staffing models (Appendix A). The North Carolina project will use only newly hired staff and does not anticipate leveraging existing VR staff to support implementation. The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation plans to hire nearly all staff in its first project year, including navigators, coordinators, employment specialists, benefits counselors, and peer mentors. Similar to North Carolina, the Minnesota project anticipates hiring all but about 1.3 FTE of its staff, which it will supplement with an unspecified number of existing VR counselors at an unspecified FTE level.

The Iowa, Georgia, and Texas SWTCIE projects do not expect to hire any direct service staff. The Iowa project will use Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services employees and partner staff members to administer and deliver services. The Iowa project is hiring several new administrative staff members, including four management and coordination positions responsible for developing, managing, and implementing the project. The Texas project plans to use its existing VR staff to implement components and hire one new staff member (project manager) to help coordinate. The Georgia project will rely on existing VR and provider staff at an unspecified FTE level and does not plan to hire additional staff.

Some SWTCIE projects propose distinctive roles in their staffing plans:

- The Florida, Minnesota, and Texas projects feature **employer liaisons or engagement specialists** who will maintain community relationships and support participating 14(c) certificate holders in working with participating businesses. The liaisons will identify work experiences, career exploration, and job placements that match participants' interests and fulfill employers' needs.
- The North Carolina and Ohio projects will hire **benefits or work incentives counselors** to educate participants and families about how employment will affect their benefits so they can make informed decisions about CIE.
- The Illinois and New York **employment specialists** will directly support participants with pre-employment services, benefits counseling, and customized employment.
- Four projects will hire or deploy **trainers or TA specialists** to build their teams' capabilities. The projects in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Texas will employ these staff in addition to partnering with an external training and TA provider to bolster their staff capacity.
- The Indiana and North Carolina projects will hire **peer mentors** to mentor participants.

E. Evaluator and evaluation design

Each SWTCIE project will use an evaluator to examine participants' engagement with services and key outcomes. Seven projects proposed a quasi-experimental design for their evaluation, all of which will use a matched comparison design (California, Connecticut, Florida, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia). The matched comparison designs will construct a comparison group of VR clients or VR locations that have similar characteristics as those participating in the projects but are not participating in the projects themselves. The Georgia, Illinois, and New York projects proposed descriptive evaluation designs that will present information on participants without the use of a comparison group. The remaining four projects (Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, and Ohio) have not yet determined their evaluation designs. All projects have partnered with universities for their evaluations, with nine using universities in their states. The evaluators are all unique institutions with one exception: the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston is the evaluator for the Florida and Minnesota projects.

Organizations serving as both a TA provider and evaluator could have a conflict of interest because they might be in a position to influence project implementation or be biased in their interpretation of results for the evaluation. Four SWTCIE projects have the same organization for both TA and evaluation purposes: the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston for the Florida and Minnesota projects, the University of Maryland for the Connecticut project, and the San Diego State University Research Foundation-Interwork Institute for the California project.

IV. Design Features of SWTCIE Projects



SWTCIE projects have the flexibility to design demonstration models that suit their local context and aid project participants in successfully transitioning from SWE to CIE. The features of each project are intended to address known challenges to accessing CIE in the state, offer integrated services that support CIE, and coordinate wraparound services for participants to thrive in CIE. The project design features outline the relationships between participants, services, barriers, and intended outcomes. This chapter compares the projects' approaches to design their model interventions: intervention focus, industries, participant population, underserved communities, and recruitment strategies. Details about these approaches for each project are available in Appendix B.

A. Intervention focus

The SWTCIE projects will primarily rely on 14(c) certificate holders and VR agencies as the locations where participants will use services (Appendix B). This intervention focus reflects the project goals, existing partnerships, and intended outcomes. Eight SWTCIE projects (Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia) will offer services through 14(c) certificate holders with an aim to build service capacity, create more CIE opportunities for people with disabilities, and potentially encourage provider transformations. Four of these projects (Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, and Virginia) will offer services exclusively through the 14(c) certificate holders. Five projects (Connecticut, Florida, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) will develop interventions through VR agencies by building on existing capacities and infrastructures. The Iowa project has not yet determined its intervention focus.

The SWTCIE projects will rely on unique locations for service delivery, either exclusively or in addition to 14(c) certificate holders and VR agencies.

- The California project will develop its service models through two community colleges.
- The projects in Florida and Texas will bolster the infrastructure of high schools.
- New York will capitalize on the services and connections of Centers for Independent Living as its primary service focus.
- The Minnesota and Pennsylvania projects will use community rehabilitation providers to deliver their interventions.

B. Industries

The DIF program encouraged SWTCIE projects to design, develop, implement, and evaluate interventions in five specific industries. These industries include arts, essential work (that is, work essential for critical infrastructure), green jobs (that is, jobs related to green goods and services), home and community-based services, and transportation. Projects also have the option to pursue a field-initiated approach, which can (1) address another industry outside of these five or (2) combine two or more topic areas into one model demonstration.

Most SWTCIE projects will touch on more than one industry (Exhibit IV.1). Two projects will focus on a single industry: the Florida project will promote jobs in the arts industry and Minnesota will concentrate its efforts in the transportation industry. All others opted to focus on field-initiated industries or more than

IV. Design Features of SWTCIE Projects

one industry, with the projects in California, Illinois, and Texas developing model projects that focus on all five industry areas.

The selected industries cut across SWTCIE projects, though they are roughly evenly distributed. Between five and seven projects will pursue each of the five named industries. Eight SWTCIE projects (California, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia) will use field-initiated models to encourage CIE.

Exhibit IV.1. Industries by SWTCIE project

Project	Arts	Essential work	Green jobs	Home and community-based services	Transportation	Field-initiated	Project total
California	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
Connecticut		X	X		X		3
Florida	X						1
Georgia	X		X			X	3
Illinois	X	X	X	X	X		5
Indiana						X	1
Iowa				X		X	2
Minnesota					X		1
New York	X			X		X	3
North Carolina		X	X		X	X	4
Ohio	X	X					2
Pennsylvania			X		X		2
Texas	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
Virginia						X	1
Total	7	6	7	5	7	8	

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

C. Populations to be offered services

SWTCIE projects can offer services and supports to four distinct groups of people with disabilities: adults (age 25 and older) working in or contemplating SWE and youth (younger than age 25) working in or contemplating SWE. Across all projects, anticipated total enrollment ranges from 228 people in Illinois to 1,250 people in New York (see Exhibit IV.2). Those contemplating SWE comprise nearly 60 percent of the total enrollment, with youth making up most of this group. Among those working in SWE, adults are the predominant population.

Exhibit IV.2. Anticipated enrollment, by participant population and SWTCIE project

Project	Adults in SWE	Adults c-SWE	Total adult enrollment	Adults: % of total	Youth in SWE	Youths c-SWE	Total youth enrollment	Youth: % of total	Total enrollment by project
California	92		92	23.0	40	268	308	77.0	400
Connecticut	114	30	144	28.8		356	356	71.2	500
Florida	160		160	40.0		240	240	60.0	400
Georgia	30	10	40	16.7		200	200	83.3	240
Illinois	159		159	69.7		69	69	30.3	228
Indiana	245	180	425	80.2	55	50	105	19.8	530
Iowa	108	228	336	70.6		140	140	29.4	476
Minnesota	400		400	33.3		800	800	66.7	1,200
New York	500		500	40.0		750	750	60.0	1,250
North Carolina	200	100	300	60.0		200	200	40.0	500
Ohio	535	5	540	90.0	5	55	60	10.0	600
Pennsylvania	240		240	100.0			0	0.0	240
Texas	305		305	72.3		117	117	27.7	422
Virginia	300		300	42.9		400	400	57.1	700
Total	3,388	553	3,941	51.3	100	3,645	3,745	48.7	7,686
Average	242	92	282	54.8	33	280	268	45.2	549

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

c-SWE = contemplating subminimum wage employment; SWE = subminimum wage employment; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

The SWTCIE projects vary in their emphases across these groups. Two projects (Indiana and Ohio) plan to recruit and offer services to people from all four groups, whereas one project (Pennsylvania) plans to focus services on adults working in SWE (though will also offer services to referred people (including youth) working in or contemplating SWE). Half the projects (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas) will focus their recruitment efforts on adults currently working in SWE. The remainder (California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, New York, and Virginia) will focus on youth contemplating SWE.

Most SWTCIE projects will take an inclusive approach to recruitment and have not specified distinct inclusion or exclusion criteria for enrollment (Appendix B). Taking an expansive recruitment approach avoids denying people with disabilities the services that could help them to prepare for, attain, and sustain CIE. Some projects specified broad inclusion criteria, such as adults with an I/DD (North Carolina) or youth eligible for pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS; Georgia and New York) who might be at risk of entering SWE. Connecticut’s project defined an additional enrollment group, adults neither working in nor contemplating SWE but who express interest in CIE at the time of outreach. Although not applying inclusion and exclusion criteria broadens the participant population that could benefit from SWTCIE services and supports, it might pose challenges in drawing comparisons across the projects and identifying a suitable comparison group for the national evaluation.

D. Recruitment sources

The most common recruitment sources for SWTCIE projects include 14(c) certificate holders and schools. Although most grant applications did not include details on their recruitment plans, they did identify their recruitment sources (Exhibit IV.3, Appendix B). Nine projects will engage 14(c) certificate holders as recruitment sources, likely because of their ability to identify people currently working in SWE. Similarly, nine projects will leverage schools to identify students and youth contemplating SWE, reflecting the emphases of their service models. Other common recruitment sources include state agencies such as departments of developmental disabilities (five projects), day programs or pre-employment transition service programs (four projects), VR agencies (four projects), and Centers for Independent Living (three projects). Other recruitment sources mentioned by projects include community organizations, community rehabilitation providers, CIE-designated employers, and faith-based institutions.

Exhibit IV.3. Recruitment sources by SWTCIE project

Project	14(c) certificate holders	Schools	State agencies	Day and pre-employment transition service programs	VR agencies	Centers for Independent Living	Other sources
California	X		X	X	X		
Connecticut	X	X	X		X	X	
Florida	X	X					
Georgia	X	X	X	X	X		
Illinois	X	X					X
Indiana	X			X			
Iowa		X		X			X
Minnesota		X				X	
New York		X	X			X	X
North Carolina	X						
Ohio	X		X				
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Texas	X	X					
Virginia	X	X					
Total	9	9	5	4	4	3	5

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

E. Emphasis on underserved communities

Most SWTCIE projects propose to connect with people from at least two underserved groups as part of recruitment (Appendix B). The most common characteristics specified for underserved groups include particular racial and ethnic backgrounds; specific geographical areas; and significant, complex, or multiple disabilities. Nine projects (California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Texas, and Virginia) will emphasize people from specific racial and ethnic backgrounds, such as

IV. Design Features of SWTCIE Projects

Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and English language learners. Five projects (California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and Texas) plan to focus on underrepresented geographical areas, such as rural areas or inner cities, which include high concentrations of people living in poverty or with low employment services. For four projects (Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, and Virginia), the populations for recruitment include people with significant or complex developmental disabilities, such as those with autism. Finally, three projects (Iowa, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania) did not specify their plans for reaching underserved communities. The applications for most projects did not provide details on their outreach approaches for these underserved groups.

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V. Project Interventions








The SWTCIE projects will design, develop, and test interventions that promote CIE to participants; encourage changes for 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers; and encourage system changes. Many of the interventions to be developed and tested by SWTCIE projects build or extend upon initiatives to promote CIE that pre-date the SWTCIE demonstration. Services offered to participants include a range of employment, education, and training interventions as well as other supports that will be delivered by project staff and partners. Interventions for 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers reflect training and TA, with the focus of the training and TA depending on the project's goals and implementation plans. To improve system-level outcomes to support CIE, projects will strengthen collaboration and relationship building across project partners, organizations, and agencies. In some cases, the projects will develop new programs and partnerships and implement policy change at the state level. This chapter describes the types of interventions that projects will pursue to encourage CIE. The chapter also highlights the approaches that appear to be more effective in promoting CIE based on a systematic review of the evidence base.

A. Participant interventions

To successfully transition from SWE to CIE, people with disabilities might benefit from services or supports that build their skills, increase their job readiness, and inform them about the effects of working on their benefits. SWTCIE projects will offer a variety of interventions to participants that can be customized based on their support needs, views of CIE, employment and other goals, and personal circumstances. The proposed interventions include counseling and staffing, pre-ETS, employment services, education and training, wraparound services and supports, mentoring, and other individual-level interventions (Exhibit V.1). Nearly all projects will offer a comprehensive suite of supports to participants spanning all types of interventions, though they vary in their emphases (Exhibit V.2, Appendix C). One caveat is that not all of the interventions proposed by the projects represent effective practices. A report on the levels of evidence for interventions that divert people with disabilities from SWE to CIE is forthcoming (summer 2023). So far, we found rigorous evidence (that is, evidence based on randomized controlled trials or strong quasi-experimental designs) for three interventions (customized employment, supported employment, and virtual reality interview interventions), though other interventions have correlational or descriptive evidence on their effectiveness.

The interventions proposed by the projects and identified in this chapter represent additions to or expansions of the usual VR services to which participants will have access. All—or almost all—project participants will also be VR program participants, which means they can use usual VR services, which span the types of interventions presented in Exhibit V.1. The projects will offer additional project-specific services or alter existing services in some way to enhance participants' efforts to secure CIE. That a project does not have a service listed in Exhibit V.2 (for example, supported employment) does not necessarily mean that participants will not have access to that service as part of their involvement with the project; it means that the project application did not name that service as part of its model.

