

# Work-based Learning for Transition-age Youth: Translating Knowledge to Improve Employment Success

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# Purpose of Session

- Describe RSA projects' design including how to effectively collaborate with key partners to deliver services;
- Identify key work-based learning approaches;
- Discuss potential challenges to move students toward more robust work-based learning opportunities; and
- Identify methods to track and use data to inform program improvements.

# Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstrations

- 5-year research project
  - Random control trial design
- Funded by: U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Awarded to: California, Massachusetts, Maine, **Maryland, Vermont**

# Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstrations

Identify and demonstrate practices, which are supported by **evidence**, in providing work-based learning experiences in integrated settings under the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, in collaboration with State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and other key partners within the local community, to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.



# Way2Work

The Maryland Project

# Way2Work Maryland

**Purpose:** To evaluate the effectiveness of the Way2Work Maryland model on post-school academic and career outcomes for students with disabilities

**Evaluation design:** A randomized control trial recruiting **400 students** with disabilities – half randomized to the treatment or model condition and half to services as usual

The model is implemented at **8 local school districts** throughout Maryland

Participating students are recruited 2 years prior to school exit (either Certificate or Diploma-bound)

Recruit students and implement the model in **2 cohorts:** fall 2017 & fall 2018

**Goal:** Within one year after school exit, at least 90% of the students participating in the intervention will have enrolled in post-secondary institutions or secured competitive integrated employment



# Way2Work Structure & Partners

## Partners

- Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services – DORS (Jill Pierce, project manager)
- University of Maryland (model implementation and fidelity monitoring across sites)
- Local school districts or **LEAs** implement model, collect and enter data, convene inter-agency teams
- Mathematica Policy Research conducts process and outcome evaluation

## Structure & Staffing

- Each participating LEA (8) received grant funds to recruit students and implement the model via MOU with DORS; designate LEA lead to manage site
- UMD staff (5) provide technical assistance, review & fidelity monitoring of model implementation
- Intervention duration by student = 18 to 24 months



# Work-based Learning Approaches

## Features of the Way2Work Model

- **Target population** = students with IEP or 504 plan 2 years prior to school exit
- Early referral to DORS for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) authorization
- A minimum of 3 work-based learning experiences (WBLE) – at least one of which is paid
- Strategic local-level service coordination/collaboration conducted via local inter-agency teams include:
  - *DORS field staff*
  - *LEA representatives*
  - *Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)*

## Work-based Learning Experiences (paid and unpaid)

- LEAs refer students to CRPs for WBLE development and follow along
- Must be of sufficient duration to offer meaningful experience in a community-based integrated setting
- Paid work experience – wages paid by employer



# Way2Work Current Status

## 8 LEA sites active

- Cohort 1 (4) – Fall 2017
- Cohort 2 (4) – Fall 2018

## Total enrollment = 402

- 201 in enhanced services
- 201 in usual services

## Work-based Learning Experiences

- 148 completed WBLES (across x cohort x sites); xx paid
- 55 ongoing WBLES
- Implementation site ranges from 4% - 82% of students completed at least one WBLE to date

## Paid employment

- 50 students across 8 LEA sites secured paid employment



# Intended Outcomes and Future Vision

- Students with disabilities exit school with paid employment or enrollment in post-secondary programs
- Improve linkages between DORS, LEAS, and community-based providers for outreach and provision of pre-employment transition
- Improve the capacity of Maryland community-service providers to deliver work-based learning experiences in integrated settings to students with disabilities
- Sustain Way2Work Maryland model by convening and maintaining local inter-agency teams focused on student engagement, outreach, and service provision
- Address system barriers to facilitate seamless transition for students with disabilities in Maryland



# Linking Learning to Careers

The Vermont Project

# Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) - Vermont

**Goal:** To develop and implement a model that provides work-based learning experiences and postsecondary access for secondary students and otherwise enhances their progress on a successful career path.

## To get there, LLC will deliver:

- Career development support via classroom, small group, & one-on-one services resulting in an individual LLC Plan.
- A continuum of work-based learning experiences.
- Access to postsecondary education, including earning college credit while still in high school.
- Intensive individualized Assistive Technology support.
- Transportation for WBL, employment, & college activities.



