

**FY 18 Strategic Plan**

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|  | **Outcomes** | **Goals** | **Status or Actions** |
| Commitment | Marylanders with I/DD and their families understand Employment First values and practices as the DDA demonstrates the commitment to Employment First in policies, communications, practices, and funding paradigms. | 1. The DDA collaborates to create, monitor, and implement an annual work plan based on the strategic plan for Employment First, including directives from the 2016 Equal Employment Act. | * The strategic work plan is monitored through monthly meetings of the Employment First State Leadership Team, which includes: DDA, DORS, DOD, POG, MACS, MD Works, MD DD Council, DRM, DLLR, CMS, and provider organizations. * Quarterly status reports are sent to stakeholders and reviewed annually at the DDA Employment First Summit meeting. |
| 1. The DDA communicates the principles of Employment First in all public forums. | * The DDA is providing leadership to Regional Office staff on Employment First initiatives. * The DDA is developing Employment First Fact Sheets that will be shared in public forums and available on the DDA website. * The DDA will develop an effective mode of communication with families in regards to Employment First principles and initiatives. |
| 1. The DDA policies represent a commitment to supporting people in competitive, integrated employment by collaborating to remove policy barriers. | * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. One last public comment period will occur in the fall of 2017. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA expectations and CMS final rule. * A communication and training plan will be developed to ensure understanding among stakeholders regarding the expectations of service delivery related to employment and community. |
| 1. Stakeholders are engaged in and provide input on Employment First activities. | * Stakeholders receive regular updates on Employment First activities via: * the DDA website * Social media * the DDA Employment First update mailing list and * through public comment * other identified individualized methods * The Employment First State Leadership Team meets monthly. |
| 1. The DDA tracks, analyzes and reports annually on the progress of the Employment First strategic outcomes including those required by the Equal Employment Act. | * The DDA tracks individual and organizational outcome data via the Employment Data initiative. Results are public and can be viewed at [www.statedata.info/mdda/](http://www.statedata.info/mdda/) * The DDA is a member of the Equal Employment Act committee. A report of activities will be available October 2017. * The DDA will develop an effective mode of communication with families in regards to Employment First principles. |
|  | Marylanders with I/DD and their families are supported to live and work in their communities through collaborative efforts among state and local government agencies, service providers and their communities. | 1. Interagency agreements will exist between State agencies to support competitive, integrated employment outcomes for people with significant needs. | * The DDA partners with MSDE, DORS, MDOD, DHR and DLLR to develop an interagency MOU to support Customized Employment and the increase of employment outcomes. * The DDA is proposing the drafting of a super MOU among state agencies that transcends the current initiatives, but strives to create:   1. Shared branding and messaging   2. Expectation of shared resources   3. Data sharing   4. Create more purposeful collaboration and expectations related to employment for students and adults with disabilities |
| 1. The DDA collaborates with the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board and America’s Job Centers (AJC) throughout Maryland. | * The DDA, DLLR and DORS are collaborating on the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). The DEI seeks to build capacity of 2 local American Job Centers (AJCs (Anne Arundel and Montgomery County) related to Customized Employment services for people with mental health needs and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.  At the completion of a successful pilot, the outcome would be to implement at AJCs throughout the state. |
| 1. The DDA collaborates with the Maryland Department of Transportation and public transportation entities throughout the state. | * The DDA is researching national best practices related to transportation. Further work will be done through State Leadership Team moving forward. * Create a workgroup related to transportation to discuss: * How to get providers to think about transportation differently * Best ways to utilize all public transportation options (i.e. Uber/Lyft) * The pros/cons of staff utilizing their own vehicles * Challenges facing rural areas * Wheelchair transport * How to get employers and community involved in the discussion * Getting federal grants to look beyond the purchase of large buses and to fund smaller vehicles |
| 1. State agencies collaborate to ensure transitioning age youth are prepared for competitive integrated employment upon exiting high school. | * Maryland, along with 8 other states, are currently receiving intensive technical assistance (TA) to support those states' efforts to improve the state-level coordination of transition services that lead to an increase in employment and post-secondary education outcomes for students and youth with disabilities in Maryland.  Maryland's team partners include Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), The University of Maryland, Maryland Department of Disability (MDOD), The Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MDCIE), The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS),  the Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) and The DDA). The partners are developing an interagency MOU to support the use of customized Employment and the increase of employment and post-secondary education for students with disabilities upon transition. The DDA utilizes the Office of Disability Employment Policy’s Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program ODEP EFSLMP subject matter experts to assist with development of the MOU. * The DDA is exploring the addition of a new waiver services that could provide supports earlier to transitioning youth. * The DDA is proposing the drafting of a super MOU among state agencies that transcends the current initiatives, but strives to create:   1. Shared branding and messaging   2. Expectation of shared resources   3. Data sharing   4. Create more purposeful collaboration and expectations related to employment for students and adults with disabilities |