Exhibit V.1. Participant interventions

						
Counseling and staffing	Pre-ETS	Employment services	Education and training services	Wraparound services and supports	Mentoring	Other participant interventions
Counseling services and assessments of a job seeker's skills, interests, and goals	VR services such as work-based learning, work-readiness training, and self-advocacy training for students with disabilities	Career exploration, job search assistance, job coaching and supports, and supported and customized employment services	Vocational skills training; work-based learning experiences such as postsecondary education, apprenticeships and internships; and other education and training services	Assistive technology, benefits counseling, information and referrals to services, transportation, and personal assistance	Peer and family mentoring	Other services beyond usual VR services

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

pre-ETS = pre-employment transition services; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

1. Counseling and staffing

Common counseling and staffing interventions proposed by SWTCIE projects include person-centered planning and the use of team-based staffing models to deliver services. In all, 10 projects will incorporate interventions of this type (Exhibit V.2). These approaches focus on participant-driven service delivery, with the person at the center of planning for their future and selecting the supports that will help them achieve their identified goals.

Person-centered planning is an approach that empowers participants in developing employment goals by identifying their skills, abilities, and interests. To support its person-centered planning efforts, the Connecticut project will use motivational interviewing to encourage participants in their decision making, skill development, and other individualized supports. Two projects (Georgia and Illinois) will use Discovery, a customized employment approach, to help participants identify their employment interests, preferences, and capabilities; ideal work environment; and supports needed for successful employment outcomes.

The five SWTCIE projects using team-based staffing models will organize resource teams to coordinate and deliver customized and supported employment and other individualized services to participants. The Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Virginia projects will use a team-based approach called the Integrated Resource Team model. The Integrated Resource Team model delivers participant-driven services, including wraparound services and supports, and works to build cross-system collaboration and knowledge translation across service providers. The Connecticut and Minnesota projects will also deliver services using team-based staffing approaches reflecting their service models.

Exhibit V.2. Participant interventions by SWTCIE project

Project	Counseling and staffing ^a	Pre-ETS ^b	Employment services				Education and training services			Wraparound services and supports				Mentoring	Other participant interventions
			Career exploration	Job coaching and supports	Supported and customized employment ^d	Other employment services	Vocational skills training	Work-based learning experiences	Other education and training services	Assistive technology ^e	Benefits counseling and financial literacy	Transportation	Other wraparound services and supports		
California	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X ^c			X	X
Connecticut	X	X			X		X	X			X ^c	X		X	
Florida			X		X	X								X	X
Georgia	X				X		X	X		X	X		X		
Illinois	X	X	X		X			X	X		X ^c	X	X	X	X
Indiana	X	X			X						X		X	X	X
Iowa				X	X			X		X			X		
Minnesota	X	X				X				X	X ^c	X	X	X	X
New York						X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
North Carolina	X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Ohio							X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Pennsylvania	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Texas	X	X			X		X		X		X				X
Virginia	X	X			X	X	X				X			X	X

Source: SWTCIE grant applications.

^a This includes counseling services and assessments of a job seeker's skills, interests, and goals. Staffing refers to interventions involving changes to staffing, such as case management, teaming, or specific training (for example, motivational interviewing).

^b Services that VR agencies offer students with disabilities include the following: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary education programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

^c This includes counseling to strengthen participants' financial literacy.

^d Four rigorous studies found Project SEARCH, an intervention involving supported and customized employment, had a statistically significant positive impact on acquiring any employment (Wehman et al. 2014), achieving competitive employment (Wehman et al. 2017; Wehman et al. 2020), and all Supports Intensity Scale-Adult scales (home living, lifelong learning, employment, health safety, and social) except for the Community Living subscale (Schall et al. 2020).

^e Two rigorous studies on the impact of virtual reality interview interventions (JobTIPS [Strickland et al. 2013] and Virtual Reality Job Interview Training [Smith et al. 2014]) found statistically significant positive impacts on some employment outcomes.

Pre-ETS = pre-employment transition services; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

2. Pre-ETS

Eight SWTCIE projects described pre-ETS as project services offered to participants who are students in secondary or postsecondary education institutions (Exhibit V.2). Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, VR agencies provide pre-ETS to students with disabilities; these services include counseling on transition or postsecondary education programs, job exploration counseling, self-advocacy training, work-based learning experiences, and workplace readiness training. Although all VR agencies offer pre-ETS, as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, half the projects offering pre-ETS as part of their projects (Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Virginia) feature work-based learning experiences, with the Indiana and Virginia projects specifying that participants will receive paid work-based learning experiences. Paid work experiences (work study or community employment) correlate with positive employment outcomes after high school for students with mild and severe disabilities (Qian et al. 2018; Southward and Kyzar 2017). The North Carolina project will offer supported internships funded through the state VR program. Taking a comprehensive approach to pre-ETS service delivery, the Illinois project's approach to pre-ETS for its services includes informed choice skills training, job exploration counseling, self-determination, and work-based learning experiences.

3. Employment services

SWTCIE participants will access employment services to find and maintain employment through career exploration activities, job supports and coaching, and paid employment and internships.

a. Career exploration

Career and job exploration activities will help participants learn about different employment opportunities. Two SWTCIE projects will leverage existing online resources to support career exploration. In California, the project will direct participants to the [Career Index Plus](#) labor market information system that provides job descriptions, job duties, required qualifications and skills, and wage information. The Illinois project will use [O*NET](#), a labor market analysis system operated by the U.S. Department of Labor to identify jobs in a participant's community. The Pennsylvania project will provide additional services to promote career exploration, job shadowing, and Community Based Assessments. The project plans to identify and engage 50 businesses to offer job shadowing experiences or worksite tours to participants. Through [Community Based Assessments](#), people can experience work environments with the support of a vocational instructor and assessments of their job readiness, potential barriers, and accommodations needed for successful employment. The Florida project will offer career exploration activities geared to the arts sector. The project, in conjunction with the University of South Florida Center for Assistive, Rehabilitation, and Robotics Technologies, will develop virtual reality modules that allow participants to learn about arts employment options. This approach has evidence to support its use from a program that simulated a job interview with a virtual character to improve job interview skills and interviewee performance. A study of the program found that treatment group participants had greater improvement during live standardized job interview role-play performances than those randomized to a control group (Smith et al. 2014). Other career exploration activities offered by the Florida project include interactive job fairs and the promotion of flexible work experiences for participants to explore employment environments.

b. Job coaching and supports

Four SWTCIE projects will include job coaches and specific job supports to prepare participants for work in CIE roles (Exhibit V.2). The California project will leverage trained peer mentors to deliver job coaching services to participants. The North Carolina project specified plans to provide long-term job coaching to participants, which could include on-the-job supports and coaching after participants are hired in CIE roles. The Pennsylvania project's job coaching and support activities include helping the participant adapt to the worksite, training the participant on work tasks, identifying work aids and assistive technology tools, providing embedded supports and development of natural supports, and helping the participant with work-appropriate etiquette and behaviors.

c. Supported and customized employment services

Supported and customized employment services are a primary intervention among most SWTCIE projects (Exhibit V.2). These interventions have evidence underscoring their efficacy in promoting CIE: A retrospective review of 104 adults with autism spectrum disorder who were referred to supported and customized employment services found that all of them achieved stable CIE and were successfully employed at VR case closure (Brooke et al. 2018). Another study compared employment outcomes among people receiving customized employment with a matched sample of VR clients. Both groups had similar rates of employment that lasted 90 days or longer, but those who received customized employment worked more hours each week and had higher earnings than the matched VR clients (Sevak et al. 2019).

The interventions of several SWTCIE projects will include enhanced supported and customized employment services or traditional supported and customized employment services combined with other employment services. The Florida project, for example, includes rapid response supported or customized employment so that participants receive job coaching, supported employment, and other services immediately after they obtain a job. The North Carolina project will offer additional job supports, such as service navigation, transportation, and long-term job coaching, and supported employment services. Customized employment services and individual placement and support will be used together in Iowa. Individual placement and support is a type of supported employment model developed for people with serious mental illness to obtain employment. For its SWTCIE project, Indiana has proposed a supported employment plus model that includes the use of peer support specialists, information about Social Security work incentives, training and TA, coaching, and family education and involvement. Indiana will develop a fidelity tool to ensure services are implemented with fidelity to the service model.

d. Other employment services

Other types of employment services offered by SWTCIE projects include progressive employment, self-employment services, and job development and placement (Exhibit V.2). Minnesota's VR agency will use a progressive employment model to meet the needs of both participants and employers. The model includes services for participants such as work experiences at the skill level appropriate to the participant; development of interpersonal and customer service skills; career exploration through short-term job placements; use of a resume building tool; and evaluations of work skills, training, and support needs. Employers can benefit from short-term job placements because they provide employers with opportunities to observe the participant in a low stake setting where employers can learn the types of supports the participant might need and assess whether the role is a suitable fit. In addition, employers are not required to hire the participant at the end of the placement period. This model could offer a flexible approach that results in a greater experience base from which to make decisions about employment and reduces the risk

for participants and businesses. The Florida project will also use a flexible career exploration approach to promote flexible and customized employment opportunities in the arts through targeted outreach to employers. Self-employment is one of the distinct areas for the California project. The project will offer supported and customized self-employment entrepreneurship and microenterprise services to give participants choices in creating employment options that are highly individualized and grounded in their strengths, capacities, and interests. Students with disabilities will have the opportunity to pursue paid internships in arts and cultural organizations as part of their involvement in the New York project.

4. Education and training services

SWTCIE projects' service models include a range of education and training services to participants, such as work-based learning experiences, vocational and other skills training, and assistance with education and credential attainment.

a. Vocational skills training

Seven SWTCIE projects will offer some type of vocational and employment skills training to participants. The Virginia project will train participants to build their employment skills. In Connecticut, the project will focus on work readiness training that will align with the state workforce development sectors. The Pennsylvania and Ohio projects will expand vocational skills training opportunities to include social and personal skill development. In Pennsylvania, skills-based training and career services will promote independence, employability, and community integration. In Ohio, the project will offer a vocational training stipend at minimum wage in addition to work skills training that includes information on self-advocacy, financial literacy, and social skills. The Georgia project will implement a skills training approach and systematic instruction to improve task performance through task analysis and individualized assistance; reinforcement and gradually pulling back supports reduces the level of assistance needed by the individual over time (Storey 2022). The New York project will establish a Personal Care Worker Academy to deliver training. Participants will attend the academy for six weeks to build hard and soft employment skills and find practical vocational learning opportunities to gain employment in the home and community-based services industry.

b. Work-based learning experiences

Work-based learning experiences allow SWTCIE participants to learn and acquire job skills directly through opportunities such as internships and job shadowing. Though similar to the services offered for pre-ETS, all participants can use these work-based learning experiences, whereas pre-ETS are limited to students. In addition to building skills, work-based learning experiences reveal the degree of compatibility between a participant's interests, skills, and abilities and the requirements of different job roles. Nine SWTCIE projects will expose participants to employment through work-based learning experiences. Georgia will develop an inclusive internship program that supports state employment initiatives in the arts, green jobs, and other industries. This approach is based on the Apprenticeship Inclusion Model, which promotes access to apprenticeship and internship programs and provides skills training to people with disabilities. Iowa proposes to establish statewide pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs using an intermediary that will work with and support businesses and organizations to set up apprenticeship programs. The intermediary will also assist with recruitment, instruction, TA, and program monitoring. The North Carolina project will implement a supported internship program for participants by partnering with employers in targeted industries of interest such as essential work, green jobs, and transportation. These internships will provide paid work experiences for participants in an industry of their interest. The goal of supported internships is to provide exposure to a job, generate job skills in a

CIE environment, and help the participant develop soft skills to succeed in employment. The Ohio project will offer internship rotations in which participants can shadow and engage in a variety of paid internship opportunities in the essential work and arts sectors to assess which roles could be a good fit. In the Virginia project, staff will arrange and support up to 120 hours of paid work experiences for participants.

c. Other education and training services

Other types of education and training services include training and support toward attaining a technical credential or license (California, Illinois, and Ohio) and training in soft skills and independent living skills (California and Ohio). California will also offer a program called College-to-Career through local community colleges and the Department of Rehabilitation that will create pathways to postsecondary academic or technical education, with a focus on employment preparation, soft skills training, independent living skills, and campus inclusion.

5. Wraparound services and supports

SWTCIE participants will access a range of wraparound services and supports, including assistive technology, benefits counseling and financial literacy, and transportation that can be customized based on their support needs and personal circumstances.

a. Assistive technology

Seven SWTCIE projects (Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) will promote assistive technology devices and supports to facilitate employment. Assistive technology has been used successfully as a tool for job coaching and task reminders with promising results (Gentry et al. 2012; Hill et al. 2013; Mazzotti et al. 2020; Muharib et al. 2021). Smartphones and tablets can be used for text, audio, or pictorial cues; to provide video modeling; and for video prompting. In a review of the impact of handheld technology on VR outcomes among people with I/DD, Muharib et al. (2022) found positive effects from handheld devices on improving vocational skills, such as food handling and preparation, cleaning, and packaging and shipping. To improve their assistive technology focus, the Minnesota project will hire an assistive technology specialist to help participants identify support and acquisition needs, and the North Carolina project will connect participants with the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program, which assesses workplace needs and loans and provides devices to people who qualify for their services.

b. Benefits counseling and financial literacy training

In all, 11 SWTCIE projects will offer benefits counseling or financial literacy training as part of their wraparound services to participants. These services help participants understand how work and earnings can affect their current benefits, such as federal disability benefits, housing rental assistance, and health coverage. A common method in financial literacy training and benefits counseling is to educate participants so they are empowered and equipped to make informed decisions about work and benefits.

c. Transportation

Inadequate access to transportation to travel to and from work is a known barrier to employment for many people with disabilities, especially those who live in rural areas. Six SWTCIE projects (Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania) will arrange transportation to and from worksites if a participant identifies a need for this service. In Connecticut, the project is looking into the possibility of using Medicaid funding to support transportation services. Sustainability of transportation

services is a priority for the Pennsylvania project. The project team will consider sustainability options through work incentives such as a Plan for Achieving Self-Sufficiency or an impairment-related work expense, which are available to people who receive federal disability benefits.³ The project team will also explore the feasibility of and participant interest in creating an employer-operated ride share service for participants.

d. Other wraparound services and supports

SWTCIE projects will also offer participants a range of additional wraparound services and supports that build individual living skills and assist them in succeeding with community-based employment. The Illinois project will help participants enroll in a Medicaid waiver program to become eligible for needed home and community-based services, such as personal assistance services. The North Carolina project will refer participants to a specific Medicaid waiver program that offers community living support services, which helps people learn skills such as navigating public transportation, accessing supplies for work, and preparing for work. Expanded referral services will also be offered as part of the programs in Indiana and Minnesota. The Ohio project will develop and deliver an enhanced career counseling program that will link adults with disabilities to VR and county boards of developmental disabilities to receive services and supports. To deliver life skills training, the Iowa project will identify promising methods in life skills training and develop a toolkit for participants.

