CareerACCESS Implementation Plan

The Labor Force Participation Rate for people with disabilities has changed little since 1971 in spite of Sections 503 & 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, numerous employer education efforts, increased expansion & supports for disability employment programs and much more. So, what’s missing in disability employment policy?

This document explains steps to implement program and policy demonstration projects to improve employment, self-sufficiency and independence for individuals with disabilities.

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Background

Several years ago, the World Institute on Disability (WID) began an effort focusing on disability, economic growth, and prosperity. The result of this effort is the CareerACCESS model. The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), Policy Works, and many others have partnered with WID in the development of our CareerACCESS model. The purpose of CareerACCESS is to impact the dramatic unemployment rates and poverty of people with disabilities by focusing on what’s missing in disability employment policy. By focusing on what’s missing, the CareerACCESS model can help all disability employment related programs become more effective.

The core techniques being offered under the CareerACCESS model can be applied for young adults with disabilities receiving Social Security Insurance (SSI), adults with disabilities on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), students with disabilities transitioning from school to work; clients or customers of state and community rehabilitation programs; people being served by Centers for Independent Living; and, more broadly, people with disabilities who are wondering about their employment potential. Furthermore, CareerACCESS can be pursued either (or both) as a separate initiative or as a supporting one for other disability-related employment efforts.

The core techniques also emphasize better appreciation and understanding around employment potential, competitive job seeking and keeping skills, benefits planning, financial skills and more. The focus is on career building and comports with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) ‘career pathways’ approach. In short, CareerACCESS develops the employment, benefits and economic empowerment of people with disabilities through coaching and individualized career planning. And, that’s where disability employment programs should begin.

CareerACCESS is based on WID’s broader Employment and Economic Empowerment (E3) efforts. Learn more about E3.
The CareerACCESS Model

CareerACCESS, originally targeted for young adults with disabilities, is designed to educate, motivate and empower youth with disabilities, often on disability benefits, so that they are better prepared; and, thereby, more likely to succeed in transitioning from school to competitive integrated employment. CareerACCESS is based on the reality that far too few youth with disabilities make the transition to work successfully. The reasons for their failure to launch are anchored in three basic fears:

- Fears or doubts about their employment potential.
- General lack of knowledge about how to become a competitive job seeker with a disability.
- Fears around losing disability benefits should they seek employment.

CareerACCESS focuses on these missing pieces of the disability employment puzzle by offering strategies and options designed to improve existing disability employment programs and outcomes. The CareerACCESS goal is to help generate self-confident and well-prepared job seekers with disabilities—job seekers who are more likely to become success stories for our nation’s existing education, rehabilitation, and independent living and workforce employment programs. CareerACCESS offers the following three approaches to respond to these roadblocks.

CareerACCESS Coach

- Assists participants to grow the self-confidence, social capital, and other workplace skills required in today’s competitive workplace.
- Offers professional development courses, mentoring, and internships.
- Assists participants to navigate the complex systems that are often required to obtain the goods, services, and supports needed to succeed in a modern economy.

CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plan

- Provides a template to assist CareerACCESS Coaches in developing customized plans to assist young adults with building careers.
- Includes an assets inventory, needs assessment, goals, revision tracking and more.
- Contains timelines, steps, tools and supports needed to meet goals.

CareerACCESS Training and Curriculum

- Provides career readiness and resilience tools to equip participants with new information and tools through WID E3 content.
- Helps all concerned better address the fundamental fears which cause too many people with disabilities to discount the idea of their employment potential.
- Empowers people to make more informed choices while developing more powerful and skillful job seeking skills.

There are two core elements and therefore two implementation possibilities for CareerACCESS:

- The first focuses on pursuing further policy advances to better support the transition of youth and/or adult beneficiaries from benefits to employment.
- The second offers a complementary program of employment coaching and learning, designed to people with disabilities the confidence, skills, vision, plan and supports they need to effectively seek and retain jobs and careers.

Given the challenges inherent in achieving both CareerACCESS components (new policy changes and program supports) simultaneously, it appears to be a better strategy to first pilot or demonstrate the program portions of the CareerACCESS model.

State and local pilots will demonstrate the value and potential of the program elements of CareerACCESS which will serve to further stimulate, inform, and justify needed policy adjustments. However, the WID team is focused on long-term policy changes as the ultimate CareerACCESS objective to enable more individuals access to employment and self-sufficiency.
CareerACCESS Policy Changes

To design and implement the program elements, it is important to understand the greater policy framework so evidence can be captured to reinforce the policy advancements necessary for the ultimate objective of movement into work and careers.

Under the Social Security Insurance (SSI) CareerACCESS Model, legislative reforms will be recommended to accelerate the potential impact of the CareerACCESS program on SSI or SSDI recipients. These benefits policy changes will focus on allowing increased earnings and remove asset limits when work is being pursued by beneficiaries participating under this initiative. Specifically:

- CareerACCESS recommends an increase in Substantial Gainful Activity for CareerACCESS participants to a minimum of 250% of the poverty level.
- Plus, CareerACCESS recommends the establishment of new eligibility requirements which would minimize the negative impact on SSI participants when they are required to prove that they are permanently unemployable in order to receive benefits.

These policy shifts would be extended to CareerACCESS program participants; thereby, helping to insure the financial investment of these proposed reforms.

CareerACCESS is a community driven set of reforms to provide an alternative benefits program for young adults with disabilities, ages 18-30.

CareerACCESS will not change the definition of disability currently used for blind individuals and it makes no changes in the benefits currently available to blind individuals.

By demonstrating pilot programs, CareerACCESS is attempting to offer a “proof of concept” for the following policy adjustments and changes.

1. Establish alternative eligibility entrance requirements eliminating tests for work incapacity. New SSI applicants who are at least 18 and under the age of 28, who meet current SSI income and resource rules auto-enroll into this alternate benefit program. Eligible applicants must meet or equal the current Social Security Listing of Impairments, excluding the test for work incapacity. We propose to test the following draft definition of disability for this program’s eligibility test:

   “A disability is a medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s) that results in marked and severe functional limitations, and is expected to result in death or has lasted or is expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months.”
Current SSI recipients in the 18-year-old redetermination process, and between the ages of 18 and 28 when the pilot begins should be eligible for CareerACCESS if they meet the income and asset rules for new applicants.

2. **Coordinate** new and existing supports to serve young adults with disabilities in compliance with an ICP that meets federal requirements. The ICP would be reviewed and updated at least annually by the participant, Career Coach, and the agencies contributing services. CareerACCESS supports the young adult in developing their career as an alternative to the current SSI program. If a participant becomes non-compliant for any reason, they may exit to the traditional SSI program.

3. **Consider the adoption of a “cash and counseling” approach**, similar to successful Medicaid models, to provide career coaching and other services to participants. In this model, the participant controls the selection of providers for ICP services with their own budget.

4. **Test major simplification of paid work rules** to allow project participants to have use of the federal SSI stipend (in 2016, $733 for an individual, $1100 for a couple) to offset expenses and the high costs of managing disability while building careers. The cash benefit stays the same until the participant’s earnings and stipend combined are more than 250% of the 2016 federal poverty level. When the participant reaches that level, the young adult will have $2,475 per month to work with. For income amounts above this level, the cash stipend ($733) will be reduced $1 for every $3 in earnings. Participant will work and earn competitive wages with their cash stipend supporting the transition.