| 1. The DDA participates in the Inter-Agency Transition Council (IATC) and other collaborations for transitioning Youth. | * The DDA is a partner of the IATC and participated in the Transition Conference in March, 2017. * IATC 2018 goals and DDA strategic plan goals will better align |
| 1. State agencies collaborate to develop post high school education and training opportunities for students with I/DD. | * Maryland’s Think College collaborative includes State agencies, institutes of higher education, parents and advocacy organizations to expand the quality and capacity of programs at four-year and two-year institutions for students who might otherwise not be able to gain access. Partners include the Maryland State Department of Education Divisions of Special Education/Early Intervention Services and Rehabilitation Services, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, Maryland Department of Disabilities, Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and University of Maryland Office College of Education. A series of capacity building institutes with State partners begins summer/fall 2017 to identify best practices and provide a coordinated effort across the State. [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net) |
| Policies | Competitive, integrated employment is the first option for all people of working age adults receiving support from DDA. | 1. The DDA and stakeholders will develop a planning tool to document a person’s barriers to competitive, integrated employment. | * Training on new tool will be implemented summer of 2017 to focus on building capacity at CCS Agencies and later extended to service providers. |
| 1. After March 2022, all youth who transition into DDA funded services will be supported in integrated settings with appropriate levels of support. | * Maryland has submitted a transition plan to CMS and is awaiting final approval. |
| 1. The DDA collaborates with the Employment First State Leadership Team and MDOD to develop and implement a plan to phase out supports that utilize subminimum wages for people with I/DD. | * The DDA is a member of the Equal Employment Act Committee, which includes DORS, MDOD, MD DD Council, MACS, MD Works, DLLR, POG and is collaborating on collecting data related to current people receiving subminimum wage and tracking those individuals. The DDA will work with the CCS entities to track individual outcomes via person centered plans. |
| 1. The DDA develops and implements a comprehensive targeted case management system ensuring Employment First practices are discussed for each person receiving supports through DDA. | * The DDA created a workgroup to create a Person Centered Planning tool that was reviewed with stakeholders during two (2) webinars. Stakeholders included: the DDA, MACS, CCS Agencies, Service Providers, SELN, DHR, DRM. Training on new tool will be implemented in the summer of 2017 and will focus on building capacity at CCS organizations and will be extended to service providers. |
| Funding | Marylanders with I/DD, regardless of the level of support they need, have the services and supports to have a meaningful life, including competitive, integrated employment. | 1. The DDA’s funding model properly funds competitive, integrated employment. | * The DDA is currently conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that reviews the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal to align definitions to support Employment First Outcomes. One additional public comment period will follow in fall of 2017. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule. |
| 1. The DDA’s funding model supports the employment needs of people with I/DD, including transportation. | * The DDA will conduct-an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule. The DDA is researching national best practices on transportation funding models used in other states. * The DDA will provide technical assistance to its’ providers to identify ‘bridge funding’ needs related to transportation before new rates are available. |
| C. The DDA’s funding model meets all stages of supported and customized employment. | * The DDA is conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. Definitions were reviewed with stakeholders during a two (2) day Symposium in May 2017. A public comment period will follow. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule |
| 1. The DDA collaborates with other State and Federal agencies to make information available to stakeholders on how to access multiple funding resources to pay for employment supports. | * The DDA is partnering with DORS to develop a flow of services chart that will explain stacked funding structure. * Once a flow of services has been developed, the DDA and DORS will partner on a training initiative for all stakeholders so there is joint understanding of expectations and available services. |
| 1. The DDA creates a funding model that can meet the varied support levels of each person. | * The DDA is currently conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. A public comment period will follow. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule The DDA is researching national best practices on transportation funding models used in other states. Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. |
| * DDA creates a funding model that provides flexible supports and is responsive to an employee’s changing needs on a job. | * The DDA is currently conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. A public comment period will follow. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule The DDA is researching national best practices on transportation funding models used in other states. Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule. * Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. |
| * DDA will create a service model that includes supports for people with I/DD who are not working full time to do things that are meaningful to them. | * The DDA is currently conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. A public comment period will follow. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule The DDA is researching national best practices on transportation funding models used in other states. Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule. * Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. |