6. Mentorship

To help participants gain first-hand knowledge that supports their successful transition to greater independence and CIE, 11 SWTCIE projects will deliver mentoring services to participants and their families. The Indiana project, for example, will develop a peer mentoring network to train local site peer career specialists as mentors for participants. The project will also leverage Family Education and Awareness Training, which uses family engagement liaisons who support families as the participant navigates their employment process. The California project will offer peer and family support services through its Family Resource Centers to help participants and their families address concerns about seeking CIE. The Virginia project will develop a family mentoring program that will build on existing structures and evidence-based practices.

7. Other participant interventions

Most SWTCIE projects will also offer services for participants and their families that do not fit under the above intervention categories, including services that go beyond usual VR offerings. To supplement their other services for participants, projects will implement interventions such as family engagement and supports, participation in meaningful day activities, and assistance with licensure attainment to address known barriers to achieving CIE. Family engagement is the most common intervention of this type, and eight projects offer services and trainings to families. The Virginia project will use Quillo as a tool to promote communication between participants and their families. [Quillo](#) is a platform for sharing stories, resources, and knowledge for people with disabilities. In California, the project will create a family-to-

³ The Plan to Achieve Self-Support program, administered by the Social Security Administration, is available to people with disabilities who receive receiving Supplemental Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. This program is meant to help people with disabilities acquire items, services, or skills that are needed to work (<https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm>). Impairment-related work expenses are work-related out-of-pocket costs incurred by people who receive federal disability benefits that can be deducted from their gross earnings when the Social Security Administration evaluates earnings to assess entitlement to Supplemental Security Insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance benefits.

family support network that will allow families of participants pursuing CIE to share information and resources. In Texas, the project will provide training to families on social inclusion, supported decision making, and guardianship alternatives. Other services include offering supportive meaningful day activities (in the North Carolina project).

B. 14(c) certificate holder, other employers, and service provider interventions



The interventions SWTCIE projects offer to 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers vary based on their roles supporting participants and the SWTCIE project's goals and implementation plans. For example, organizations that hold 14(c) certificates might include community rehabilitation providers that offer employment services to people with disabilities and also employ some people in segregated settings where they work on business contracts that economically benefit the provider (Curda 2021). These organizations, along with service providers, might receive training on organizational transformation or staff training on customized or supported employment. For employers that offer people with disabilities CIE roles in the community, they might receive training about on-the-job supports or strategies to effectively communicate with participants. SWTCIE projects will offer 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers three types of interventions: training and TA assistance, organizational transformation, and restructuring of payment models.

1. Training and TA

Training and TA is the most frequently offered intervention for 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and providers. All SWTCIE projects but California will offer this intervention (Appendix D). Training and TA topics frequently center on supported and customized employment, disability awareness and inclusion, and strategies and evidence-based practices to support CIE. Training and TA directed to employers involves disability inclusion, job development and support, and necessary accommodations for workers. Customized and supported employment methods and person-centered planning are common training and TA offerings to employers and service providers. Four projects (Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and North Carolina) will offer service provider staff with training and certification on customized and supported employment services through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators, which is intended to build capacity to support participants in achieving CIE.

2. Organizational transformation

Nine SWTCIE projects will offer technical support and training for 14(c) certificate holders to advance their efforts to transition from SWE (Appendix D). Specific supports include training and development of organizational transformation plans (such as in the Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, and Virginia projects) that guide 14(c) certificates holders' efforts to diversify their business lines away from contracts in which workers with disabilities might work in segregated settings performing janitorial, grounds maintenance, product assembly, and other functions. In the Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas projects, 14(c) certificate holders can access training and TA to transform their service model away from offering services in segregated employment settings and toward a service model that promotes CIE in the community. The Florida and Ohio projects will also offer technical supports to 14(c) certificate holders to become certified VR providers of employment services. Making this type of cultural change requires training to build staff capacity and reorient organizational frameworks to promote CIE. The training topics will cover labor market analysis, strategies to effectively outreach to employers, understanding evidence-based practices, and internal capacity building to support a shift to CIE.

3. Payment model restructuring

Roughly half of SWTCIE projects will modify their VR agency's payment structures or test value-based purchasing models that provide incentives to encourage service providers to place more people with disabilities in CIE (Appendix D). In some states, Medicaid reimbursement rates for employment services are lower than the actual cost of providing services, which results in some service providers reducing or not offering supported employment, job placement, or other services that promote CIE to avoid operating at a loss (Tucker et al. 2017; Denny-Brown et al. 2013). Four projects propose revising or changing payment structures to rehabilitation providers. The Indiana and Iowa projects will increase reimbursement rates to service providers that deliver employment services with high fidelity to the service model or service providers that deliver customized employment services aligning with established best practices. For the Ohio project, 14(c) certificate holders will have the option to become VR providers, which will allow them to bill for services. These new VR providers will receive increased reimbursement rates when a participant attains CIE. The Virginia project will implement a value-based purchasing model to incentivize service providers to support more people with disabilities in obtaining CIE. This effort will include developing a work group to research the state's current funding model and federal purchasing requirements followed by a pilot value-based purchasing agreement that encourages providers to offer customized employment with high fidelity.

Other employment interventions proposed by SWTCIE projects involve partnering with employers in the business community to create job opportunities and work-based learning experiences for participants. For example, Minnesota, focuses on the transportation industry, plans to reach out to 700 businesses in the transportation sector to build career pathways for SWTCIE participants. The California project will develop customized apprenticeship programs through the Department of Industrial Relations to offer participants work-based learning and on-the-job training opportunities in all six industry areas.

C. System change interventions



System change efforts hinge on strong partnerships to transform policies, payment structures, and service systems that prioritize people with disabilities achieving CIE. Though all SWTCIE projects will develop collaborations and advisory groups consisting of key organizations to guide implementation, specific system change interventions are less common (Appendix E).

Four SWTCIE projects will pursue interventions related to state-level policy changes (Appendix E). The Georgia and Minnesota projects will review and update current state policies to match best practices and procedures to meet Section 511 requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Iowa project will propose a Technology First policy to expand assistive technology access among people with disabilities. The project plans to also adopt an Employment First policy that requires CIE to be the preferred outcome for Iowans with disabilities. Finally, the North Carolina project will revise its day service programs to focus more on preparing people for CIE.

Two SWTCIE projects propose to implement other system interventions that include developing new programs or partnerships or increasing the competency of direct service providers. The Iowa project will create a registered apprenticeship intermediary to help support businesses in setting up their apprenticeship programs. The Indiana project will develop a process for joint VR and Bureau of Developmental Disability Services applications.

VI. Contextual Factors Affecting SWTCIE Projects



A range of contextual factors can affect SWTCIE projects' ability to achieve their outcomes. SWTCIE implementation areas include diverse public policy, economic, and geographic regions across the 14 states included in the demonstration.⁴ In this chapter, we assess the state policy landscape, federal supports for CIE, and local economic indicators that can influence SWTCIE participants and 14(c) certificate entities' progress in transitioning from SWE to CIE. We also assess the use of 14(c) certificates and the prevalence of SWE in the states participating in the SWTCIE demonstration.

A. Public policy

Various policy factors can impact a state's progress in adopting system changes to promote CIE and phase out SWE use. These factors include access to health care coverage for workers with disabilities, Employment First initiatives, Olmstead settlement agreements, state capacity-building initiatives, and state policies governing hourly minimum wage rates.

1. Expanded health coverage

Because workers with disabilities have higher health care needs than those without disabilities, their health insurance coverage is especially critical to maintain medical care access (Xiaobei et al. 2022). Most states have adopted policies to expand Medicaid coverage that allows people to access coverage while working (Kaiser Family Foundation 2023). The Medicaid Buy-in program is an optional Medicaid eligibility group that allows workers with disabilities who have incomes above traditional limits to access Medicaid community-based services. Although most states have a Medicaid Buy-in program, each state that covers one of the Medicaid Buy-in groups has its own rules about income, assets, and premiums (Shea 2019). For example, some states charge premiums for coverage when earned income is higher than traditional limits, and other states have no income or asset limits for its eligibility groups, which is intended to promote employment and higher earnings for workers with disabilities (Shea 2019). To understand medical care access that SWTCIE participants might have, we assessed the income and asset limits to qualify for Medicaid Buy-in coverage across SWTCIE states.

In general, states with lower monthly income limits for Medicaid Buy-in coverage also have lower asset limits, and states with higher monthly income limits tend to have more generous asset limits. The monthly individual income limit in the SWTCIE projects ranges from \$1,133 in North Carolina (100 percent of the federal poverty level) to \$6,250 in Connecticut (552 percent of the federal poverty level) (Appendix F) (Department of Health and Human Services 2022).⁵ In most of the projects, the monthly individual income limit was 250 percent of the federal poverty level (\$2,833) or less. The individual asset limits also vary by state, ranging from \$2,000 in Indiana, North Carolina, and Virginia to \$25,000 in Illinois.

2. Employment First

In recent years, the Employment First movement has propelled states' system-change efforts to promote CIE. Employment First aligns state policies, regulations, and payment structures to promote CIE for people with significant disabilities within publicly financed day and employment services (ODEP n.d.).

⁴ Although the SWTCIE implementation areas are geographically diverse, these areas are not nationally representative of the United States.

⁵ In 2022, the federal poverty level for an individual was \$13,590.

VI. Contextual Factors Affecting SWTCIE Projects

Nearly all states have actively engaged in Employment First, signaling the investment of state leaders in making changes so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to work competitively in community-based settings. Some SWTCIE states have championed the elimination of SWE for more than a decade through the adoption of Employment First policies, laws, and state executive orders that establish policies for publicly funded agencies under their governor's jurisdiction. Other states are early in their journeys to transform their service systems to promote CIE. We examined when each state with a project launched its Employment First efforts to prioritize CIE in the general workforce as the preferred option for people with disabilities because this experience and commitment from state leaders could influence states' progress in phasing out SWE and promoting CIE (Exhibit VI.1) (APSE 2020; Curda 2021).

The states with SWTCIE projects differ in when they began to institute changes to promote CIE among people with I/DD. States for half of the projects (California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia) were early adopters and first passed Employment First legislation or state executive orders from 2011 to 2013. States for three projects (Minnesota, New York, and Pennsylvania) first adopted an Employment First policy through state legislation or executive order from 2014 to 2016. The remaining four states (Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, and North Carolina) have since proposed or passed an Employment First policy in legislation.

Because Employment First aims to spur changes in state employment service systems, it relies on strong intra-agency coordination to effect sustained progress. Nine of the states with SWTCIE projects established formal interagency work groups or task forces to embed Employment First principles across state service systems and make CIE a priority. These work groups involve representation from the state departments of rehabilitation, education, and developmental services, among other agencies. In some states, these work groups entered into interagency agreements to bring Employment First principles into operation for strategic plans, payment structures, and service models. Often, the interagency work groups originated from state legislation or executive orders that established an Employment First policy in the state.

Exhibit VI.1. Employment First experiences of states awarded SWTCIE projects

	State adoption of Employment First policy	Employment First Executive Order
California	2013	No
Connecticut	2011	No
Florida	2016	2013
Georgia	2018	No
Illinois	2013	2021
Indiana	2017	No
Iowa	Proposed 2017	No
Minnesota	2014	No
New York	No	2014
North Carolina	No	2019
Ohio	2014	2012 and 2019
Pennsylvania	2018	2016
Texas	2013	No
Virginia	2012	No

Source: The Association of People Supporting Employment First, Employment First, last updated January 2020. Available at: <https://apse.org/legislative-advocacy/employment-first/>.

SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

3. Olmstead settlement agreements

Efforts to comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have shaped the transformation of some state service systems to facilitate community integration and competitive employment for people with disabilities. Title II of the ADA prohibits unjustified segregation of people with disabilities; states that had violated Title II of the ADA were determined to have discriminated because of unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities, which might include those working in SWE alongside other people with disabilities in facility-based employment settings. Half the states with SWTCIE projects (Appendix F) have entered into an Olmstead agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice and, in response, have initiated system changes to expand access to community-based services and opportunities to pursue CIE (Department of Justice 2011).⁶ For example, in Virginia, the agreement required the state to provide HCBS through Medicaid waivers for more than 5,000 people with I/DD who were unnecessarily institutionalized in five state-operated training centers or private facilities because of a lack of adequate community supports and services (Department of Justice n.d.). The state has since expanded its waiver capacity to support 4,000 more people on HCBS waivers, particularly those with I/DD who are on waitlists for community services and those transitioning from institutional settings. The state also created a community crisis system with comprehensive supports, such as mobile crisis teams and crisis stabilization programs, to divert people from unnecessary institutionalization.