5. **Streamline income reporting** with an annual process similar to filing taxes. Participants with episodic changes in employment will be able to report those changes when needed.

6. **Allow participants to benefit from work** by eliminating all asset building rules for participants; assets saved and acquired while enrolled in CareerACCESS are held harmless after leaving the program and when applying for other means tested benefits.

7. **Change the overall SSI Program rules**, over time, for all SSI young adults based on the findings and results of the pilot projects.

The design elements for CareerACCESS continue to evolve. The current framework is a compilation of input provided by subject matter experts, policy advocates, and state agency leaders from across the disability community. We seek continued engagement of these experts and advocates to more fully develop the details of the CareerACCESS pilot initiative for young adults receiving SSI.

As inaugural pilots unfold, both the resulting outcomes and knowledge gained will serve to further refine and support these policy ideas/recommendations.

An alternative approach is available under the **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) CareerACCESS Model** which emphasizes better appreciation and understanding about disability employment potential, disability centric competitive job seeking and keeping skills, benefits
planning, financial skills and more. In short, CareerACCESS develops the employment, benefits and economic empowerment of people with disabilities.

CareerACCESS can focus separately on either the SSI or SSDI situations, they can be pursued either independently or combined as a broader effort. The combined option might be chosen when focusing on those individuals with disabilities who receive both SSI and SSDI benefits; or, when a dual strategy is desired.

The core techniques being offered in the CareerACCESS Model can be replicated more broadly for other non-working people with disabilities including: students transitioning from school to work; clients or customers of state and community rehabilitation programs; recipients of Workers’ Compensation, people being served by Centers for Independent Living; and, by American Job Centers serving people with disabilities.

Under the SSDI CareerACCESS Model, legislative reforms are recommended to accelerate the potential impact of the CareerACCESS program on SSDI beneficiaries. The following proposed SSDI policy changes will focus on allowing increased earnings and remove asset limits when work is being pursued by beneficiaries participating under this initiative.

- CareerACCESS recommends an increase in Substantial Gainful Activity for CareerACCESS participants to a minimum of 250% of the poverty level.
- After reaching that earning level, benefits would be reduced by $1 for every $3 earned.
- Plus, CareerACCESS recommends the establishment of new SSDI definition requirements which would minimize the negative impact on SSDI participants when they are required to prove that they are permanently unemployable in order to receive benefits.

Further, CareerACCESS is positioned to pilot how to expand the mission of SSDI from a wage replacement program to a program that safeguards against the high cost of disability and enables workers to connect to work, stay at work, or return to work.

These policy shifts would be extended to CareerACCESS program participants; thereby, helping to insure the financial investment of these proposed reforms. As inaugural program pilots unfold, both the resulting outcomes and knowledge gained will serve to further refine and support these policy recommendations.

“Exploring an Alternative Social Security Definition of Disability” White Paper

This white paper explores the various issues contributing to the low employment rates of both SSI and SSDI beneficiaries; and, offers policy and program strategies designed to help increase their employment transitions. Specifically, the white paper calls to replace the phrase “inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity” as part of the inability to work definition for disability in modernizing the approach crafted in 1955.
CareerACCESS Program Elements

“Any of us can acquire a disability at any time, and all of us have a stake in making equal employment opportunity the rule rather than the exception.” - Senator Tom Harkin

Based on current Social Security disability programs, people with disabilities are required to prove their inability to work to be eligible for benefits. As a result, those who receive benefits face the challenge of balancing their need for financial assistance, healthcare access, personal attendant care and accommodation requirements with their desire to work and reach their full potential in the workforce. Additionally, they often face low expectations of their abilities, a lack of employment experience, and an extremely challenging job market as well as the challenge of their disability.

The Social Security disability rolls grow annually while the employment rates of people with disabilities stay the same.

CareerACCESS has been designed to counter these trends and pave the way for people with disabilities to be able to live independently and strive in their careers. CareerACCESS will provide adult coaching, counseling, and employment support services to achieve this goal. The key CareerACCESS program elements are detailed in the following sections:

- CareerACCESS Coaches
- CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plans
- CareerACCESS Training Program

CareerACCESS Coaches

CareerACCESS participants will work with specially-trained coaches. CareerACCESS Coaches can be either new positions or existing ones. In either case, they must be trained for this role so that they can respond effectively to the missing pieces of disability employment policy. These skills are focused on developing employment, benefits and economic empowerment skills. The CareerACCESS Coaching methodology is designed to support and ensure that each CareerACCESS participant discovers and achieves their employment potential. In addition, the CareerACCESS Coaching component will help individuals navigate the complex systems that are often required to obtain the goods, services, and supports needed to succeed in their careers.

CareerACCESS Coaching techniques will also help participants, and young adults with disabilities in particular, grow the self-confidence, social capital, and other workplace skills required in today’s marketplace. Professional development courses, peer mentoring relationships, and internships will be available to CareerACCESS participants through the CareerACCESS Coaches. This CareerACCESS Implementation Plan defines in greater detail
the key competencies and subjects needed to be learned by Career Coaches, offers a position comparison chart, as well as recommendations on how to integrate the position into an existing organization and programs.

**CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plans**

In support of the CareerACCESS effort, an Individualized Career Plan (ICP) is used to support the interactive process as well as plan for and track progress. Recognizing that a CareerACCESS Coach provides a variety of services focused on aiding individuals in identifying actionable steps toward a meaningful career experience, it is important to capture the effort in a written document.

Furthermore, in support of the recommended policy changes, the CareerACCESS ICP should become a federally-approved document that is a requirement to remain eligible for continuing benefits. Until the point in time when CareerACCESS is integrated into the federal structure, the CareerACCESS ICP will be piloted to demonstrate its value in guiding the career planning and evaluation process. This *CareerACCESS Implementation Plan* provides a sample CareerACCESS ICP and further guidance on its use.

**CareerACCESS Training Program**

The CareerACCESS approach of Coaches and ICPs comes with training for the professionals who are implementing the model to help ensure professionals obtain coaching and ICP skills to integrate into their work. Onsite or online sessions are provided for professionals on CareerACCESS Coaching techniques, developing personal employment vision for a client, and completing the CareerACCESS ICP.

CareerACCESS is also complimented by WID’s evidence-based curriculum, first created at the University of California, Berkeley and replicated at other locations. As a package of instructional topics on fundamental skills development in both employment ambition and workplace competitive skills, the training reverses the negativity people with disabilities have encountered around building their employment expectations and ambitions. WID also trains professionals on how to use the curriculum as embedded ICP activities to create a robust CareerACCESS Coaching, ICP and Training powerhouse of tools and approaches that delivers fresh and empowering employment opportunities.

The CareerACCESS Training Program also addresses the central disability and employment strategies which need to be discussed and resolved in order to build self-confidence. By exploring the fundamental truths about the world of work and how to manage a disability in that world, the curriculum is complimented by content to understand and develop competitive workplace skills in a modern economy.
Our WID team guides professionals through the curriculum in a “train the professionals” format in order for the curriculum to be taught locally by empowered CareerACCESS Coaches with enhanced toolkits of proven training content.