# LLC Vermont Structure & Partners

## Structure & Staffing:

- State leadership and coordination by VocRehab VT
- New Career Consultant positions at all 12 district offices
- Two Assistive Technology Specialists dividing the state
- Dedicated LLC Youth Employment Specialists
- Youth teams in every office collaborate to support students

## Essential Partners:

- VABIR – Work-Based Learning delivery
- Community College of Vermont – Postsecondary options
- Vermont Agency of Education – essential school connections
- TransCen – Fidelity monitoring and technical assistance
- Mathematica Policy Research – Evaluation and technical assistance



# LLC Work-based Learning Approaches

LLC will deliver a continuum of work-based learning experiences including:

- At least one formally prepared and evaluated job shadow
- At least one formally prepared and evaluated unpaid internship and/or volunteer experience
- At least one employer-paid job in a competitive, integrated setting

Other WBL activities such as career guest speakers, work site visits, and informational interviews are incorporated



# LLC Current Status

## Staffing:

Full staffing statewide – State leadership, 11 Career Consultants, 2 AT Specialists, 6 Youth Employment Specialists (VABIR) added

## Professional Development:

Project tools developed – LLC Plans, WBL tools, Implementation Guide, data collection tools and guidance, Fidelity Monitoring of all sites on-going

Monthly professional development days with full youth teams, bi-weekly calls, on-going site visits

**Enrollment:** Target of 800 students statewide reached by 12/14/2018

Half enhanced services, half core services

Enhanced services delivery underway

## Evaluation:

Baseline survey data, enrollment data, actual services analysis, WBL (including GPRA measures) and AT services surveys underway, initial comparisons of 'core' and 'enhanced' group comparison



# LLC Intended Outcomes and Future Vision

LLC is designed to achieve these outcomes:

- High school completion
- Competitive, integrated employment
- Postsecondary education and training enrollment
- Confidence and motivation to achieve career goals
- Academic and career planning readiness

**Our vision:**

- Identify systems change implications based on results;  
resource the strategies and action steps needed
- Create exciting new futures for VT students with disabilities



## Diving Deeper:

What practices do you use to offer students quality work-based learning opportunities prior to high school exit?



# Effective Practices

## Maryland:

- Local collaboration between all parties (Maryland Interagency Teams - MIATs)
- State collaboration
- On-going student level engagement
- Training of local CRPs to work with students

## Vermont:

- Established system of transition support for HS students and Core Teams
- Creating strong youth teams – Transition Counselors, Youth Emp. Specialists, Career Consultants
- Building local collaboration with high school leaders and staff
- On-going professional development and opportunities to share best practice among staff
- Data reviews to stay on top of providing actual services to enrolled students