4. Capacity building initiatives

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division administers the 14(c) certificate program and monitors 14(c) certificate holders’ compliance with governing regulations under the Fair Labor Standards Act. A different agency in the Department of Labor, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), provides states with technical support and resources to help them adopt system changes that make their workforce development systems more inclusive of people with disabilities. States that have benefitted from technical support and resources are likely further along in their journeys to transition away from SWE. States for half the SWTCIE projects receive federal capacity building grants or TA designed to support state efforts in promoting CIE. These supports include TA provided by ODEP through ASPIRE, NEON, PIE, and VOICE initiatives (see the box on the right and Appendix F).

Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE) provides grantees targeted TA to integrate state policy, program, and funding infrastructures to expand evidence-based employment services for people with disabilities resulting from mental health conditions.

National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network Initiative (NEON) connects state agencies to consulting, capacity building support, and ongoing mentoring to increase CIE for people with disabilities.

Partnerships in Employment Systems Change (PIE) grants focus on establishing state partnerships to improve systems and support CIE outcomes for young adults with I/DD.

Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment (VOICE) grantees receive intensive policy consulting, technical support, and peer mentoring to increase CIE for people with mental health disabilities.

To illustrate states’ involvement with these initiatives and their potential influence on SWTCIE projects, we describe PIE grant efforts for three states (California, Iowa, and New York). PIE grants allow states to

⁶ The 1999 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Olmstead v. L.C.* prohibits the unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities. Since the ruling, the U.S. Department of Justice has prioritized enforcing the Olmstead decision and established settlements with states documenting their plans to eliminate unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities and ensure they receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs (Department of Justice 2011).

build partnerships that advance system change efforts and increase CIE outcomes for young adults with I/DD. California expanded access to postsecondary education for students with I/DD through the state's College2Career Program (Tucker et al. 2017). California also strengthened its infrastructure by developing a dashboard to monitor the state's progress in employing youth and young adults with I/DD across the state.⁷ Iowa's PIE initiative focused its efforts on restructuring its Medicaid rate reimbursement structures to incentivize CIE. Iowa engaged with several cross-sectoral partners to design and build support for a new rate restructuring model that went into effect in 2016. The New York State Partnerships in Employment Systems Change project (NYS PIE) embarked on a system-wide transformation effort prompted by a planned shift to managed care (Christensen et al. 2017). It also addressed the need for the state's 1915(c) waiver programs to be compliant with CMS's HCBS Final Settings Rule, which CMS issued to ensure that people with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting possible. Through PIE, the state received TA to plan for the eventual closure of the Medicaid-funded sheltered workshop system and restructure rates to incentivize supported employment services (Christensen et al. 2017). NYS PIE funding was also used to develop a pilot [initiative](#) for 12 providers to develop new business models oriented toward a community-based employment service delivery system. All three states plan to sustain initiatives implemented under their PIE grants in their SWTCIE model demonstrations.

5. State minimum wage rates

The state minimum wage rate directly affects SWTCIE participants' earnings and purchasing power when they achieve CIE. As a result, higher minimum wages provide a greater financial incentive to participants to transition from SWE to CIE. At the same time, higher minimum wages make it more likely that the participant will have earnings at a level that will reduce or eliminate their federal disability benefits. State minimum wage rates vary based on the cost of living in the locale, the level of poverty, the size of the workforce, and other factors (DeSilver 2021). In nearly half the states with SWTCIE projects (Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas), the state minimum wage rate reflects the federal minimum wage rate of \$7.25 per hour, which is the rate that employers subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act must pay workers for the work they perform. Florida, Minnesota, Ohio, and Virginia increased the state minimum wage rate to \$12.00 per hour (Appendix F). In the remaining states, the state minimum wage is \$13.00 to \$15.50 per hour (California, Connecticut, Illinois, and New York). Some states permit cities and counties to adopt local ordinances that provide for higher rates than their state's minimum wage. For example, New York has built regional variations into the statewide laws to account for wide cost-of-living differentials in the state; the minimum wage for New York City and the city's suburban counties is \$15 per hour, and the rate for the remainder of the state is \$14.20 (DeSilver 2021).

B. Local economic indicators

The 14 states with SWTCIE projects have distinct local economic and workforce characteristics that can influence program participants' and 14(c) certificate holders' progress in transitioning from SWE to CIE. For example, people in states with a robust job market and low unemployment rate might have more opportunities to secure CIE roles with local employers than people in states with high unemployment rates and fewer job opportunities.

⁷ The dashboard provides up-to-date data on measures of progress, such as the wage gap between people working in CIE and people working in groups in the Support Employment Program through the state's Regional Centers.

Economic statistics indicate substantive variations in local employment rates across the SWTCIE states (Appendix G). The employment-to-population ratio (which captures the employment rate among working-age adults) for people with disabilities varied across states, ranging from 37 percent in New York to 50 percent in Minnesota in 2021; the national average was 41 percent. Likewise, the employment-to-population ratio for people without disabilities ranged from 73 percent in California to 83 percent in Minnesota in 2021; the national average was 77 percent. Rates of unemployment among people without disabilities also differ across states with SWTCIE projects, from 3 percent in Iowa to 8 percent in New York. Unemployment rates among people with disabilities are twice as high, ranging from 9 percent in Iowa to 18 percent in New York.

C. 14(c) certificate use

SWTCIE projects are capable of substantially reducing SWE because most 14(c) certificate holders (51 percent) operate in the 14 participating states. Exhibit VI.2 identifies the number of 14(c) certificate entities and workers earning SWE. As of October 1, 2022, 527 different 14(c) certificate holders in the 14 states held or had applied for certificates issued under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Most of these entities were community rehabilitation providers, a smaller subset were businesses and hospitals, and four were school-to-work experience programs. Collectively, these 14(c) certificate holders employed nearly 21,000 people with disabilities in SWE, representing 60 percent of all people working in SWE nationally.

Exhibit VI.2. Use of 14(c) certificates in the SWTCIE states, as of October 1, 2022

Project	Number of 14(c) certificate holders ¹	Type of 14(c) certificate holder ^a				Number of people employed earning SWE
		School-to-work experience program	Community rehabilitation provider	Business establishment	Hospital	
California	46	1	40	4	2	4,106
Connecticut	22	0	22	0	0	889
Florida	36	0	30	1	6	1,115
Georgia	14	0	1	0	0	253
Illinois	82	1	77	4	0	1,672
Indiana	31	0	30	0	1	461
Iowa	13	0	13	0	1	294
Minnesota	73 ^b	0	67	5	0	3,929
New York	26	1	26	2	2	1,480
North Carolina	33	0	30	3	0	213
Ohio	52	0	50	1	2	920
Pennsylvania	49	0	48	1	1	4,085
Texas	37	1	34	0	15	1,332
Virginia	12	0	11	1	0	218
Total in states with SWTCIE projects	527	4	479	22	30	20,967
National total	1,038					35,020

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, as of October 1, 2022. Available at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/workers-with-disabilities/reports-to-congress>.

Note: Entities that apply to the Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division for a 14(c) certificate provide these data, which capture the total number of workers employed at the entity and paid a subminimum wage rate at any time during the most recently completed fiscal quarter. These data are self-reported by employers and were not independently verified by the Wage and Hour Division.

^a The number of 14(c) certificate holders includes those with issued 14(c) certificates and those with pending applications under review by the Wage and Hour Division. Also, a small subset of 14(c) certificate holders represent more than one type of entity (for example, a community rehabilitation provider and a business establishment). Thus, the total number of types is more than the number of 14(c) certificate holders in such states.

^b One type of 14(c) certificate holder was not known and is not reflected in the counts by type.

SWE = subminimum wage employment; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment.

VII. Considerations for the SWTCIE National Evaluation

This report offers an early glimpse of the SWTCIE projects' proposed service models and describes the ways in which they intend to achieve their goals. The report reflects what grantees have planned for their projects as of March 2023, though the grantees might refine their plans as they pilot services and learn from other projects. The appendices present project features at a high level to identify cross-cutting trends across all projects, but the projects are each complex in their partnerships, populations to be offered services, and the interventions they will test to prioritize CIE and effect broader system changes.

In this final chapter, we compare the SWTCIE projects to understand how we might categorize them for the SWTCIE national evaluation and consider which might be relatively stronger positioned for implementation within a time frame that could provide data for the national evaluation. As outlined in Chapter II, we consider the projects across four factors: policy objectives, existing public program context, causal evidence for the proposed interventions, and implementation and planning considerations.

A. Policy objectives

All SWTCIE projects have the same overarching goal: decrease opportunities for SWE and increase opportunities for CIE. In Exhibit VII.1, we consider the common and unique levers that projects will use to achieve those objectives for each of three analysis levels: participants; 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers; and the system changes.

1. Participants

The SWTCIE project proposals offer little information to differentiate their approaches to the specific populations they will offer services. All but one (Pennsylvania) will include people currently working in SWE and those contemplating SWE, though they differ in their distributions.⁸ Half the projects will focus more on those working in SWE, and half will enroll more who are contemplating SWE, with youth comprising almost all of this latter population.

Though all SWTCIE projects will build on their existing VR services, the interventions will differ in their additions to or emphases on certain approaches for participants, as described in Chapter V. The projects will offer a wide array of services through their service models that can be flexibly implemented to address known barriers to employment and individualized to support the diverse support needs of SWTCIE participants. Exhibit VII.1 presents those interventions that might be more commonly used by participants, with an emphasis on the staffing approaches, use of customized and supported employment, mentoring, and family engagement activities.

2. 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers

All SWTCIE projects have planned training and TA for 14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers. Project staff will develop their training and TA plans during Project Year 1; the project-specific and national evaluations will assess their implementation and impact in reaching their intended audiences. In addition, most projects plan to reach out to employers in the industries they will promote.

⁸ The Pennsylvania project will enroll referred youth working in or contemplating SWE into the SWTCIE project, although the project will not specifically conduct outreach to this group.

We can differentiate the SWTCIE projects according to their additional activities with 14(c) certificate holders (Exhibit VII.1).

- Three projects (California, Georgia, and New York) have no explicit outcomes or activities with 14(c) certificate holders beyond training and TA.
- Nine projects (Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia) intend to encourage the transformation of the business models for 14(c) certificate holders to become employers offering CIE, VR vendors, or community rehabilitation providers.
- Five projects (Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia) plan to test changes to their payment structures to incentivize service providers to promote CIE.

3. System changes

Few SWTCIE projects have objectives specifically focused on the broader system of state policy or supports beyond their work groups and communities of practice. As Exhibit VII.1 shows, seven projects have such goals; each is relatively unique, though two projects (Georgia and Minnesota) will address changes in meeting Section 511 requirements.

Exhibit VII.1. Policy objectives for SWTCIE projects

Project	Participant	14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers	System changes
California	Guided discovery and person-centered planning, work-based learning, internships, mentoring, family supports	None	None
Connecticut	Person-centered planning, supported employment, vocational skill training, mentoring	Transformation training for 14(c) certificate holders	None
Florida	Supported employment, mentoring, family supports	Transforming 14(c) certificate holders to VR vendor	Create CIE pathways with secondary schools
Georgia	Discovery and person-centered planning, supported employment, mentoring	None	Policy changes with SWE and Section 511
Illinois	Discovery and person-centered planning, supported employment, mentoring	Transforming 14(c) certificate holders to VR vendors or CIE	None
Indiana	Person-centered planning, teaming, paid work experiences, supported employment, mentoring, family supports	Provider rate changes	Streamlined applications for VR and the developmental disability agency
Iowa	Customized employment, apprenticeships	Technical assistance on 14(c) certificate holder capacities; provider rate changes	Promote Employment and Technology First policies; create an apprenticeship intermediary

VII. Considerations for the SWTCIE National Evaluation

Project	Participant	14(c) certificate holders, other employers, and service providers	System changes
Minnesota	Teaming, progressive employment, mentoring, family supports	Transforming 14(c) certificate holders; business engagement with transportation industry	Policy changes with Section 511
New York	Paid internships, training, mentoring, family supports	None	None
North Carolina	Supported and customized employment, internships, mentoring, family supports	14(c) certificate holder training, provider rate changes	Improved day services
Ohio	Internships, mentoring, family supports	Transforming 14(c) certificate holders to VR vendor, provider rate changes	None
Pennsylvania	Teaming, supported and customized employment, mentoring	None	Create or update VR policy and service definitions to sustain elements of SWTCIE services
Texas	Person-centered planning, supported and customized employment, mentoring, family supports	14(c) certificate holder training	None
Virginia	Teaming, supported and customized employment, mentoring, family supports	Transformation training for 14(c) certificate holders, provider rate changes	None

CIE = competitive integrated employment; SWE = subminimum wage employment; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

B. Existing public program context

Although all SWTCIE projects involve VR agencies for services and staffing, we can differentiate those projects that will focus on modifying their existing structure and those oriented toward developing service models outside of the VR agency.

- Four projects will modify their existing service models: Connecticut, Florida, Minnesota, and Ohio.
- Seven projects will deliver services through 14(c) certificate holders: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania (which will also use community rehabilitation providers), Texas (which will also use secondary schools), and Virginia.
- New York will use Centers for Independent Living as the service provider for its project.
- California will use community colleges as the service provider for its project.
- Iowa has yet to determine its approach.

In addition, Chapter VI described how SWTCIE projects can build on prior experience transforming their state service systems. Some, such as with the Employment First activities of Connecticut and Virginia, go back a decade or more. In those states, the provider and system interventions might launch relatively quickly with their SWTCIE projects. Other projects, in states with less experience, weak service system capacity, or with fewer supports for workers with disabilities, might face more challenges achieving their goals related to CIE outcomes.

C. Causal evidence

Causal evidence for participants, based on our early review of the current literature, is limited to three interventions: customized employment, supported employment, and specific assistive technology interventions. In all 10 SWTCIE projects (all but California, Minnesota, New York, and Ohio) will offer customized employment, supported employment, or both as a key feature of their models. Seven projects (Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) will include assistive technology as an explicit part of their models, though we do not have sufficient information to determine whether the assistive technology services will reflect the specific practices supported by the causal evidence.