Learn more about the curriculum on the WID E3 Empowerment page

In addition, other resources and materials are discussed in this CareerACCESS Implementation Plan.
CareerACCESS Coach Roles and Responsibilities

In order to establish, monitor and manage participants’ compliance to their ICPs and assist them in seeing their employment potential and finding their way to their career goals, CareerACCESS will provide CareerACCESS-trained Career Coaches to participants. The CareerACCESS Coach’s main goal is to support and ensure that each CareerACCESS participant is prepared to meet or exceed their potential and self-identified career goals. CareerACCESS-trained Career Coaches will help CareerACCESS participants access the complex systems that can support their employment preparation and career development. CareerACCESS Coaches will help participants grow the self-confidence, social capital, and other workplace skills required in today’s marketplace. Professional development courses, peer mentoring relationships and internships will also be available to CareerACCESS participants.

Overview of the Job Duties of a Career Coach

Whenever SSI recipients doubt that anyone would ever hire them and/or fear the loss of benefits, discussing the realities around these intertwined issues starts the process. The second step is helping SSI youth recipients learn about the realities of the world of work. Career Coaches methodically teach these skills. Such learning further enhances the employment self-confidence of the youth being coached. Additional program tools and strategies are available including career planning, education/employment supports, internships and more.

With these missing components addressed, existing employment supports like the Ticket to Work, Vocational Rehabilitation programs and other employment focused supports will receive better motivated and prepared clients to serve. Improved employment outcomes depend on our customers’ growing belief in both their employment potential and workplace knowledge.

A system to appropriately prepare CareerACCESS Coaches for their roles will be provided. It will be delivered through network of trainers, as well as web-based curriculum materials. Only formally trained and certified CareerACCESS Coaches will be placed in these roles.

CareerACCESS-trained Coaches assist participants in identifying personal goals, strengths, aptitudes, skills, and weaknesses, in part to develop leadership skills and plan career pathways.

Duties include:

- Conducting a personal assessment of the personal and professional needs of the young adult;

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1 Materials adapted and edited from www.study.com
• Providing opportunities for career exploration and the development of personal networks to support education and work success;
• Assisting participants in selecting career goals and developing a plan that identifies all services and supports needed for success;
• Including benefits planning to manage SSI, SSDI and health-related benefits as part of the plan;
• Development of the technical and soft skills needed to connect to a job or career; and,
• Placement supports for initial employment and career path employment, to include mentoring and other supports.

In helping individuals with disabilities select career choices, paths, supports and education needed to succeed in them, the CareerACCESS Coach empowers participants with tools and resources to navigate benefits, health care systems, and employment discrimination protections while planning their career paths. Examples of tools and resources will be made available to the CareerACCESS Coaches when working with participants. The work may include training and providing feedback on resumes and cover letters, strategizing for a successful job interview and searching for employment opportunities.

By choice, the relationship can be long term in many cases and can include mentoring and other collegial interactions that build self-confidence and client competitiveness in the marketplace.

CareerACCESS trained coaches will also focus on the fundamental fears and limited knowledge which make our youth with disabilities on SSI in particular very reluctant to consider and seek employment. Here are some of the subjects, selected from the WID training program, which will be addressed in order to overcome these negative thoughts about their employment potential created by the disability experience.

• The Emotional Response
• Why Choose Work
• The Disability Experience and Creating a New Experience
• A New Perspective for the Workplace
• Disability Pride and Self-Determination (consumerism)
• Discrimination Threat and Performance
• The Disability Message You Want to Send
• Accommodation and Disclosure Strategies
• A Brief Disability History
• Disability Employment Laws and Social Security Work Incentives
• How to Represent the Disability Demographic and Voices of Experience
• Workplace Presence (soft skills—marketing yourself)
• Workplace Practices (medium skills—rules of the road)
• Workplace Job Skills (hard skills or job-specific skills)
• Workplace Patterns (understanding workplace differences)
• Workplace Protocols (finding and winning the job)
• Workplace Pathways to Employment (programs that can help)
• Workplace Planning (developing your personal plan)
An accompanying reader or self-help guide will be available for Coaches to further guide their clients through these subjects.

The CareerACCESS Coach has a variety of clients, to include those unemployed for long periods, students and young adults with disabilities, and those looking to change or upgrade careers. Hence, short term or long-term services can also be episodic depending on individual needs.

The method for building and growing this client relationship is the CareerACCESS ICP. This experience and relationship can be intense and multi-faceted until and after an initial job connection. Available and consistent follow-up and follow-along can be the norm not the exception, with the CareerACCESS Coach assisting to revise the ICP, or to make additional training become available for the chosen career path. This relationship is core to the ICP process and its success. In particular, “timely progress reviews” with the CareerACCESS Coach emphasize analysis of what is working for the participant and what needs to be adjusted to achieve the ICP objectives.

A CareerACCESS-trained Coach also guides the participant with obtaining additional services that are included in an approved ICP. For example, supported and customized integrated employment services, specific training, or benefits planning services may all be appropriate for ICP inclusion.

**Career Coaching Services**

CareerACCESS Coaches, under full implementation of the initiative, will be responsible for the following services:

- Working with the participant, jointly creating the ICP with specified goals, objectives, activities and timeframes.
- Supporting participants in accessing leadership development, career readiness and resilience training and curriculum.
- Coordinating new and existing supports to serve individuals with disabilities in compliance with an ICP.
- Reviewing and updating the ICP, to include the participant and the agencies (contributing services).

A *CareerACCESS Coach Job Description* is available on the following page for use in CareerACCESS pilot locations.
The CareerACCESS Coach has a variety of resources already available through local services, including State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and American Job Centers. Further, school and community based services are available and tailored for young adults with disabilities in transition from school to work. CareerACCESS extends training and curriculum further to incorporate career readiness for successful work and resilience for career success. This document provides recommendations for curriculum and training to be used in pilots. CareerACCESS is also researching additional curriculum components to continue differentiating the model and the ability for the CareerACCESS Coach to help young adults build new approaches to recurring employment barriers.

CareerACCESS also recognizes the importance of engaging employers in all stages of its design and implementation. We must work closely with organizations with established relationships with a diverse range of employers, such as the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development. In order to help ensure employment outcomes of those participating in CareerACCESS, new and advanced employer recruitment and evaluation practices and techniques will be identified and demonstrated. CareerACCESS Coaches will receive training to help develop or reinforce ties with these organizations.

CareerACCESS Coach Job Duties / Description

Job duties to be performed by the CareerACCESS-trained Coach:

- Work with the participants, jointly create the ICP with specified goals, objectives, activities and timeframes.
  - Assist in identifying personal goals and planning career moves
  - Assist in completing ICPs
- Support the participants and their families on how to understand and manage the emotional fears, lack of employment self-confidence, and lack of knowledge on managing the system when seeking employment (SSI, SSDI, Education, Workforce System, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.).
- Support participants in accessing leadership development, career readiness and resilience training and curriculum content.
- Coordinate new and existing supports and provide direct assistance to serve participants in compliance with an ICP.
  - Provide feedback on resumes and cover letters
  - Support search for new employment opportunities
  - Assist participants in strategizing for a successful job interview
  - Hold workshops, network and maintain relationships to actively promote career opportunities
- Review and update ICP, to include the participants and agencies that are contributing services.
  - Work with participants could span a week to several years, depending on an individual’s needs and plan design
Who Can Become a Career Coach?