| Services | People with I/DD are supported to live and work in their communities through person-centered supports. | 1. The DDA system supports all phases of employment and wrap-around services with competitive, integrated employment as a primary service. | * The DDA is currently conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. A public comment period will follow. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule The DDA is researching national best practices on transportation funding models used in other states. Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule. * Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. |
| * Models of excellence are recognized and shared with all stakeholders. | * The DDA is collecting promising practices from individuals, providers and families statewide and will share them via a link on the website and Employment First update emails. |
| * DDA funded supports utilize Customized Employment as promising and best practices. | * The DDA is establishing training credential and/or certification requirements related to Employment and Day services, utilizing Customized Employment as the preferred method and best practices. * The DDA will also look at BHA staff training requirements to potentially identify alignment potential. |
| 1. Clear definitions for services are created and communicated to all stakeholders. | * The DDA is currently conducting an independent rate setting study to establish provider rates for community based services. The study includes a rate analysis and an impact study that looks at the actual cost of providing community based services. Results of the rate study will be shared with stakeholders. * The DDA is reviewing service definitions for the HCBS Waiver renewal aligning definitions that support Employment First Outcomes. A public comment period will follow. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers DDA regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule The DDA is researching national best practices on transportation funding models used in other states. Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. * Policies and guidance are currently being developed to aide service providers regarding updated expectations and CMS final rule. * Proposed funding model will include the ability to utilize hourly billing to create a meaningful day in the community made up of the services and supports that people need, based on an individualized person-centered plan. |
| * Employment goals are included in the person-centered plan for every person of working age receiving DDA supports. | * Training on new PCP tool will be rolled out in the summer of 2017 and will focus on building capacity at CCS organizations and will later extend to service providers. |
| Training | Marylanders with I/DD receive employment supports from knowledgeable and skilled direct support professionals and providers of employment services. Training and technical assistance are available for all stakeholders. | 1. Staff providing supports receive competency-based trainings and certifications. | * DDA is developing guidelines and policies related to training and certification requirements and will distribute them to providers by July, 2017. |
| 1. Technical assistance is offered for school professionals working with transitioning youth and targeted case management regarding competitive, integrated employment. | * DDA is partnering with MSDE, DORS, MDOD, DHR and DLLR to develop and MOU that will cross state agencies and support the use of Customized Employment, and the increase of employment and post-secondary education for students with disabilities upon transition. * DDA is utilizing ODEP EFSLMP subject matter experts to assist with development of the MOU. * DDA is exploring the addition of a new waiver services that could provide supports earlier to transitioning youth. * DDA residential service providers will be included in Employment First discussions and planning. |
| 1. Comprehensive trainings for people with I/DD and their families are developed and include peer-to-peer mentoring techniques. |  |
| 1. DDA has a system to provide training and technical assistance to providers who have identified needs through provider self-assessment and planning. | 1. DDA is providing a transformation webinar series for all providers that includes 4 webinars and 2 in-person planning meetings to assist with the transformation process. This opportunity is made available through Maryland’s participation in ODEP’s EFSLMP. 2. DDA provides technical assistance through the regional office Employment Liaisons, as well as the Statewide Career and Employment Services Coordinator. The statewide coordinator works with providers to identify ongoing needs and identify resources available to facilitate them. 3. The DDA will continue to identify outside trainings and TA that are needed and identify ways to make them available. |
| Evaluation | Policy changes and funding decisions are data-informed. | 1. DDA sets annual employment outcome benchmarks using data to direct and measure benchmarks. | 1. DDA tracks data using the Employment Data Initiative through partnership with SELN/ICI. Baseline data for individuals and providers is currently being used to identify which providers may need more technical assistance. 2. The DDA is developing a policy to provide expectations and guidance to providers around both provider and individual benchmarks related to employment and community-based non work activities that align with CMS final rule requirements. |
| 1. DDA publicizes individual provider and aggregate employment outcome data. | 1. Ongoing: Updated DDA Employment Data Initiative site was unrolled during 4/21 Employment First webinar series. Providers are able to compare their data, side by side with other providers regionally and statewide. |
| 1. DDA collaborates with other State partners to share data. | 1. DDA is partnering with MSDE to create a shared data system to track data on transitioning youth related to employment and post-secondary education. 2. DDA is part of the Equal Employment Act Committee, which includes DORS, MDOD, MD DD Council, MD Works, MACS, DLLR, POG and is collaborating on collecting data related to current people receiving subminimum wage and steps that will be taken to track those individuals. DDA will be working with CCS entities to track individual outcomes via person centered plans. |