All SWTCIE projects will offer additional interventions that are not supported by causal evidence but instead by another type of evidence, such as descriptive or qualitative. This level of evidence is particularly relevant for 14(c) certificate holder transformations or system changes, for which causal evidence is difficult to obtain. Thus, the projects might provide opportunities to critically assess individual-level interventions, such as mentoring and internships, for this population, along with descriptive evidence on provider transformation.

D. Implementation and planning considerations

To inform SWTCIE national evaluation activities that rely on two years of observation for initial enrollees, SWTCIE projects will need robust implementation and enrollment by Project Year 3 and an absence of other policy changes that could confound estimates. Based on our review of the SWTCIE projects' implementation plans and local contexts, we expect that 10 projects are better positioned to develop their models and might have substantive enrollment by the end of Project Year 3: California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. These grantees have a combination of experience with demonstration projects, key partnerships in place (including relationships with 14(c) certificate holders), essential staffing in place, experience delivering the proposed services, and relatively better-developed plans for implementation. Though we include the California project in this list, the state's elimination of SWE by 2025 will likely skew participant outcomes and thus limits its potential to be included in some national evaluation activities. Minnesota and Virginia also have pending legislation eliminating SWE.

The remaining SWTCIE projects (1) have encountered early obstacles in one or more areas that could impede implementation or evaluation activities and limit their inclusion in the national evaluation or (2) have project designs that could restrict our ability to assess impacts.

- **Illinois.** The project's plan to offer 14(c) certificate holders funding to develop their own approaches might limit the evaluation's ability to find appropriate comparison groups and track services.
- **Iowa.** The project has had a slow start in solidifying its partners and developing implementation plans.
- **New York.** The project does not yet have its partnerships in place and does not have specific information on its services and evaluation. Observation of services and outcomes might be limited by the project's use of Centers for Independent Living as its service locations.
- **North Carolina.** The project has not yet offered sufficient details as to its service model, locations, enrollment strategies, and outcomes.

E. Potential categorizations of SWTCIE projects

Each of the 14 SWTCIE projects is relatively unique in its approach to achieving its outcomes, and each could face obstacles to development and enrollment. Our assessment of whether we can include each project in all national evaluation activities could change as grantees alter their designs to reflect other projects' models, input by TA providers, information from the SWTCIE national evaluation (such as on intervention effectiveness), or other developments. National evaluation staff will track those developments and adjust the analysis plans accordingly.

Aside from VR services as a foundation, the SWTCIE projects will not all have a common set of interventions, so we cannot pool all 14 projects together because of certain differences in their designs. We anticipate that including California would bias some evaluation outcomes (such as attributing impacts on CIE to the California project) because the state will eliminate SWE as an option by 2025, and we expect that other states might make similar policy changes during the course of project implementation. In addition, we might exclude projects from certain evaluation activities if they encounter significant implementation obstacles.

Despite the early stages of the SWTCIE projects, however, we find it helpful to consider how we might eventually categorize them to support an evaluation of pooled agencies with some similarities in their approaches. We acknowledge that any categorizations will depend on the ability of the projects to execute their implementation plans and how they adapt their service models. We might consider the following project categorizations:

- Projects modifying VR agency services and using a teaming approach: Connecticut and Minnesota
- Projects modifying VR agency services and not using a teaming approach: Florida and Ohio
- Projects using new service models through 14(c) certificate holders along with a teaming approach: Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Virginia
- Projects using new service models through 14(c) certificate holders and not using a teaming approach: Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas

We omitted the SWTCIE projects in California, Iowa, and New York from the above categories. We omitted California because of state policy changes, Iowa because it has not fully defined its service model, and New York because of its use of Centers for Independent Living to offer services.

In addition, we can group the SWTCIE projects that will pursue provider transformation:

- Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia

Finally, we might be able to group SWTCIE projects that use a common intervention or set of interventions, such as an industry-focus, person-centered planning, customized employment, peer mentoring, or provider rate changes. We will identify the groups and projects based on selected characteristics or interventions, the projects' success with their implementations, and input from RSA.

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Appendix A
Project Infrastructure

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Exhibit A.1. Project infrastructure

Project	Partnerships	Training and technical assistance providers	Implementation locations	Staffing	Evaluator and evaluation design
California	San Diego Community College District, North Orange County Community College District Programs, Department of Industrial Relations, local regional centers service, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Exceptional Family Resource Centers, local educational agencies, California Workforce Development Board, California Disability Services Association, PolicyWorks	The Tarjan Center, San Diego State University Research Foundation-Interwork Institute, state council on developmental disabilities, and Griffin-Hammis Associates,	Two locations (one urban and one suburban)	New staff: Four individuals (two at each project site; 1.0 FTE each) to provide services, two individuals (one at each project site; 1.0 FTE each) to manage the project and coordinate service delivery Existing staff: Project director (1.0 FTE); principal investigator (0.20 FTE); two DOR counselors (0.5 FTE each); and key evaluation personnel (2.35 FTE)	San Diego State University Research Foundation; QED (comparisons to other VR agency clients)
Connecticut	Advance Auto, Ability Beyond (14(c) certificate holder), Kennedy Collective (14(c) certificate holder), Norwalk Public Schools, Department of Developmental Services, Department of Labor, State Department of Education, Office of Workforce Strategies, Capitol Workforce Partners, Eastern Workforce Investment Board, Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Workforce Alliance, The Workplace, Access Independence, Center for Disability Rights, Disability Network of Eastern CT, Independence Northwest, Independence Unlimited, State Independent Living Council, Ability Beyond, Viability, Connecticut Tech Act Project, family/guardian, self-advocates	University of Maryland–Center for Transition and Career Innovation and the VR agency	Statewide through three regions (north, south, and west) representing urban, suburban, and rural communities	New staff: Three counselors to lead the three regional teams (1.0 FTE each), project coordinator (1.0 FTE), and grant specialist (1.0 FTE) Existing staff: Project director (0.5 FTE), project co-director (0.5 FTE)	University of Maryland; QED (comparison group)

Appendix A. Project Infrastructure

Project	Partnerships	Training and technical assistance providers	Implementation locations	Staffing	Evaluator and evaluation design
Florida	Pine Castle, ARC of Washington, ARC of Tampa Bay, PolicyWorks, University of South Florida Center for Assistive Rehabilitation and Robotics Technologies, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Bureau of Exceptional Student Education, CareerSource Florida, Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities	The VR agency, Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, Griffin-Hammis Associates, and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts	Three pilot locations: Washington (rural), Hillsborough (suburban), and Duval counties (urban)	New staff: Two project coordinators in local sites (1.0 FTE each) and four business relations representatives (1.0 FTE each) Existing staff: Project director (1.0 FTE), five existing VR agency staff (0.15 FTE each)	Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts–Boston; QED (matched comparison group)
Georgia	Community rehabilitation providers, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; Georgia Department of Education; Institute on Human Development at the University of Georgia	The VR agency and the University of Georgia	One pilot location at Creative Enterprises (urban), one implementation location at Sunnydale (rural), and two replication locations to be determined	Existing staff: Program manager (1.0 FTE), existing VR and provider staff (FTE unspecified)	University of Georgia; descriptive design
Illinois	Illinois Division of Developmental Disabilities; Illinois State Board of Education; Illinois Department of Health Care & Family Services; Illinois Division of Mental Health; Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living; Equip for Equality; Illinois workNet; Illinois APSE Employment First; Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities; State Rehabilitation Council; community rehabilitation providers; local Chambers of Commerce and other employer organizations; State Rehabilitation Council; Self-Advocacy Alliance of Illinois; local educational agencies; Parents Alliance Employment Project; Illinois Assistive Technology Project	University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign; Virginia Commonwealth University	Six 14(c) certificate holders geographically representative of Illinois	New staff: Each of the six 14(c) certificate holders will dedicate one employment specialist (1.0 FTE each) to support SWTCIE participants attain CIE Existing staff: Principal investigator (0.5 FTE), project director (0.5 FTE), project administrator (0.10 FTE), project liaison (1.0 FTE), and trainers (FTE unspecified)	University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign; descriptive design

Appendix A. Project Infrastructure

Project	Partnerships	Training and technical assistance providers	Implementation locations	Staffing	Evaluator and evaluation design
Indiana	Division of Disability and Rehabilitation Services, Bureaus of Developmental Disability Services, Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Indiana Association of Person's Supporting Employment First, Indiana University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, National Center for Cultural Competence, Arc of Indiana	Public Consulting Group LLC	Four pilot locations with seven 14(c) certificate holders: two rural entities in north central Indiana, one urban entity in northeastern Indiana, one suburban entity in eastern Indiana, two suburban and rural entities in south central Indiana, and one suburban entity in central Indiana	<p>New staff: Four facility leads (0.5 FTE each), five VR counselor liaisons (1.0 FTE each), training/operations project manager (1.0 FTE), peer support specialists and a peer support consultant (FTE to be determined), family engagement liaison (hourly employee)</p> <p>Existing staff: Project director (0.10 FTE), internal project manager (1.0 FTE), external project manager (0.4 FTE), training/operations project manager (0.2 FTE), training developer (0.17 FTE), data consultant (0.05 FTE),</p>	The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community; design to be determined
Iowa	Iowa Department of Education and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities	Griffin-Hammis Associates	To be determined	<p>New staff: Senior project manager (1.0 FTE), junior project manager (1.0 FTE), and two project coordinators (1.0 FTE each), two vocational rehabilitation counselor specialists (1.0 FTE each)</p> <p>Existing staff: Project director (0.90 FTE), special initiatives and community liaison (0.20 FTE)</p>	University of Iowa's Center for Evaluation and Assessment; design to be determined

Appendix A. Project Infrastructure

Project	Partnerships	Training and technical assistance providers	Implementation locations	Staffing	Evaluator and evaluation design
Minnesota	Minnesota State Transportation Center for Excellence, Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, Institute for Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Association of People Supporting Employment First, Minnesota Department of Human Services – Disability Services Division, Minnesota Department of Education – Special Education Services	Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts–Boston	Three pilot locations in Northeast Minnesota, Metropolitan Saint Paul/Minneapolis (Metro) in year 2; Southwest Minnesota to be added in year 3 or 4	New staff: Project manager (1.0 FTE), three business engagement specialists (1.0 FTE each), six counselor navigators (1.0 FTE each), assistive technology specialist (1.0 FTE), three policy specialists (3.0 FTE), three employment trainers (3.0 FTE), case management system data analysis staff (0.2 FTE), accounting and budget support staff (0.15 FTE), vocational rehabilitation technician (1.0 FTE) Existing staff: An unspecified number of VRS counselors at an unspecified FTE	Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts–Boston; descriptive and QED (matched comparison group)
New York	New York Association for Independent Living, Long Island Center for Independent Living, Suffolk Independent Living Organization, Regional Center for Independent Living, Western New York Independent Living, Access to Independence of Cortland County, Office for People with Development Disabilities, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, Office of Special Education	San Diego State University Research Foundation – Interwork Institute, Griffin-Hammis Associates, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Revitalizing Community Membership of Washington	Six locations: two rural counties, two suburban counties, two urban counties	New staff: Project manager (1.0 FTE), outreach coordinator (1.0 FTE), six integrated employment specialists (1.0 FTE each), project coordinator (1.0 FTE), 11 customized employment specialists (1.0 FTE each) Existing staff: VR assistant commissioner (0.15 FTE), customized employment director (0.50 FTE)	Cornell University’s Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability; descriptive design

Appendix A. Project Infrastructure

Project	Partnerships	Training and technical assistance providers	Implementation locations	Staffing	Evaluator and evaluation design
North Carolina	Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services; North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services	SWTCIE leadership group, East Carolina University	Three pilot locations: western, central, and eastern North Carolina involving three 14(c) certificate holders	New staff: Project manager (1.0 FTE), SWTCIE administrative specialist (1.0 FTE), three SWTCIE administrative specialists (0.22 to 0.55 FTE each), SWTCIE program specialist (FTE to be determined), three navigators (1.0 FTE each), three coordinators (1.0 FTE each), six employment specialists (1.0 FTE each), three benefits counselors (1.0 FTE each), and three peer mentors (1.0 FTE each)	North Carolina State University; design to be determined
Ohio	Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Ohio State University Nisonger Center	VR agency, Employment First Task Force, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Ohio State University Nisonger Center, more training providers to be determined	15 implementation locations that represent rural, urban, and suburban communities; specific locations to be determined	New staff: Project administrator (1.0 FTE), two career resource caseload assistants (1.0 FTE each), and two work incentive consultants (1.0 FTE each) Existing staff: Project director (0.1 FTE) and project manager (1.0 FTE)	Ohio State University; design to be determined
Pennsylvania	Office of Developmental Programs, Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association, Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability, a 14(c) certificate holder or community rehabilitation provider (to be determined), Developmental Disabilities Council, Pennsylvania Disability Rights, Client Assistance Program, Statewide Independent Living Councils.	RSA Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment, University of Missouri–Kansas City, Charting the LifeCourse Nexus	Six implementation locations to be determined; one location in the greater Philadelphia metro area and one location in a rural area	New staff: Project manager (1.0 FTE), grant manager (1.0 FTE), six CIE engagement specialists (1.0 FTE each), and grantee liaison (1.0 FTE) A contracted 14(c) certificate holder or community rehabilitation provider will hire six CIE team facilitators (1.0 FTE each), six employer liaison experts (1.0 FTE each), and six employment specialists (1.0 FTE each) Existing staff: Project director (1.0 FTE), data analyst (1.0 FTE)	Temple University Institute on Disabilities; QED (matched comparison group design)