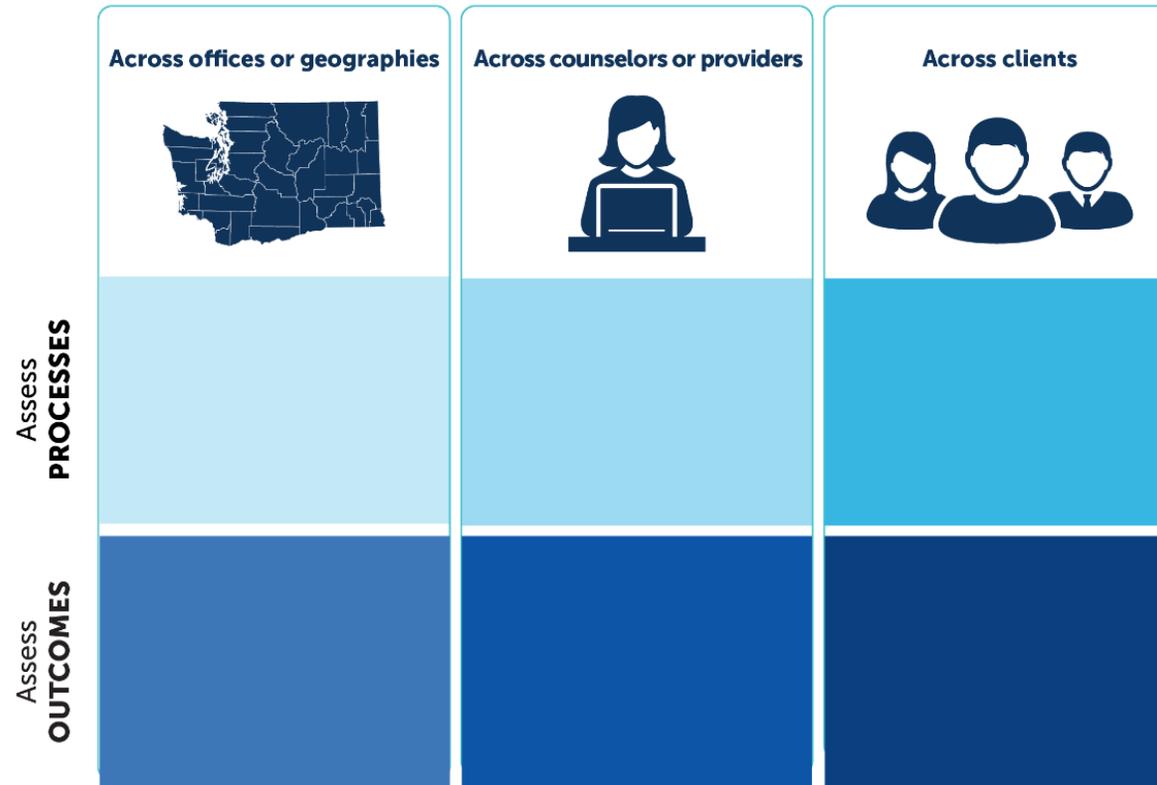
# Program Improvement Is a Continuous Cycle



**Source:** Miller, Sevak, and Honeycutt 2017.  
“Performance Management for State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies Serving Transition-Aged Youth.”

<https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/performance-management-for-state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies-serving-transition-aged-youth>

# A Framework for Program Improvement Priorities



# Program Improvement in the Context of Way2Work Maryland and LLC

## Step 1: Identify the problem

*Processes:* How are services delivered?

*Outcomes:* How is the project meeting RSA goals?