Professional vocational support services are available for a variety of needs. It is important to understand the difference between the myriad of professional and paraprofessionals who serve young adults and adult with disabilities in their efforts to achieve independence through employment. The titles may depend in part on the system that is using them – education, for instance, traditionally calls these individuals counselors while the rehabilitation system calls the individuals job coaches or career coaches. CareerACCESS Coaches can be trained from these ranks; or, new positions can be employed.

It is important to examine the characteristics of each of these position titles and to identify how the CareerACCESS-trained Coach may offer more.

**Job Coach**

A job coach is an individual who is employed to help people with disabilities learn, accommodate, and perform their work duties. A job coach may work with individuals one-on-one and/or in a small group. In addition to working on skills related to performing specific job tasks, a job coach also helps with interpersonal skills necessary in the workplace. The coach will assess the worker’s strengths and needs or may rely on an already completed assessment.

Usually a job coach will work with an individual both in and outside of the workplace. Before entering a place of employment, many individuals with disabilities can benefit from specific training to help them learn what to expect in the work environment. In this case, the job coach may visit the place of employment to understand the requirements of the job and work environment. The coach will then work with the individual to prepare. The job coach may also accompany the individual to the work site. This allows the coach to directly observe the abilities of the employee and any areas needing improvement. The employee is able to receive immediate feedback and assistance.

While the benefits of a job coach to an individual are evident, job coaches also benefit employers. By helping to support employees with disabilities, job coaches free up personnel time which would otherwise be needed for training and hopefully improve the experience for all involved.

**Career Coach**

A general or traditional career coach (not the CareerACCESS type) may come from a variety of coaching models. For example, life coaches assist individuals in defining or redefining life objectives while career coaches exist to aid in the enhancement of the work and career experience.

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1 https://www.carautismroadmap.org/the-role-of-a-job-coach/

2 https://www.carautismroadmap.org/the-role-of-a-job-coach/
That National Association of Social Workers offers this review\textsuperscript{3} of traditional career coach services:

- Assess your behavioral style. Get an objective look at how and why you work the way you do, then learn how to leverage your strengths in work and life.
- Create an action plan to achieve your goals. In each coaching call, you’ll identify 2-3 objectives for the following week so you’ll continually see progress.
- Eliminate clutter from distractions. Coaches utilize tools and assessments to help you achieve greater clarity and focus on what matters most to you. If you have trouble saying “No,” a coach can help you set boundaries and have more control over your life.
- Obtain support and structured guidance through a transition. Whether you’re looking for a new job or striking out with a business of your own, a coach will help you strategize and execute your plan.
- Have an unyielding champion. A coach is always on your side, wanting what you want and encouraging you to get there. When you falter or question your ability to reach your goals, your coach will motivate you to keep going.
- Work with someone who will listen attentively, but not be afraid to tell it like it is. Although a coach is your undeterred supporter, he or she will also be straightforward and honest. Coaching is grounded in inquiry and coaches will ask the tough questions to get you to the heart of the issue.
- Get “unstuck.” Using active listening, structured goal setting, and undeterred encouragement, a coach will help you overcome the hurdles that are in your way.

In summary, mainstream Career Coaches help a client identify personal goals, develop leadership skills and plan career moves. Daily duties may include helping clients hunt down new employment opportunities, providing feedback on resumes or cover letters and strategizing for a successful job interview. They also tend to hold workshops, network and maintain relationships to actively promote career opportunities. Career Coaches tend to work with clients for a week to several years, depending on an individual's needs. In addition to students and recent graduates, clients may include the unemployed as well as individuals with physical disabilities or those looking to change or upgrade careers.\textsuperscript{4} And, most lack disability specific knowledge and techniques. Generally, they lack disability specific expertise.

\textit{Career Counselors}

With a variety of definitions available for career counseling, we provide this view\textsuperscript{5} from Sokanu, a career matching platform.

A career counselor is an individual trained to aid people with their career choice. Whether the person is new to the working world, or simply desires a change of profession, the career

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{3}http://careers.socialworkers.org/findajob/articles/coach.asp
\textsuperscript{4}http://study.com/articles/Career_Coach_Job_Description_Duties_and_Requirements.html
\textsuperscript{5}https://www.sokanu.com/careers/career-counselor/}
counselor will be able to guide them in the best possible direction. Beginning with interviews to
determine their client's skills, underlying drive, and personality traits, the career counselor gains
an understanding to better serve them in their search for the right career.

A thorough history of client employment, education, skills, personality, and interests is necessary
to ensure the best possible result, all of which is gained through the thorough interviewing
process of the clients. The information is then applied in job searches using all available
technology and resources.

Career counselors are responsible for having knowledge of the skills needed in various fields, the
average salary of each field, and the requirements of each field. After they have assessed a client
they will then match them up with a field suitable for their skills and personality, creating the
most profitable match possible in terms of job satisfaction and monetary earnings.

Most career counselors will hold a master's degree in counseling. The requirements can vary by
state or country, with a degree in counseling being the common theme.

Most career counseling programs have specific courses in relationships, cultural and social
diversity, human growth and development, professional identity, and research and program
evaluation. Most master's degree programs will also demand supervised clinical counseling
experience.

Licensed career counselors are often expected to continue their learning in order to maintain their
license. Further learning can include seminars, workshops, graduate studies and personal
studies; all to strengthen their own education and the service level they can provide to their
clients.

**Work Incentives (or Benefits) Counselors**

Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (WIPA) is a step by step process to assist people with
disabilities, receiving benefits from Social Security, with understanding how employment will
affect their Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability
Insurance (SSDI) and other benefits they may receive. WIPA also helps Social Security
beneficiaries to understand how they can increase their financial independence.

To be eligible to receive WIPA services an individual must be receiving benefits from Social
Security based on a disability (SSDI or SSI), at least 14 years old, not yet eligible to receive full
retirement benefits, and employed, seriously considering employment, or working toward
employment through school or training.

The beneficiary will work with a Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC), who will
help each beneficiary to understand, and plan for, the effect employment may have on benefits,
including:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash benefits
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) cash benefits
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Other Health or Disability Insurance
• Unemployment Benefits
• Veterans Benefits
• Housing Subsidies
• Food Assistance

The CWIC will assist beneficiaries through the development of a Work Incentives Plan so that the individual can make the best use of the many options available to support his or her employment goals.⁶

⁶ http://miwipa.org/
Coaching and Counseling Services Comparison Chart

Now that each role has been reviewed, the comparison table provided below is designed to help understand the difference between the CareerACCESS approach and a standard job coach, career coach or counselor and benefits counselor.

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<td>Income Impact Analysis on Disability Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Building Supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Term Follow Along</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Creating the CareerACCESS Coach Position

Moving forward, CareerACCESS pilots will be able to both create a new position, entitled a CareerACCESS Coach; and/or train existing staff in these skills. Early adopters of the position may choose to add the CareerACCESS Coach functions to a current position. *It is important to realize this is a position that is offering coaching services in a new, long-term support model.*

The list of agencies and programs below are likely partners to pilot the CareerACCESS model in their area. CareerACCESS’s Coaches, as described above, can be either created or adapted from their ranks.

- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies: Counselors
- Special Education Transition Programs: Transition Coordinators
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Career or Peer Counselor(s)
- American Job Centers: Representatives
- Disability Employment Initiative: [Disability Resource Coordinators](#) and [DEI information on WorkforceGPS](#)
- Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) Initiative:
  - Arkansas PROMISE 2013
  - California PROMISE (CaPROMISE)
  - Consortium of States—Utah, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Colorado and Arizona
  - Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment (ASPIRE)
    - Maryland PROMISE Promoting the Employment Readiness of SSI Minors
    - New York State (NYS) PROMISE
    - Wisconsin PROMISE
- Personnel working in [Employment First](#) states
- Role of Peer Mentoring Programs and Career Coaching Services

In all of these roles, the CareerACCESS Coach would be responsible for working with participants, whether SSI, SSDI, combined, or another CareerACCESS Model, in the completion of an assessment, career plan, and identified career readiness curriculum. The template for the career plan is provided in the next section.
CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plan

Recognizing that a CareerACCESS Coach provides a variety of services focused on aiding an individual with a disability in identifying actionable steps toward a lived career experience, it is important to capture their attention to the program through attractive and meaningful messaging. Part of this attractiveness is access to a CareerACCESS Coach and the ease of use of a flexible and useful CareerACCESS ICP. *When fully implemented, the CareerACCESS ICP will be a federally-approved document that is a requirement to remain eligible for the benefits program.*

Until the point in time when CareerACCESS is integrated into the federal structure, the CareerACCESS ICP will be piloted to learn of its value in guiding the career planning and evaluation process. Other ICP templates approximating this design can be considered during the pilot phase.

The primary goal of the CareerACCESS ICP is to assist participants with building a career; the ICP contains timelines, steps, tools and supports needed to meet an overarching career path goal. The ICP will also direct individuals to access CareerACCESS readiness curriculum, also described in the following sections.

The CareerACCESS model ICP uses the structure of the [Individualized Learning Plan](http://www.wid.org) developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth and augmented with adult coaching concepts. After feedback is received and the ICP moves to implementation in a pilot location, the content will be moved to a professionally-designed, accessible document and online form.

CareerACCESS ICP Overview

The CareerACCESS ICP contains the following sections. Details for each are provided on the following pages.

- Section 1: Tracking Information
- Section 2: Contact Information
- Section 3: Assets Inventory
- Section 4: Needs Assessment Information
- Section 5: Goals
- Section 6: Agreement
- Section 7: Review and Revision Tracking
SECTION 1: TRACKING INFORMATION

Tracking Number Date

SECTION 2: CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name Middle Name Last Name Client Number
Street Address 1 Street Address 2 City State Zip
Home Phone # Mobile Phone # Email Address
CareerACCESS Coach Name Email Work / Mobile Phone #

SECTION 3: ASSETS INVENTORY

Emotional/Self-Confidence
Educational
Workplace Soft Skills
General Career Dreams
Technical Workplace Skills/Credentials
Experiences
Other

SECTION 4: NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

What are / were your favorite subjects in school?

List any activities or hobbies that you participate in (including arts, sports, student organizations or community service projects):

Check all that apply:

Supportive Services Used

__ Accommodations, general __ Accommodations, job specific
__ Identification(s) __ Social Security Work Incentives Planning
__ Benefits Management __ Transportation
__ Housing __ Childcare
__ Child Support/Alimony __ Medical/Dental
__ Mental Health Treatment __ Substance Abuse Treatment
Disability Disclosure

Workforce Development (Career Assessment):

List three careers that interest you:

List any jobs or volunteer experiences you have had and your level of enjoyment in the role(s):

Please complete the following sections as applicable:

- Continuing Education (HS Diploma, GED, Post-2nd Ed) Specify: _____________
- Occupational Skills Training (Certification) Specify: ___________________
- Workplace Learning (Internships, Summer Jobs, etc.) Specify: ___________________
- Employment Placement (Unsubsidized Employment) Specify: ___________________
- Other: __________________

SECTION 5: GOALS

CAREER PATH CAREER GOAL:

[Insert overarching Career Path Career Goal]

OTHER GOALS:

[The CareerACCESS Coach should guide the client through the planning process. Goals for consideration should include “Preparing tools for the job search,” “Creating a professional network,” and “Finding a professional mentor.” Each CareerACCESS participant will conclude the ICP with a “CareerACCESS Readiness Training and Professional Development” goal.]

Goal #1:

Objectives/Action Steps:

Person/Organization Responsible: Due/Completion Date:

Goal #2:

Objectives/Action Steps:

Person/Organization Responsible: Due/Completion Date:

Goal #3:

Objectives/Action Steps:
Person/Organization Responsible: Due/Completion Date:

Goal #4:

Objectives/Action Steps:

Person/Organization Responsible: Due/Completion Date:

Goal #5: Career Readiness Training (Required for all CareerACCESS Participants)

Objectives/Action Steps:

Person/Organization Responsible: Due/Completion Date:

Notes:

SECTION 6: AGREEMENT

Client Signature Date

Case Manager Signature Date

SECTION 7: REVIEW AND REVISION TRACKING

ICP Review/Revision Dates:

Date: 1st_________ 2nd_________ 3rd_________ 4th_________

Initials: _____/_______ _____/_______ _____/_______ _____/_______
CareerACCESS Training Program

In support of the Career Coach and Individualized Career Plan, specific training and content is provided to CareerACCESS professionals for participants. Based on WID’s broader Employment and Economic Empowerment (E3) model, CareerACCESS training and content is provided to CareerACCESS partners. WID E3 is a new disability empowerment model and set of resources to more effectively support job-seekers with disabilities through effective policies and programs. The model is delivered through three empowerment offerings – Employment, Benefits, and Economic.

Employment Empowerment: Includes WID’s evidence-based skills development curriculum and the CareerACCESS Coaching and Individualized Career Plan. Collectively this created a powerhouse set of tools and approaches to integrate innovative and empowering employment opportunities.

The Employment Empowerment curriculum and materials directly addresses the following core or central disability and employment strategies, which often need to be discussed and resolved in order to build self-confidence (included earlier in the CareerACCESS Coach section).

- Why Choose Work
- The Disability Experience and Creating a New Experience
- A New Perspective for the Workplace
- Disability Pride and Self-Determination (consumerism)
- Discrimination Threat and Performance
- The Disability Message You Want to Send
- Accommodation and Disclosure Strategies
- A Brief Disability History
- Disability Employment Laws and Social Security Work Incentives
- How to Represent the Disability Demographic and Voices of Experience

By exploring the fundamental truths about the world of work and how to manage a disability in that world, the curriculum is complimented by content to understand and develop competitive workplace skills. Specifically, the following workplace topics are presented and discussed:

- Workplace Presence (soft skills—marketing yourself)
- Workplace Practices (medium skills—rules of the road)
- Workplace Job Skills (hard skills or job-specific skills)
- Workplace Patterns (understanding workplace differences)
- Workplace Protocols (finding and winning the job)
- Workplace Pathways to Employment (programs that can help)
- Workplace Planning (developing your personal plan)
The online instructional materials are available at the College to Careers webpage.

The evidence demonstrating the potential impact on students with disabilities is in this Evidence about This Course PDF.

**Benefits Empowerment:** Includes state-specific disability benefits planning training and resources. Created by WID, the industry-leading benefits and work incentives training and web-based “Disability Benefits 101” (DB101) are guides to demystify the Social Security benefits maze and empower individuals to make benefits work in their favor.