Appendix A. Project Infrastructure

Project	Partnerships	Training and technical assistance providers	Implementation locations	Staffing	Evaluator and evaluation design
Texas	University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment, Texas A&M University Center on Disability and Development, Texas Association of People Supporting Employment First, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Education Agency, Imagine Enterprises, Virginia Commonwealth University, WorkQuest	Texas A&M University Center on Disability and Development, Virginia Commonwealth University, West Virginia University–Job Accommodation Network, University of North Texas College of Health and Public Service	Six 14(c) certificate holders and two school districts	New staff: Project manager (1.0 FTE) Existing staff: Principal investigator (0.33 FTE), project director (1.0 FTE), project coordinator (1.0 FTE), administrative specialist (1.0 FTE), financial specialist (0.5 FTE), business liaison (1.0 FTE), three training associates (0.5 FTE each), and web developer (0.25 to 0.5 FTE), director of training and technical assistance (0.0625 FTE), two technical assistance specialists (0.0375 to 0.075 FTE)	Virginia Commonwealth University and University of Kentucky Human Development Institute; QED (matched comparison group)
Virginia	George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education; Griffin-Hammis Associates, Partnership for People with Disabilities; Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; The Arc of Virginia; Interwork Institute San Diego State University Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management; Virginia Department of Education	Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center; National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative; Griffin-Hammis Associates	Two 14(c) certificate holders in the greater Richmond metro area (urban, suburban and some rural areas) and one 14(c) certificate holder in rural location in southwestern Virginia	New staff: Two VR counselors (0.66 FTE to 1.0 FTE), project manager (0.75 to 1.0 FTE) Existing staff: Project director (0.25 FTE)	Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy; QED (matched comparison group)

APSE = Association of People Supporting Employment First; CIE = competitive integrated employment; FTE = full-time equivalent; QED = quasi experimental design; SWTCIE = Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

Appendix B
Project Design

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Exhibit B.1. Project design

Project	Intervention focus	Industry topic areas	Adults to be offered services (inclusion/ exclusion criteria)	Students and youth to be offered services (inclusion/ exclusion criteria)	Recruitment sources	Emphasis on underserved communities
California	Community colleges	All six topic areas	92 adults in SWE and 0 adults contemplating SWE	40 youth in SWE and 268 youth contemplating SWE	14(c) certificate holders, local VR agency offices, developmental disability centers, local educational agencies, and pre-employment transition services providers	The project will represent the racially diverse geographic areas where the participants exist.
Connecticut	VR agency	Transportation, green jobs, and essential workers	114 adults in SWE, 30 adults neither working in or contemplating SWE, but possibly interested in CIE	356 youth and students contemplating SWE	14(c) certificate holders, Centers for Independent Living, public schools, and state agencies	Recruit Black and Hispanic people, people with psychiatric and developmental or intellectual disabilities, those with autism spectrum disorder, and those transitioning from school to postsecondary education or work.
Florida	VR agency, schools, and 14(c) certificate holders	Arts	160 adults in SWE	240 youth and students contemplating SWE	Schools and 14(c) certificate holders	The project selected locations to ensure diversity by race and ethnicity, national origin, gender, and age. The project will prioritize recruiting in rural areas and recruiting youth who have completed secondary education and are on waiting lists for agency services.

Appendix B. Project Design

Project	Intervention focus	Industry topic areas	Adults to be offered services (inclusion/exclusion criteria)	Students and youth to be offered services (inclusion/exclusion criteria)	Recruitment sources	Emphasis on underserved communities
Georgia	Providers	Green job workers, arts, field-initiated	30 adults in SWE, 10 adults contemplating SWE (in day services)	200 youth or students (using pre-ETS) contemplating SWE	Schools, providers, VR agency staff, developmental disability agencies, and 14(c) entities	Recruit people with significant or complex disabilities, with developmental disabilities, living in rural areas, or representing racial or ethnic minority groups.
Illinois	14(c) certificate holders	Essential workers, green job workers, home and community-based service workers, arts, and transportation and related industry workers	159 adults in SWE	69 youth or students contemplating SWE	14(c) certificate holders, schools, and other community organizations geographically representative of Illinois	Involve remote and inner-city communities where large numbers of people live in poverty. Provide all materials in accessible formats and in preferred languages.
Indiana	14(c) certificate holders	Field-initiated	245 adults in SWE and 180 adults contemplating SWE	50 students and youth contemplating SWE and 55 students and youth in SWE	14(c) certificate holders, day habilitation programs, and pre-employment transition programs	Recruit students and individuals with I/DD from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds
Iowa	To be determined	Home and community-based services, field-initiated	108 adults in SWE and 228 adults contemplating SWE	140 youth and students contemplating SWE	Day program service providers, secondary transition programs, intermediate care facilities, schools, and project partners' networks	Not specified

Appendix B. Project Design

Project	Intervention focus	Industry topic areas	Adults to be offered services (inclusion/ exclusion criteria)	Students and youth to be offered services (inclusion/ exclusion criteria)	Recruitment sources	Emphasis on underserved communities
Minnesota	VR agency and partnering community rehabilitation providers	Transportation industry	400 adults in SWE	800 youth contemplating SWE	Centers for Independent Living, high schools, 14(c) certificate holders, and community rehabilitation providers	<p>Outreach and services tailored to underserved populations, non-English speaking persons and families, Indigenous persons, people with multiple disabilities including those who are deaf/blind, LGBTQIA, and geographic distribution, and persons receiving Department of Human Services waived services.</p> <p>Pilot sites selected to include populations historically underserved.</p>
New York	Centers for Independent Living and 14(c) certificate holders	Arts, home and community-based services, field-initiated	500 adults contemplating or employed in SWE	750 youth receiving pre-ETS and contemplating SWE	The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Independent Living, youth centers and shelter, LGBTQ centers, faith-based institutions, and schools	Outreach to potential enrollees from racial or ethnic minority populations or enrollees from families with low incomes.
North Carolina	14(c) certificate holders	Transportation, green job workers, essential workers, and field-initiated	500 people with I/DD contemplating or employed in SWE	Not specified	Non-CIE settings	Not specified.
Ohio	VR agency	Essential workers, arts	535 adults in SWE and 5 adults contemplating SWE	5 students and youth in SWE and 55 youth and students contemplating SWE	County boards of developmental disabilities and 14(c) certificate holders	Recruit underserved populations using methods that promote cultural connection and respect and address systemic barriers to pursuing CIE.

Appendix B. Project Design

Project	Intervention focus	Industry topic areas	Adults to be offered services (inclusion/exclusion criteria)	Students and youth to be offered services (inclusion/exclusion criteria)	Recruitment sources	Emphasis on underserved communities
Pennsylvania	VR agency and 14(c) certificate holders	Green job workers, transportation and related industries	240 adults employed in SWE	None	VR program applicants and VR-eligible people; project partners' networks including 14(c) certificate holders	Not specified.
Texas	14(c) certificate holders and school districts	All six topic areas	240 adults in SWE and adults contemplating SWE (not specified)	84 students or youth contemplating SWE	School districts and 14(c) certificate holders	Enrollment focused on rural, remote, and inner-city communities and will include people of color and people from other populations historically minoritized in project planning and implementation.
Virginia	14(c) certificate holders	Field-initiated	300 adults in SWE	400 youth contemplating SWE	14(c) employers and local education agencies	Outreach to people from underrepresented communities including but not limited to persons who are Black and Hispanic or Latinx with I/DD and/or serious mental illness, as well as those living in rural areas.

CIE = competitive integrated employment; I/DD = intellectual and developmental disabilities; pre-ETS = pre-employment transition services; SWE = subminimum wage employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

Appendix C

Project Design: Participant Interventions

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Exhibit C.1. Project design: Participant interventions

Project	Counseling and staffing	Pre-employment transition services	Employment services	Education and training services	Wraparound services and supports	Mentoring	Other participant interventions
California	Case management and service coordination, guided discovery, person-centered planning	Self-determination training	Career exploration using the Career Index Plus labor market information system, customized job development, self-employment options, job coaching, Lights! Camera! Access! Program	Work-based learning, internships, job shadowing, independent living skills training, credential attainment, peer education coaches	Financial literacy training	Job and education peer mentoring	Family support services to develop a family-to-family support network
Connecticut	Person-centered methods including motivational interviewing, regional resource teams	Additional support options and interventions to promote informed choice of CIE	Supported employment, individualized task analyses; fading of instruction and reinforcement (that is, gradually reduce the level of assistance needed over time to encourage independence)	Work-based learning experiences, vocational skill building and pre-trainings to achieve prerequisite skills	Financial literacy, transportation	Peer and work mentoring	None
Florida	None	None	Supported employment, interactive job fairs, rapid-response placement services, flexible work experiences, career exploration activities	None	None	Youth and adult peer mentoring	Virtual reality offering to explore arts-based options, family support services
Georgia	Discovery method as a person-centered planning process	None	Supported employment	Inclusive apprenticeships and internships, systematic instruction	Benefits counseling, Disability Benefits 101 website, assistive technology, wraparound supports after placement	None	None

Appendix C. Project Design: Participant Interventions

Project	Counseling and staffing	Pre-employment transition services	Employment services	Education and training services	Wraparound services and supports	Mentoring	Other participant interventions
Illinois	Person-centered plans, Discovery Tool for participants	Job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, self-determination and informed choice making skills, supported decision making	Supported employment, O*NET, job exploration	Postsecondary education, credentialing, work-based learning	Transportation, assistance with obtaining Medicaid waivers, and financial planning, accommodations, personal assistance services	Peer and family mentoring, education, and consultation	Community integration and social inclusion
Indiana	Person-centered plans, integrated resource teams	Paid work-based learning experiences	Job development and placement, supported employment with fidelity	None	Career counseling information and referral services, monthly benefits counseling	Peer support mentoring network	Family engagement through FEAT workshops
Iowa	None	To be determined	Customized employment, supported employment, and individual placement and support services	Intermediary to create pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships	Assistive technology, life skills practices, additional services to be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Minnesota	Team-based model	Work experiences, access to skill-building services	Progressive employment strategies to mitigate risk (such as paid wage for work-based learning)	None	Expanded information and referral status, pre-VR application, transportation, benefits counseling and financial planning, assistive technology	Peer mentoring	Family engagement and services
New York	None	None	Pre-employment services	Training through the Personal Care Worker Academy and paid internships and job opportunities in the arts	Self-advocacy training, benefits planning, work incentives planning, assistive technology	Peer mentoring	Family engagement

Appendix C. Project Design: Participant Interventions

Project	Counseling and staffing	Pre-employment transition services	Employment services	Education and training services	Wraparound services and supports	Mentoring	Other participant interventions
North Carolina	Case management, service navigation	Pre-employment transition services, supported internships	Supported and customized employment, long-term job coaching	Supported internships	Benefits counseling, transportation, community living and supports, assistive technology	Peer mentoring	Supportive meaningful day activities, informational tools for people with I/DD and their families
Ohio	None	None	None	Licensure attainment, internship rotations in essential jobs and arts paid through a vocational training stipend at minimum wage; work skills training that includes self-advocacy, financial literacy, social skills, and linkage with peer mentors	Enhanced career counseling services; increased technological guidance that includes general and individualized solutions; increased focus and flexibility with work incentives services	Peer and family mentoring	Funds for purchasing assistive technology, family engagement
Pennsylvania	Team-based model	None	Job shadowing experiences, short-term job supports, job coaching, supported and customized employment services	On-the-job training, skills-based training, work-based learning experiences, and other education and training services	Person-centered wraparound supports, benefits counseling, transportation support, assistive technology,	CIE engagement specialists will be family members with lived experiences; training, technical assistance, and peer mentoring for project participants and their families	Family engagement
Texas	Person-centered planning	Self-advocacy training	Supported and customized employment	On-the-job training and support, assistance negotiating work	Benefits counseling	None	Family training on social inclusion, supported decision making, and guardianship alternatives
Virginia	Integrated resource team	Work-based learning experiences	Supported and customized employment; paid work experiences (up to 120 hours)	Educational opportunities to build skills for employment	Benefits counseling	Peer mentoring	Family engagement

CIE = competitive integrated employment; I/DD = intellectual and developmental disabilities; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

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Appendix D

Project Design: 14(c) Certificate Holder, Other Employer, and Service Provider Interventions

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Exhibit D.1. Project design: 14(c) certificate holder, other employer, and service provider interventions

Project	Training and technical assistance	14(c) certificate holder transitions	Enhanced payment or purchasing models	Other employer interventions
California	None	None	None	Partner with employers on work-based learning experiences, job analyses, customized job development, identification, and provision of reasonable accommodations for individuals hired with employers Develop on-the-job training opportunities including customized apprenticeship programs through Department of Industrial Relations
Connecticut	Career pathways training for project staff, 14(c) certificate holders, and local education staff Trainings and technical assistance for staff that promote values of diversity, equity, and inclusion and enhance staff skills and knowledge of evidence-based practices that promote CIE Technical assistance to businesses to provide tailored solutions and build capacity to engage with people with disabilities	Individual technical assistance on organizational transformation	Stipends for provider's time to train on new services	None
Florida	Trainings for direct service personnel, employers, and schools about CIE and disability inclusion strategies, such as the use of assistive technology and other technologies	Increase the number who are VR vendors Expand collaborative relationships on outreach and referral pathways, family engagement, and information services Partner on transformational business plans	None	None
Georgia	Person-centered training and customized employment to school, VR, and developmental disability agency staff and employers Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators training certification for provider employment specialists	None	None	None

Appendix D. Project Design: 14(c) Certificate Holder, Other Employer, and Service Provider Interventions