## Step 2: Collect data

Service data from staff

Satisfaction data from students

## Step 3: Conduct analysis

Descriptive statistics on services, WBLEs, and surveys

Perspectives: individual student, all students, offices, providers

## Step 4: Review results

Evaluation team meets with program managers

Program managers meet with staff

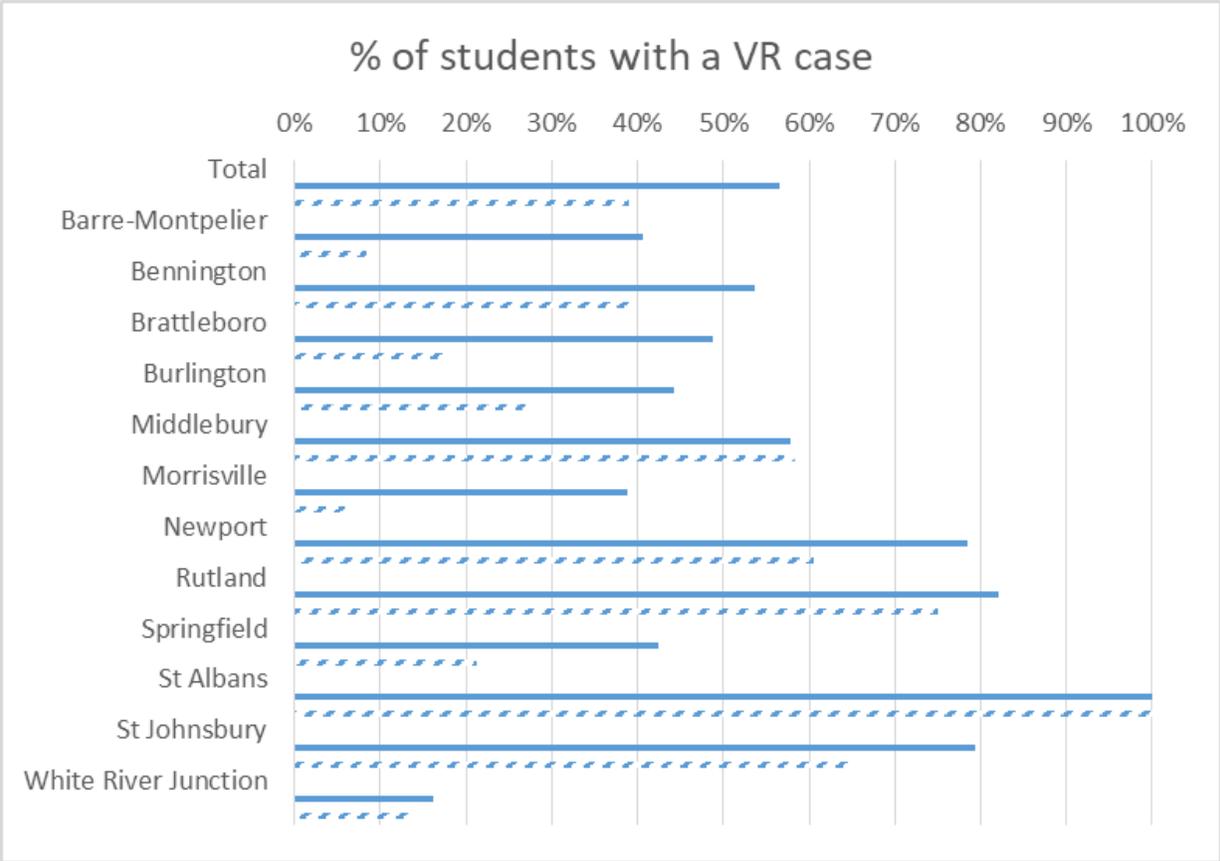
## Step 5: Make decisions

Program managers and staff decide how to improve data entry and service delivery

# Monitoring Report Example From Way2Work Maryland

	Anne Arundel County Public Schools	Carroll County Public Schools	Cecil County Public Schools	Charles County Public Schools	Frederick County Public Schools
Number of students enrolled in enhanced services (count)	26	39	11	28	24
Number of students with data reported this week (count (percent_A4))	26 (100%)	33 (85%)	11 (100%)	28 (100%)	24 (100%)
<b>Enhanced services</b>					
<b>Contact</b>					
Students with contact this week (count and percent_A5 (sum may exceed 100))					
Any	22 (85%)	20 (61%)	9 (82%)	26 (93%)	24 (100%)
<b>Interagency Collaboration</b>					
Contacted agency on student's behalf this week (count and percent_A5 (sum may exceed 100))					
Any	1 (4%)	10 (30%)	7 (64%)	1 (4%)	24 (100%)
Referred student to provider (count and percent_A5 (sum may exceed 100))					
Any	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
Assist student in submitting application (count and percent_A5 (sum may exceed 100))					
Any	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (11%)	0 (0%)

# Monitoring Report Example From LLC



## Diving Deeper:

What data do you use to inform project progress?  
How do you use the data? How do you share the data?



The Sarcastic Fingerhead

# Using Data for Program Improvement

## Maryland:

- Sharing data with VR to improve systems (examples)
- Maintaining fidelity in the interventions
- Recognize gaps and adapt

## Vermont:

- Student-level data reports sorted from our new data management system
- Survey responses from provision of WBL and AT services
- Comparison data for services to 'core' and 'enhanced' students
- Fidelity monitoring checklists and site visits



# Challenges

## Maryland

- CRPs new to this population (students) and service system
- Moving outside of Special Education realm within school systems – new partners
- Maintaining fidelity

## Vermont:

- Outreach and recruitment is different than work previously done by VR counselors; takes time, training, and openness to build
- Implementation of LLC simultaneous with implementing new data mgmt. system
- Core vs. Enhanced—roles clarification with schools
- Hiring of new cadre of Youth Employment Specialists

## Diving Deeper:

What are your challenges to offering quality work-based learning experiences? What solutions have you put in place?

The Giant Isopod



# Sustaining the Intervention

## Maryland:

- Planning for maintaining MIATs starting now
- Policy changes
- Training of CRPs
- Marketing and Awareness

## Vermont:

- Planning the transition for staff and services at project conclusion
- Finding new resources to replace demonstration grant funding
- Policy and practice changes as a result of this project





The *famous* Blob Sculpins