Our Benefits & Work Incentives content guides individuals on disability benefits in order to better navigate the system for improved outcomes. Topics covered in this section focus primarily on SSI, with recognition of adults who may also be receiving SSDI benefits. Some of the related work incentives are detailed below.

- **Earned Income Exclusion and General Income Exclusion:** Social Security does not count the first $65 of the earnings an individual receives in a month, plus one-half of the remaining earnings. This means that we count less than one-half of your earnings when we figure your SSI payment amount. Social Security applies this exclusion in addition to the $20 general income exclusion. The $20 general income exclusion is first applied to any unearned income.

- **Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) and Blind Work Expenses (BWE):** Deduct the cost of certain impairment-related expenses needed to work from earnings when an individual is performing substantial work. Examples include wheelchairs, certain transportation costs and specialized work-related equipment. BWE is earned income that a blind individual uses to meet the expenses of working. This income does not count when Social Security determine SSI eligibility and payment amount. The expenses do not need to be related to blindness and include earned income used to pay income taxes, meals consumed during work hours, transportation costs or guide dog expenses.

- **Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE):** For individuals under age 22 and regularly attending school, Social Security does not count up to $1,780 of earned income per month when determining SSI payment amount. The maximum yearly exclusion is $7,180. These amounts are for the year 2015; they may be adjusted each year based on the cost-of-living. Access Social Security’s SEIE Video to learn more.

- **Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS):** A plan to achieve self-support allows an individual to use income and/or things one owns to reach a work goal. For example, you can set aside money to go back to school, or to get specialized training for a job or to start a business. Social Security does not count the money or resources set aside under an approved PASS when deciding an individual’s initial or continuing eligibility for SSI.
Having a PASS may help someone qualify for SSI or may increase the amount of an SSI payment. Learn more.

- **Section 1619(a) and (b):** Section 1619(a) of the Supplemental Security law permits people to continue to receive an SSI payment while they work. Under Section 1619(b), an individual may continue to be eligible for Medicaid coverage. If a beneficiary is eligible under section 1619, they can receive a SSI cash benefit for up to 2 months while in a Medicaid facility or a public medical or psychiatric facility.

- **Medicaid Buy-In:** Medicaid Buy-In program continues to provide workers with disabilities an opportunity to improve their economic well-being and achieve a better life. Inspired through the independent living movement, the Medicaid Buy-In program is an optional State Medicaid benefit group for workers with disabilities who have earnings in excess of traditional Medicaid rules. So people with disabilities who would be ineligible for Medicaid because of earnings can work and access the services and supports they need. Ideally, it means workers with disabilities do not need to choose between healthcare and work. Learn more.

- **Trial Work Period (adults):** The trial work period allows an individual to test their ability to work for at least 9 months. During the trial work period, the individual will receive their full disability benefit regardless of how much one earns as long as the work activity has been reported and they continue to have a disabling impairment. The 9 months does not need to be consecutive and their trial work period will last until an accumulated 9 months within a rolling 60-month period. Certain other rules apply.

- **Ticket to Work:** Social Security’s Ticket to Work Program is a free and voluntary program available to people ages 18 through 64 who are blind or have a disability and who receive SSDI or SSI benefits. Visit The Work Site to learn more.

- **Reinstating Eligibility Without a New Application:** If an individual has not been eligible for an SSI benefit for 12 months or less, they do not have to file a new application to reinstate SSI cash payments or Medicaid coverage.

Our team also integrates Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) for participating states. DB101 provides community outreach, training, and web-based services that support employment in Alaska, Arizona, California, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, and Ohio. Each state’s website has benefits and work calculators along with current information on health coverage, employment, and benefits that job seekers and workers with disabilities can use to plan employment. In states where DB101 exists, trainings on how to best utilize the website to better understand the relationship between government and work are offered.

WID offers specific economic inclusion strategies, subject matter expertise, and technical assistance to improve the financial outcomes for people with disabilities. According to behavioral finance research, knowledge of basic financial information has the power to significantly reduce wealth inequality in the United States, particularly in traditionally underserved communities.

WID has developed and curated a comprehensive group of resources to better meet the specific needs of the disability community. From budgeting, dealing with credit card debt, and taking advantage of refinancing opportunities to optimizing Social Security benefits, avoiding predatory lenders and financial scams, and planning for retirement, WID has the resources to help change people’s lives and provides those to professionals via the CareerACCESS partnership.

WID is also privileged to have assisted the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in developing their “Focus on People with Disabilities, Your Money, Your Goals” Empowerment Toolkit and to be working with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to ensure their “Money Smart” curriculum is inclusive of and relevant to people with disabilities.

The course layout is built on the suite of asset-building tools in WID’s proprietary EQUITY book with each section covering one chapter, plus an introduction and conclusion session. Each section may be provided via webinar over a period of weeks or months; as an online course which includes a combination of readings, instruction, and problem-solving activities; or, as an in-person training covering 1-2 consecutive days.

*EQUITY: Asset Building Strategies for People with Disabilities, A Guide to Financial Empowerment* covers all topics that are important to people with disabilities in their quest for improved finances and asset building. It is a stand-alone book and a video series. WID offers financial education trainings and technical assistance for families, individuals and professionals based on WIOA requirements and *EQUITY: Asset-Building Strategies for People with Disabilities*.

Ultimately, the goal of WID’s Economic Empowerment training is to both explain the strategies included in the course materials and show participants how to educate others on how to use the strategies (“training the trainers”). Our course curriculum and strategies are well tested and contribute greatly to those goals. Chapters and related course sections include:

a) Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions.
b) Support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards.

c) Teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores; what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information; how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies; and how to improve or maintain good credit.

d) Support a participant’s ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions.

e) Educate participants about identity theft; ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways to understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data.

f) Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials.

g) Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling.

h) Provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings.

i) Implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high-quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools, and instruction.

Each section contains:

- Required reading: a chapter from WID’s *EQUITY*, the complete asset building guide for people with disabilities, which provides links to other recommended reading and resources for those section’s instructional objectives.
- A focus on youth 18 and younger as well as information needed as the young adult reaches 18.
- A brief youth-centric video success story demonstrating how an individual used a particular asset building tool to their advantage.
- A six-to-ten-minute video outlining course materials.
- A downloadable outline of key instructional objectives.
- Opportunity for students to participate in an online idea exchange linked to instructional lesson.
- A syllabus, midterm and final exam based on a series of problem-solving client situational essays as well as a series of multiple choice questions.

The existing online book, *EQUITY: Asset Building Strategies for People with Disabilities, A Guide to Financial Empowerment* covers all topics that are important for people with disabilities in their quest for
strong finances and asset building. Pulling together information from years of research, the book includes chapters on the following topics:

- Benefits
- Budgeting
- Paying Down Debts
- Credit
- Identity Theft
- Homeownership
- Self-Employment
- Retirement

WID also offers ABLE 101 to aid in understanding Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts. ABLE accounts are groundbreaking resources for certain people with disabilities to save money and invest for their future. These specialized savings accounts do not count as “assets” that the government uses to determine whether somebody is eligible for SSI, Medicaid, or other federal benefits. This means that account holders can save money and still receive vital benefits to protect their health and well-being.