Project	Training and technical assistance	14(c) certificate holder transitions	Enhanced payment or purchasing models	Other employer interventions
Illinois	<p>Technical assistance to providers through Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators trained specialists who will be embedded in 14(c) certificate holders</p> <p>Training and technical assistance to partners on supporting consumers in CIE</p> <p>Joint training for VR counselors and case managers on systems knowledge</p>	<p>Offer labor market analyses to identify business organizations and employers in each region</p> <p>Participating sites to transform into CIE programs</p>	None	<p>Guidance and support in establishing new or enhancing/improving upon placement contracts with the VR agency</p> <p>Improve and streamline processes for providers to become approved VR agency contract holders</p> <p>Innovative business model</p>
Indiana	<p>Universal training, targeted, and intensive technical assistance to pilot site staff; integrated resource team training to VR counselors; benefits and work incentives basics training to case managers, behavior specialists, and other team members</p>	<p>Develop and implement a training plan for each site on supported employment, training, benefit planning, Life Course tools, and VR</p> <p>Assemble a Transformation Leadership Team that will offer information about activities/strategies at the provider level to promote cultural competence in developmental disabilities</p> <p>Offer small group training on best practices</p>	<p>Provide enhanced provider rates (20 percent above standard VR rate for sites performing with high fidelity during the pilot) for fidelity employment service implementation</p>	<p>Leverage peer specialists to build provider capacity and assist participants to better navigate services to achieve CIE</p>
Iowa	<p>Training, coaching, and technical assistance to partners in delivering customized employment, supported employment, and individual placement and support services</p>	<p>Offer technical assistance to help 14(c) certificate holders build their capacity to help people with disabilities transition to CIE</p>	<p>Revise payment structure to align with best practices for delivering customized employment services</p>	<p>Identify employers to host pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs</p>
Minnesota	<p>Comprehensive business engagement services and employer supports to match businesses with jobseekers to meet their workforce needs</p>	<p>Expand existing Agency Change Toolkit on provider transformation</p> <p>Expand provider transformation project to eight additional 14(c) certificate holders</p> <p>Develop transformative business models for 14(c) certificate holders</p>	<p>Cover costs associated with work-based learning activities</p>	<p>Engage and conduct outreach to 700 businesses in the transportation industry</p> <p>Align agency resources and develop data-tracking systems</p> <p>Dual-customer approach to business engagement and work-based learning matching transportation business and job seeker needs</p>
New York	<p>Technical assistance and training for VR staff, project partners, and project service providers</p>	To be determined	None	None

Appendix D. Project Design: 14(c) Certificate Holder, Other Employer, and Service Provider Interventions

Project	Training and technical assistance	14(c) certificate holder transitions	Enhanced payment or purchasing models	Other employer interventions
North Carolina	Customized and supported employment training to increase provider capacity to help people with disabilities achieve CIE success Disability sensitivity training for employers	Provide Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators approved training to providers Use SWTCIE leadership experience and expertise for technical assistance	Incentive payments for targeted employer job placement and for milestones	Business to business mentoring
Ohio	Professional development opportunities for staff on Certified Employment Support Professional attainment, trauma informed care, Employment First, sequenced funding, disability awareness and etiquette training	Offer training to become VR providers	Increased reimbursement rates for CIE placements; site development to assist providers for rotating internships at local employers	Expand relationships with employers in the essential jobs and arts sectors by conducting business outreach to better understand employers' workforce needs and matching participants to work-based opportunities that are a good fit
Pennsylvania	Educate employers on the benefits of customized employment; job coaching certifications for CIE support staff Provide training and technical assistance to employers, 14(c) holders, and other agency partners on Charting the LifeCourse and Integrated Resource Teams	Individuals referred to a 14(c) certificate holder will have the opportunity to participate in the SWTCIE project rather than begin SWE employment	Implementing an updated employment supports policy with enhanced supported employment fees; enhanced on the job training contracts for designated employers who hire project participants	Support CIE employers' recruitment, interviewing, onboarding, and management activities that involve participants Conduct extensive outreach to designated employers to participate in CIE opportunities
Texas	Training to 14(c) certificate holders on business market analysis, job analysis, and evidence-based practices to support CIE Training to employers and providers on job development and placement, supported employment, customized employment, internships, apprenticeships, labor market analysis, and workplace accommodations Training to school district staff on evidence-based practices such as family involvement, internship and apprenticeship programs, postsecondary education programs, and inclusion in career and technical education coursework	Training to providers on supported and customized employment, high demand occupations, work-based learning experiences, and apprenticeships	None	None

Appendix D. Project Design: 14(c) Certificate Holder, Other Employer, and Service Provider Interventions

Project	Training and technical assistance	14(c) certificate holder transitions	Enhanced payment or purchasing models	Other employer interventions
Virginia	Offer training to 14(c) certificate holders in supported and customized employment services and organizational transformation	Technical assistance on organizational transformation, including developing a five-year training plan; training staff; creating tools to support staff; and providing curricula to build organizational capacity and ensure sustainability Training 14(c) certificate holder staff on supported and customized employment	Use a value-based purchasing model to incentivize service providers in promoting CIE	None

CIE = competitive integrated employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation.

Appendix E

Project Design: System Change Interventions

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Exhibit E.1. Project design: System change interventions

Project	Collaborations	State policy changes	Other system interventions
California	Establish the project's collaborative model and partner group	None	None
Connecticut	Establish a partner work group and community of practice	None	None
Florida	Expand formal collaborative relationships with seven to 10 center schools to create a pathway to the VR agency and career exploration for all youth contemplating SWE Create partner working group and community of practice	None	None
Georgia	Community of practice	Make public policy and procedure changes to support reduction in subminimum wages statewide, including reviewing/updating current policies to match best practices and enhancing procedures for meeting Section 511 of WIOA	None
Illinois	Interagency collaboration, coordination, and partnering through a community of practice	None	None
Indiana	Utilize a community of practice and statewide coalitions	None	Streamlined application process to VR agency for Bureau of Developmental Disability Services, such as improved processes for sharing collateral and exploration of joint application
Iowa	Build on and strengthen the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment; community of practice	Develop, adopt, and implement an Iowa Technology First Policy that expands access to technology for lowans with disabilities to increase independence and offers virtual support Develop, adopt, and implement an Iowa Employment First Policy that requires that CIE is the first and preferred outcome of publicly funded services for lowans with disabilities	Create a registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship intermediary
Minnesota	Partnership with the Minnesota State Transportation of Excellence; create a community of practice across 14(c) certificate holders in the pilot sites to adopt and implement the CIE business model	Revamped 511 process with CIL partners for adults and high schools for youth	None
New York	Establish a community of practice and an interagency customized employment collaborative	None	None

Appendix E. Project Design: System Change Interventions

Project	Collaborations	State policy changes	Other system interventions
North Carolina	Establish a stakeholder engagement advisory group comprised of people with I/DD and their families to foster collaboration, guide work, provide ongoing program development and support	Develop a statewide meaningful day service	None
Ohio	Create a statewide community of practice; develop local steering committees in areas that feature 14(c) provider partners	None	None
Pennsylvania	Form a community advisory panel and join and contribute to the PA Family Network, part of Pennsylvania's Community of Practice: Supporting Families Throughout the Lifespan	None	None
Texas	Create a community of practice to offer resources and services to stakeholder groups	None	None
Virginia	Create a community of practice consisting of people with disabilities, 14(c) certificate holders, and peer and family engagement partners to facilitate communication	None	None

CIE = competitive integrated employment; CIL = Centers for Independent Living; I/DD = intellectual and developmental disabilities; SWE = subminimum wage employment; VR = vocational rehabilitation; WIOA = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Appendix F

Contextual Factors Affecting SWTCIE Projects

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Exhibit F.1. Contextual factors affecting SWTCIE projects

Project	Monthly individual income limit to qualify for Medicaid Buy-In in 2022 (% of FPL)	Monthly individual asset limit to qualify for Medicaid Buy-In in 2022	State adoption of Employment First legislation	Employment First Executive Order or Certificate of Recognition	Formalized Employment Interagency Coordination	Olmstead Settlement Agreement	Federal support for CIE	State hourly minimum wage rate (2023)
California	\$2,833 (250%)	\$2,000	2013	No	Yes	No	NEON, PIE	\$15.50
Connecticut	\$6,250 (552%)	\$10,000	2011	No	No	No	N/A	\$14.00 ^a
Florida	\$2,265 (200%)	\$5,000	2016	2013	Yes	No	ASPIRE	\$11.00
Georgia	\$3,398 (300%)	\$4,000	2018	No	Yes	No	N/A	\$7.25
Illinois	\$3,964 (350%)	\$25,000	2013	2021	Yes	No	EFSLMP	\$13.00
Indiana	\$3,964 (350%)	\$2,000	2017	No	No	No	VOICE, ASPIRE	\$7.25
Iowa	\$2,832 (250%)	\$12,000	Proposed 2017	No	Yes	No ^b	VOICE, ASPIRE, PIE	\$7.25
Minnesota	None (N/A)	\$20,000	2014	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	\$10.59
New York	\$2,832 (250%)	\$20,000	No	2014	Yes	No	NEON, ASPIRE, PIE	\$14.20
North Carolina	\$1,133 (100%)	\$2,000	No	2019	Yes	Yes	VOICE	\$7.25
Ohio	\$2,684 (237%)	\$13,233	2014	2012, 2019	Yes	No	EFSLMP	\$10.10
Pennsylvania	\$2,832 (250%)	\$10,000	2018	2016	Yes	No	EFSLMP	\$7.25
Texas	\$2,833 (250%)	\$5,000	2013	No	Yes	No	N/A	\$7.25
Virginia	\$1,563 ^c (138%)	\$2,000 ^c	No ^d	2012	Yes	Yes	VOICE, ASPIRE	\$12.00

Sources: Medicaid Buy-In program from the Kaiser Family Foundation, Available at <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/medicaid-eligibility-through-buy-in-programs-for-working-people-with-disabilities/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colld%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>; State adoption of Employment First policies and Executive Orders from the Association of People Supporting Employment First available at <https://apse.org/legislative-advocacy/employment-first/>; Federal support for CIE from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (for ASPIRE, EFSLMP, NEON, PIE, and VOICE) and Administration for Community Living, available at <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/odep-selects-18-states-fy18-employment-first-state-leadership>; State hourly minimum wage rates (effective Jan. 2023) from the U.S. Department of Labor, available at [Consolidated Minimum Wage Table | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](https://www.dol.gov/eis/whd/minimum-wage-table).

Note: Formalized interagency coordination is codified in a settlement agreement, state legislation, or executive order or tasked with overseeing the state’s Employment First strategy or efforts.

^aThe Connecticut state minimum wage rate will increase to \$15 per hour as of July 1, 2023.

^bIn December of 2021, the Department of Justice released its Report of Investigation into Iowa’s state operated Glenwood and Woodward Resource Centers. The Department of Justice and Iowa have not finalized a settlement agreement; however, on April 7, 2022, Iowa leadership announced that the state intends to close the Glenwood Resource Center.

^cIn Virginia, applicants must have income at or below 138% FPL and assets limited to \$2,000; however, once enrolled, people can have income up to \$75,000/year and assets up to the Section 1619 (b) threshold (\$46,340 in 2022).

^dIn 2012, the Virginia Legislature passed a [resolution](#) that encourages the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt and implement Employment First practices in the state.

Appendix F. Contextual Factors Affecting SWTCIE Projects

ASPIRE = Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment; CIE = competitive integrated employment; EFSLMP = Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program; N/A = not applicable; FPL = federal poverty level; NEON = National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network Initiative; PIE = Partnerships in Employment Systems Change; VOICE = Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment.

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Appendix G

Economic Indicators in the SWTCIE States

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Exhibit G.1. Economic indicators in the SWTCIE states

Project	Employment-to-population ratios for people with disabilities ^a	Employment-to-population ratios for people without disabilities ^b	Unemployment rate for people with disabilities ^c	Unemployment rate for people without disabilities ^d
California	39.58%	73.45%	16.94%	7.70%
Connecticut	43.73%	78.47%	13.70%	6.04%
Florida	39.24%	76.22%	13.13%	5.13%
Georgia	38.85%	76.01%	11.28%	5.13%
Illinois	41.79%	76.94%	15.01%	6.79%
Indiana	40.94%	79.00%	12.19%	4.14%
Iowa	46.55%	82.78%	8.87%	3.17%
Minnesota	49.61%	83.12%	12.01%	4.19%
New York	36.86%	73.74%	17.95%	8.18%
North Carolina	38.31%	76.30%	11.58%	5.37%
Ohio	39.72%	78.56%	12.39%	4.92%
Pennsylvania	39.41%	77.78%	14.11%	5.80%
Texas	46.15%	75.42%	11.65%	5.77%
Virginia	44.32%	78.80%	10.80%	4.35%
United States	40.79%	76.55%	13.18%	5.77%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2022, Table B18120 Available at: https://data.census.gov/cedsci/?intcmp=aff_cedsci_banner

^a The calculation for the employment-to-population ratios for people with disabilities = Employed with a disability / (Employed with a disability + Unemployed with a disability + Not in labor force with a disability).

^b The calculation for the employment-to-population ratios for people without disabilities = Employed without a disability / (Employed without a disability + Unemployed without a disability + Not in labor force without a disability).

^c The calculation for the unemployment rate for people with disabilities = Unemployed with a disability / (Employed with a disability + Unemployed with a disability).

^d The calculation for the unemployment rate for people without disabilities = Unemployed without a disability / (Employed without a disability + Unemployed without a disability)..

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Appendix H
DIF Grantee Profiles

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California SWTCIE Project (CSP)



- The California CSP project will build off the College-to-Career program to help people with disabilities obtain CIE through (1) comprehensive CSP services and (2) coordinating activities for 14(c) certificate holders to transform their business models based on evidence-based and emerging practices that lead to CIE.
- **Participant goal:** To increase the number of individuals with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating entering, SWE in obtaining CIE through a wide array of services and supports for participants and family members.
- **System goal:** To build system-level capacity among service providers and build effective partnerships among governmental agencies, service providers, and business leaders.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus inclusion • Employment preparation • Soft skills training • Instruction on skills for living independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training on customized employment and other strategies, services, and supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youths in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92 40 268

Design Features

Industries. Essential workers, green job, home- and community-based services, arts, and transportation and related industries, and field-initiated topic areas
Locations. Two community colleges
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders, local state VR offices, public schools, state agencies

Connecticut Pathways to Integrated Employment (CTPIE) Project



- The Connecticut CTPIE project will build on existing resources to align consumer assessment and career preparedness activities with structured customized training and employment programs, individualized supports, and wraparound services.
- **Participant goal:** To increase opportunities for students, youth, and adults to access career pathways and individualized supports that lead to competitive integrated employment along with enhanced financial stability and social inclusion.
- **System goal:** To build system capacity and establish the collaborative infrastructure required to support the development, implementation, and enhancement of the model to increase sustainable competitive integrated employment options for youth, students, and adults with disabilities.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess participants' skills and mitigate barriers to CIE • Create and expand wraparound services and supports • Offer flexible, customized employment and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide intensive technical assistance and coaching for resource teams • Offer technical assistance to businesses, 14(c) certificate holders, and education staff • Establish training stipends for provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Other adults • Youth and students contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 114 30 356

Design Features

Industries. Essential workers, green jobs, and transportation industries
Locations. Statewide through three regions
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders, Centers for Independent Living, public schools, state agencies

Florida Arts to Integrated Employment (ArtCIE) Project



- The Florida ArtCIE project will leverage work and partnerships associated with the state’s Employment First executive order to increase the state’s system capacity to support individuals’ pursuit of CIE.
- **Participant goal:** To increase the number of adults who transition from SWE to CIE and to increase the percentage of students or youth contemplating SWE to enter CIE.
- **System goal:** To build system capacity to sustain the model over time through increased competencies, partnerships, and renewed business models.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized and flexible services and supports, such as a new virtual reality offering to explore arts-based options, interactive job fairs, and peer mentoring • Rapid response placement services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the competency of direct service personnel to provide career exploration and customized employment • Expand relationships with 14(c) certificate holders and partner with them to develop transformational business plans • Expand relationships with center schools to create a pathway to VR agency and career exploration for youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youth and students contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 160 240

Design Features

Industries. Arts
Locations. Pilot in Washington, Hillsborough, and Duval counties with expansion in later project years
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders and schools

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency’s (GVRA) Community Employment Systems Transformation (CEST)



- The GVRA CEST project will build on existing relationships within and across state agencies to reduce the siloing of information and advance policy and cultural changes resulting in the elimination of SWE and increased CIE for those with disabilities.
- **Participant goal:** To increase CIE opportunities for students, youth, and adults, the CEST project will focus on person-centered service provision and employ DB101 to promote easy access to benefits counseling.
- **System goal:** To elevate the community view of the employability of those with disabilities through technical assistance and collaboration, facilitated by a stakeholder group.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-centered planning through the Discovery method • Intensive benefits counseling and information through DB101 • Inclusive internships • Assistive technology and wraparound services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employers with training on person-centered service delivery and customized employment to build staff capacity • Share trainings and strategies widely through a community of practice and technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 200

Design Features

Industries. The arts and green job industries
Locations. Pilot sites in two metro Atlanta counties, and an implementation site in one rural south-central county
Recruitment sources. Public schools, 14(c) certificate holders, state agencies

SWTCIE Illinois



- SWTCIE Illinois will establish a replicable and scalable model that increases opportunities for CIE among people with disabilities and leads to statewide systems change.
- **Participant goal:** To support youth and adults working in or contemplating SWE to find their “dream job” and coordinate access to VR services through specially trained employment specialists offering evidence-based, person-centered services.
- **System goal:** To provide subgrantee funding to six 14(c) certificate holders to hire and/or reassign agency personnel to program activities directly related to CIE activities. Highly trained employment specialists embedded with the 14(c) certificate holders will share their specialized training. The project will establish a website for resource sharing.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate VR services that support CIE through an emphasis on self-determination • Promote participant community integration through CIE • Coordinate wraparound services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build employment specialist expertise in increasing CIE and addressing challenges to CIE • Develop a website to share evidence-based CIE practices • Support to 14(c) certificate holders for business model transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 159 69

Design Features

Industries. Essential workers, green job, home- and community-based services, arts, and transportation and related industries
Locations. Not yet determined; locations will be within six 14(c) certificate holders
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders, State Board of Education, local school districts, and social media

Supported Employment Plus (SE+) Indiana



- The Indiana SE+ project will expand on current family training services to implement a comprehensive service package that builds state and local capacity to address barriers to CIE for people with disabilities.
- **Participant goal:** To help participants receiving services through SE+ achieve CIE by the end of the grant cycle.
- **System goal:** To build the capacity of state and local providers, case managers, and family members to direct and prioritize services and supports for people with intellectual and development disabilities to obtain CIE.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Employment Awareness Training workshops • Benefits counseling through an enhanced Benefits Information Network • Integrated resource team to coordinate wraparound services • Multilevel peer support system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence-based technical assistance to facility leaders, program leaders, and direct service staff • Offer universal training on VR101 and CIE to staff at each facility • Provide enhanced provider rates for 14(c) certificate holders performing with high fidelity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Adults contemplating SWE • Youths in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 245 180 55 50

Design Features

Industries. Field-initiated topic areas with an emphasis on essential workers and health and wellness workers
Locations. Four pilot locations with seven 14(c) certificate holders
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders, day habilitation programs, and preemployment transition programs

Iowa Blueprint for Change Project



- The Iowa Blueprint for Change project will advance and improve statewide systems so Iowans with disabilities have access to CIE opportunities that lead to economic security.
- **Participant goal:** To increase readiness for and access to CIE among people with disabilities.
- **System goal:** To promote policies, funding, and practices that support CIE as the first and preferred outcome for all Iowans with disabilities.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a statewide direct support professional intermediary to coordinate registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships for enrollees • Offer customized employment, supported employment, and individual placement and support (IPS) services • Facilitate access to assistive technology and resources to enhance participants' life skills and independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and technical assistance to partners in delivering customized employment, supported employment, and IPS services • Revise vocational rehabilitation payment structure to align with best practices for delivering customized employment services • Develop and implement an Iowa Employment First policy and an Iowa Technology First Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Adults contemplating SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 108 228 140

Design Features

Industries. Home and community-based services industry and field-initiated topic areas
Locations. Statewide (specific locations to be determined)
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders, public schools, day care and day habilitation programs

Minnesota Go MN! Project



- The Go MN! project will use a dual-customer strategy that engages both SWTCIE participants and employers in the transportation industry to connect students, youth, and adults with work experience and CIE opportunities through flexible, customized supports.
- **Participant goal:** To increase the number of job seekers with disabilities who have work experience in the transportation industry, and the number of adults and youth with disabilities who transition from SWE to CIE.
- **System goal:** To increase the number of businesses in transportation partnering with VR and meet the workforce needs of the high-growth or high-demand transportation industry in Minnesota.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a customized employment training program and Discovering ME!, a youth-focused, person-centered assessment and planning process • Offer services delivered using the progressive employment model including work-based learning, benefits counseling, and wraparound supports • Services delivered using the progressive employment model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop transformative business models for 14(c) certificate holders • Revamp MN's WIOA Section 511 career counseling, information, and referral process • Engage transportation industry businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400 800

Design Features

Industries. Transportation
Locations. Northeast Minnesota and the Saint Paul–Minneapolis metropolitan area, with plans to later expand to a pilot location in Southwest Minnesota
Recruitment sources. Centers for Independent Living, public schools, and state agencies

New York Promoting Advancement of Competitive Integrated Employment (PACIE) Project



- The New York PACIE project will use a peer-facilitated model through Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to offer an array of comprehensive supports leading to CIE.
- **Participant goal:** To create new CIE opportunities for people with disabilities and to decrease pathways for students and youth with disabilities into SWE.
- **System goal:** To improve the effectiveness and service provision capacity of CILs, vendors, and VR counselors in delivering quality services—particularly customized employment services.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Care Worker Academy to train enrollees for jobs in home and community-based services • Job and internship opportunities in the arts sector • Self-advocacy training, family engagement, benefits planning, peer mentoring, and assistive technology through CILs to support independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with CIL partners to develop a customized employment blueprint • Lead an interagency customized employment collaborative • Support and provide resources to employers that are engaged with the project and providing CIE opportunities to project participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE or contemplating SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 500 750

Design Features

Industries. Home and community-based services, the arts, and field-initiated topic areas
Locations. Six counties across the state
Recruitment sources. Office for People with Development Disabilities, Centers for Independent Living, youth centers and shelters, LGBTQ centers, faith-based institutions, and schools

North Carolina Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (NCSWTCIE) Project




- The NCSWTCIE project will provide best practice community-based employment services including benefits counseling, wraparound services, and customized employment to address barriers to CIE.
- **Participant goal:** To increase access to supported employment services, informational tools, benefits counseling, and career navigation services, and to achieve an increase in CIE.
- **System goal:** To increase CIE employment rates and establish integrated employment training centers that can be replicated across the state.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational tools to participants and their families • Wraparound services and supports • Customized employment opportunities, peer mentoring, and meaningful day activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a stakeholder engagement advisory group • Develop new employer partnerships to offer work-based opportunities • Provide training to all newly hired staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE or contemplating SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300 200

Design Features

Industries. Transportation and green jobs industries and field-initiated, locally driven topic areas
Locations. Statewide through three regions
Recruitment sources. Not specified

Ohio Works4Me Project



- The Ohio Works4Me project will build on their state's Employment First executive order to prioritize community employment for people with developmental disabilities.
- Participant goal:** To provide people with disabilities who are earning or contemplating subminimum wage with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to achieve their full potential in CIE.
- System goal:** To leverage partnerships through the Employment First Task Force to increase access to employment pathways and build local capacity to improve services.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career development services Integrated work experience for participants interested in pursuing CIE, including internship rotations with a vocational training stipend at minimum wage rate Job retention services including technology, wraparound services, and ongoing person-centered planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build partnerships with employers to better understand workforce needs and identify matches Offer technical assistance and trainings to 14(c) certificate holders to become VR providers Provide professional development opportunities for VR staff Increase reimbursement rates for CIE placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults in SWE Adults contemplating SWE Youth in SWE Youth contemplating SWE 	<p>535</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>55</p>


Design Features

Industries. Essential workers and arts industries

Locations. 15 implementation locations that represent rural, urban, and suburban communities

Recruitment sources. County boards of developmental disabilities and 14(c) certificate holders

Pennsylvania Integrated Vocational Engagement and Supports Team (InVEST) Project



- The Pennsylvania InVEST project will work with participants, their families, and employers to support participants' transition from SWE to CIE using a collaborative wraparound model of supports.
- Participant goal:** To support participants' transition from SWE to CIE through a team-based model.
- System goal:** To facilitate the creation of new CIE opportunities for participants across the state and to work with employers to promote best practices for recruiting, onboarding, and managing employees with disabilities.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match each participant with a collaborative resource team Team will work with each participant to identify, develop, and implement person-centered, community-integrated, and goal-directed solutions to meet their needs to achieve CIE and increase their community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct outreach to businesses to establish job shadowing experiences, workplace tours, and employment opportunities for participants Educate employers on the benefits of customized employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults in SWE 	<p>240</p>

Design Features

Industries. Green jobs, transportation, and related industries

Locations. Six implementation sites across the state

Recruitment sources. VR program applicants and VR-eligible people, project partners' networks

Texas Beacons of Excellence



- The Texas Beacons of Excellence project will merge supply-side and demand-side interventions for individuals, providers, and employers to produce a sustainable model to increase CIE.
- **Participant goal:** To provide opportunities for youth contemplating SWE and adults working in SWE to obtain employment experience, supports, and training to access and maintain competitive integrated employment.
- **System goal:** To promote cross-agency collaboration to recommend policies to support CIE and improve collaboration between 14(c) certificate holders, schools, and local businesses to address employment barriers for people with disabilities. Participating school districts and 14(c) certificate holders will receive training and technical assistance to implement evidence-based practices to support CIE.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and job shadowing experiences • Supported and customized employment • On-the-job training and support • Self-advocacy training • Benefits counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and technical assistance to 14(c) certificate holders to become CIE service providers • Training for staff in schools and at 14(c) certificate holders on evidence-based practices for CIE • Increase capacity of 14(c) certificate holders to identify employers and jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 305 117

Design Features

Industries. Essential workers, green job, home- and community-based services, arts, and transportation and related industries, and field-initiated topic areas
Locations. Six 14(c) certificate holders and two school districts in urban, suburban, and rural areas
Recruitment sources. 14(c) certificate holders and school districts

Real Pay for Real Jobs Education and Outreach, Partnership Development, Provisions of Individualized Services, and Capacity Building (RPRJ EPIC)



- Virginia's RPRJ EPIC project will leverage success and best practices from existing RSA projects focused on increasing CIE to divert people from SWE and decrease or eliminate SWE in the state.
- **Participant goal:** To transition and divert adults and youth with disabilities from SWE to CIE through individualized and integrated services and supports.
- **System goal:** To increase system capacity through training and technical assistance to 14(c) certificate holders and implement a value-based purchasing model to incentivize service providers to offer customized employment services.

Interventions		Populations Offered Services	
For participants	For employers, community rehabilitation providers, or state systems	Population	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Resource Teams delivering individualized supports and services • Work-based learning experiences • Education and training opportunities to develop skills for employment • Peer mentoring and family engagement services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-based purchasing model to incentivize CIE • Training and technical assistance for 14(c) employers, VR staff, and other professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in SWE • Youth contemplating SWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 400

Design Features

Industries. Field-initiated locally-driven topic areas
Locations. Two regions in the state: one urban, suburban, and rural and another rural area
Recruitment sources. 14(c) employers and local education agencies

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