The WID ABLE 101 course provides all the information professionals, participants and families need to know about ABLE accounts and how they may affect benefits, including:

- ABLE basics
- Different states and different options
- Managing your account
- Opening an account
- Tips and tricks
- Calculators

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Eligibility: ABLE accounts are open to people with disabilities who acquired their disability at age 26 or before. It doesn’t matter how old somebody is right now; it just matters when their disability came about. This can include disabilities from birth, such as developmental disabilities, or acquired disabilities, such as chronic health conditions or major physical injuries.
People can document their eligibility in different ways. They are automatically eligible if they are on SSI for disability, and the disability occurred at or before age 26. Account-holders can get a letter from a physician verifying that they have a qualifying disability. Otherwise, they can self-certify that they have a qualifying disability—and of course, people should be prepared to justify a disability with personally held information or a physician’s note.

**Savings and Benefits:** Normally, people with disabilities are limited to having $2,000 in assets if they are to receive benefits including SSI and Medicaid. However, ABLE accounts transform this rule. The first $100,000 in an ABLE account is not considered countable assets for means of determining eligibility for SSI. ABLE accounts have higher levels for Medicaid and other federally means-tested benefits, such as the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)](http://www.wid.org).

**ABLE’s Tax Advantages:** ABLE account programs are set up by different states and run at the state level—but most are open to out-of-state residents, which means that there are many opportunities available. Assets in an ABLE account grow tax-free.

**Qualified Disability Expenses (QDEs):** The money and ABLE accounts must be spent on items that are considered “Qualified Disability Expenses” or QDEs. This list includes things, such as housing, transportation, adaptive equipment, health care expenses, and even disability-related lawyers’ fees.

**Tailoring the CareerACCESS Training Program Content**

The CareerACCESS Training Program content can be delivered by anyone who has both read it and has work life experiences. It’s not complex. It’s mostly common-sense ideas, along with insightful fundamental truths about being professional and competitive in the workplace.

It can be communicated in many ways. It can be coaching “talking points.” It can be occasional workshop presentations. It can be a course of instruction in a variety of rehabilitation, education and independent living program models. And, it’s also available as a self-help guide or course reader designed to support the participants’ learning style.

The WID team will tailor the CareerACCESS Training Program content and tools to meet the CareerACCESS partner’s model and staffing preferences.
CareerACCESS Experience

The CareerACCESS Experience flowchart below is provided to assist potential collaborators and partners in understanding how to best position the young adult as the driver of a five-phase process for Enrolling, Coaching, Counseling, Learning and Working. The details of each phase are listed below.

**Phase 1: Enroll In CareerACCESS**
- Learn about CareerACCESS
- Register for program
- Assessment of interests, skills and experience
- Career exploration & identification of Career Path

**Phase 2: Pick Your Coach & Create Your Plan**
- Initial meeting with CareerACCESS Coach
- Develop ICP with short and long term goals
- Develop job seeking skills

**Phase 3: Receive Counseling & Advocacy Supports**
- Work incentives
- Develop protection & advocacy skills
- Provide long-term supports on the career pathway
- Include ICP revision(s) as necessary

**Phase 4: Learn Career Readiness Skills**
- Career readiness curriculum
- Professional development & disability
- Resilience, benefits, economic training

**Phase 5: Access Your Career**
- ICP fulfillment on career path
- Program evaluation

*Figure 1 CareerACCESS Experience*
CareerACCESS Funding Strategies

The recommended funding strategy for piloting CareerACCESS is to use braided and blended funding from both existing programs that work with families and young people with disabilities as well as new pilot project funds. Pilot projects could be funded by state, federal, non-profit or foundations – or a combination of funders. The CareerACCESS team is reviewing specific funding strategies as described below.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Pre-Employment Training Services

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and requires vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to set aside at least 15% of their federal funds to provide "Pre-Employment Transition Services" to "Students with Disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services." According to the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), WIOA supports the following required services:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy

The CareerACCESS program model integrates job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training and self-advocacy training. Furthermore, the CareerACCESS Coach and ICP can be managed to integrate planning and accessing work-based learning experiences and planning for transition or postsecondary educational programs.

CareerACCESS also provides tools and supports for the local workforce implementing WIOA Pre-ETS strategies, including the following list also provided by WINTAC:

- Implement effective strategies that increase independent living and inclusion in their communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
- Develop and improve strategies for individuals with intellectual and significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
- Provide training to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition staff, and others supporting students with disabilities;
- Disseminate information on innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to implement pre-employment transition services;
- Coordinate activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under IDEA;
- Apply evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel;
• Develop model transition demonstration projects;
• Establish or support multistate or regional partnerships that involve States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or others; and
• Disseminate information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of those who are traditionally unserved.

In some states, a single agency is positioned to coordinate Pre-ETS funding and services. In other states, an entity may apply through a state intermediary. CareerACCESS is working to identify partners and pilot CareerACCESS with Pre-ETS funding support.

**Medicaid Section 1115 Demonstration Waivers**

According to Health & Disability Advocates, Section 1115 of the Social Security Act allows the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services to approve demonstration waivers for ‘experiments’ in the way Medicaid can be used to assist specific groups in states. States use these waivers to allow alterations to their programs, from managing cost to expanding coverage to populations such as non-pregnant, non-disabled adults. The waivers can be amended, renewed, or terminated, allowing a state to evolve its Medicaid program as its needs change.

The "experiments" are delivered or reimbursed, with the goal of improving care. States have used this process to expand eligibility for Medicaid, provide new services, or transform the way they coordinate services. All 1115 Waiver innovation projects must be cost-effective and budget-neutral, so a state can't spend more than was projected without the waiver. As of February 2017, 41 waiver projects were in operation across 33 states.

This may represent another potential funding source for a CareerACCESS model or pilot to be implemented locally.

**Other Models**

CareerACCESS will also explore a cash and counseling model, community foundations and other models identified by partners for funding future pilots.

**CareerACCESS Aligns with State and Federal Policy and Practice**

Fundamental systems change and a comprehensive approach to service provision permeates the culture, practice and policy work within each of the states or regions working on the following employment initiatives.

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**Employment First** is an expressed vision within 46 states to make employment the first priority and preferred outcome for people with disabilities. At least 19 of these states have an official state policy, stating that community-based, integrated employment is the first and preferred service option for people with disabilities.

**PROMISE** (Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income) is an interagency initiative led by the U.S. Department of Education. PROMISE fosters improved health, education, and post-secondary outcomes for youth who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), as well as their families. PROMISE supports improved coordination of various services from federal and state sources that support independent living and employment.

The underlying premise of PROMISE is that improved coordination between services can improve outcomes for youth on SSI and for their families. PROMISE's goals include improving the life outcomes of youth on SSI and decreasing their reliance on the program, as well as reducing the federal government's costs.

**Employment First** and PROMISE address improving employment outcomes for youth through an array of supports and services blended and braided from state and federal programs. Young adults aging out of PROMISE could anticipate defaulting into CareerACCESS and continue along the path to full inclusion through employment.

**WIOA** requires each state to have core partners: Workforce Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Education and Medicaid participate in a unified planning process to create a state plan focused on coordination of services, outlining how they will address services to priority groups. Individuals with disabilities comprise one of these groups. The WIOA focus on integration of services and transition services for youth in and out of school will support the efforts of CareerACCESS in pilot project states.

Three CareerACCESS changes support and align with the future progress of these initiatives.

1. Seeks to establish a defined Social Security disability benefits program for young adults with disabilities to build careers and earn competitive wages in integrated settings;
2. Pays a predictable monthly stipend for those enrolled up to income limits designed in the pilot projects; and,
3. Braids and blends existing funding and services within an integrated model at the state level for the new Social Security program serving young adults.
CareerACCESS Implementation Project Schedule

The CareerACCESS Implementation Plan has a draft project schedule provided for planning purposes. A refined timeline will be developed once funding is secured and the collaboration kick-off is scheduled.

**Phase 1: Defining State-Tailored Requirements**
- Kick-off Meeting
- Refine Project Plan and Milestones
- Introductory Briefing for key state partners

**Phase 2: Curriculum and Tools Development**
- Determine state-tailored model(s):
  - Connect to current related initiatives
  - Workforce System, Pre-Employment Transition Services
  - Centers for Independent Living (counselors)
- Develop content and tools to describe project to staff, partners, consumers
- Develop training content and tools for training current professionals, to include:
  - Develop state-tailored position description with desired knowledge, skills and abilities with responsibilities and qualifications of CareerACCESS Coaches
  - Develop state-tailored Individualized Career Plan (ICP) template with supporting prescriptive processes for oversight, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Identify state recommendations and templates for CareerACCESS Coach participants interventions and reporting requirements

**Phase 4: Implementation**
- Train the professionals on the curriculum and produce CareerACCESS Certified Coaches
- Provide the tools and technical assistance resources
- Select the individuals with disabilities to participate in the demonstration
- Schedule introductory meetings for coaches and participants

**Phase 5: Identify Sustainable Funding**
- List potential funding streams for Coach and ICP services.
  - Review the Cash and Counseling model: how would this model support or fund consumer directed services in CareerACCESS?
  - Review the "Just in Time Counseling" concepts and text.
- Provide results report to funder and other stakeholders.
- Share lessons learned through WID E3/CareerACCESS Portal and enhance curriculum for other states.
CareerACCESS Collaborators

The CareerACCESS team would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals from across that nation that have helped advance the policy initiative over the years, including representatives from organizations in the following states:

- California
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Nebraska
- Pennsylvania
- Vermont

The CareerACCESS team has also worked with representatives from the following federal agencies to help guide the initiative’s development process:

- Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living
- Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy
- National Council on Disability
- Social Security Administration

Finally, the CareerACCESS team has worked with representatives from the following organizations:

- The ARC
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- California Foundation of Independent Living Centers
- Corporation for Enterprise Development
- Disability Network, Michigan
- Independent Living Center of the North Shore & St. Ann
- Insight Center for Community Economic Development
- Institute for Educational Leadership, National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth
- Mathematica Policy Research
- National Community Reinvestment Coalition
- National Disability Institute
- Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council
- The Viscardi Center
- Workforce Essentials
CareerACCESS team would also like to acknowledge and thank the young adults with disabilities that currently and previously served as advisors in developing the CareerACCESS policy initiative. The work continues with their guiding voice to find an alternative approach to increase access to careers and independence through employment.
More Resources and Tools

CareerACCESS partners may find the following resources and tools helpful in the design and implementation of career readiness planning, coaching, counseling and employment support services.

**World Institute on Disability: Disability Benefits 101 (DB101)**

WID’s Employment and Disability Benefits Initiative (EDBI) develops community-based public policy recommendations on work and benefits at state and national levels. EDBI has launched an information services tool called Disability Benefits 101, or DB101, which provides community outreach, training, and web-based services that support employment in Alaska, Arizona, California, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, and Ohio. Each state’s website has benefits and work calculators along with current information on health coverage, employment, and benefits that job seekers and workers with disabilities can use to plan employment.

**PolicyWorks: Youth Transitions Collaborative School-to-Work Transition Toolkit**

The HSC Pathways to Success Transition Toolkit is designed to mirror a job search. No matter where one is on a pathway—just starting to look, already searching, or settling into a new job—this toolkit provides the resources to successfully navigate each person’s Career Path.

The toolkit is organized into three main areas with subsections under each as follows:

GETTING PREPARED (BEFORE YOU START THE JOB HUNT)

- The Business Case
- Campus & Community Resources
• Careers in The Federal Sector

THE SEARCH (AS YOU’RE LOOKING FOR A JOB)
• Social Media & Your Job Search
• The Job Hunt
• Build Your Brand
• Get the Interview
• Close the Deal

AFTER YOU’RE HIRED (IF YOU’VE ALREADY FOUND A JOB)
• Benefits at Work
• Career Growth
• Your Rights & Legal Protections

This toolkit is made available through the support of the HSC Foundation’s Youth Transitions Collaborative in Washington, DC. The toolkit content was developed by PolicyWorks and its Collaborative Partners, the DC Metro BLN and TransCen, Inc.

Office of Disability Employment Policy: Skills to Pay the Bills

Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success is a curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching "soft" or workforce readiness skills to youth, including youth with disabilities. Created for youth development professionals as an introduction to workplace interpersonal and professional skills, the curriculum is targeted for youth ages 14 to 21 in both in-school and out-of-school environments. The basic structure of the program is comprised of modular, hands-on, engaging activities that focus on six key skill areas: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking, and professionalism.

Also, in a December 2013 ODEP Disability Blog post, Maria Town provided the following overview of Skills to Pay the Bills:

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8 This content was adapted from the following content on the ODEP website at: https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/

9 http://www.ncwd-youth.info/blog/?p=796
These resources are targeted at youth, ages 14 to 21, in both in-school and out-of-school environments. The curriculum was designed to be inclusive and is comprised of modular, hands-on, engaging activities that focus on six key skills: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking and professionalism. The curriculum can be adapted to suit the needs of any group. The video series also addresses these six themes and can be used separately or as a complement to the curriculum. In fact, mail-order DVDs of the videos include a guide with “conversation starters” to help spark discussions among youth about the importance of soft skills to career and personal success.

The CareerACCESS Coach should consider working with appropriate young adults to integrate Skills to Pay the Bills curriculum into their learning objective.

Also, The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and the LEAD Center recently release resources for Guided Group Discovery. Guided Group Discovery materials include a Facilitator Manual, an accompanying PowerPoint slide deck (Introduction and Course), and a Participant Workbook.

The purpose of Guided Group Discovery is to lay the foundation for competitive integrated employment as a Universal Design that can benefit all job seekers. For some people, Guided Group Discovery leads to Customized Employment. For everyone, the process assists job seekers in identifying employment that would be a good fit both for them and an employer.

**Mathematica Policy Research Issue Brief: A Roadmap to a 21st-Century Disability Policy**

This issue brief from January 2012 outlines an alternative approach to slowing expenditure growth while improving the economic status of Americans with disabilities. The proposed plan addresses the work disincentives and fragmentation that drive up program costs. Reform will be difficult and will require a gradual transition, starting with a demonstration period to gather the information needed for effective reform. That period would enable piloting of approaches like CareerACCESS. Access the full brief [online](http://www.wid.org) to learn more.
including youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth. The NCWD/Youth, created in 2001, is composed of partners with expertise in education, youth development, disability, employment, workforce development and family issues. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), the NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C. NCWD/Youth offers a range of technical assistance services to state and local workforce investment boards, youth councils and other workforce development system youth programs.

NCWD/Y provides guidance and resources for the development of Individualized Learning Plans, including the following documents:

- ILP Fact Sheet: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/fact-sheet/individualized-learning-plan