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U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section

Enforcing the ADA:

Looking Back on a Decade of Progress

A Special Tenth Anniversary Status Report from the Department of Justice

July 2000

This is a special edition commemorating the tenth anniversary of the enactment of the ADA. This report, previous status reports, and a wide range of other ADA information are available through the Department's ADA Home Page on the World Wide Web (see page 38).

FLE.ADA

Report from the

Subcommittee on Expanding Employment Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities

TO THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Vicki w/ First Lady's

Co-Chairs:

Sue Swenson, Commissioner
Administration on Developmental Disabilities
Department of Health and Human Services

Curtis Richards, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Department of Education

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

The Honorable Alexis Herman
Chairwoman, Presidential Task Force on
Employment of Adults with Disabilities

The Honorable Tony Coelho
Vice-Chair, Presidential Task Force on
Employment of Adults with Disabilities
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room S-2312
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Chairwoman Herman & Vice-Chair Coelho:

Under cover of this memorandum, we transmit the 1999 report to the President from the Committee on Access to Employment and Lifelong Learning Subcommittee on Expanding Employment Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities. We understand that this report will be made available concurrent with publication of the full Task Force report in December.

The report contains a summary of current and planned activities and was drafted with the assistance of Subcommittee members. It addresses school-to-work transition and other strategies designed to improve young people's opportunities for success in the workforce.

We approve this report as written and submit it to you for publication and public use.

Sincerely,

Curtis Richards, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education and
Rehabilitation Services

Sue Swenson, Commissioner
Administration on Developmental
Disabilities, US Department of
Health and Human Services

Mission and Goals

The *Subcommittee on Expanding Employment Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities,* co-chaired by Sue Swenson, Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, and Curtis Richards, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, established the following mission and goals.

The charge of the Subcommittee is to:

1. Review and analyze current data on the status of young people, with and without disabilities, transitioning from adolescence to adulthood and the world of work.

2. Identify and promote effective practices that assist young people with disabilities in successfully transitioning from adolescence to employment.

3. Review and analyze current legislative authorities and programs that affect young people with disabilities, and make recommendations for the alignment or improvement of Federal programs that ensure successful transition of young people with disabilities to employment.

The goals of the Subcommittee are to:

1. Identify and eliminate Federal policies that are barriers to employment for young people with disabilities.

2. Make recommendations that promote effective Federal policies and eliminate policies which are barriers to employment.

3. Develop an action plan that leads to a coordinated and aggressive national strategy to ensure that young people with disabilities enter the workforce at comparable rates and pace as their non-disabled peers.

4. Develop recommendations for influencing State and local policy and practice for young people with disabilities and chronic health conditions in achieving employment.

Background

Overview

In its first report to President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force recognized the importance of focusing attention on the issues facing young people with disabilities. One of the recommendations in [illegible] states:

> The Administration should work with States, communities, schools and others to assist young people with disabilities with the tools they need to believe in themselves and to pursue positive futures; to avoid teen pregnancy, substance abuse and other risk behaviors; to finish high school and go on to college or work; to take full advantage of school-to-work and community and national service opportunities; to experience, learn from, and build on early life successes; and to assume positive control and responsibility for their individual lives and futures.

With this recommendation, the Task Force called for an end to the expectation that yet another generation of young people with disabilities would stay out of the workforce and become dependent on public assistance programs. Therefore, the leadership of the Task Force created the *Subcommittee on Expanding Employment Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities* as a subcommittee of the Committee on Access to Employment and Lifelong Learning.

Definition of Terms

At the Subcommittee's first meeting, the breadth of issues to be considered seemed daunting. Before shaping a specific charge, members of the Subcommittee believed it necessary to begin by defining the key terms that would guide its work: Who is the target audience? What is meant by transition and employment? The following common definitions were developed:

Young People: The focus of the Subcommittee's work will be on young people between 14 and 25 years old. However, it is important to remember that young people begin thinking about work at much earlier ages. It is not uncommon for elementary and middle-school students to emulate adult role models and aspire to their professions. The Subcommittee believes that its work will occasionally address issues related to people younger than high school age.

Transition: For the work of the Subcommittee, transition is defined as the movement of young people with disabilities into employment. Activities promoting this movement must be based on an individual's self-determined preferences and interests. These activities should include, but not be limited to, lifelong learning, community experiences, and the development of a career path, health and wellness, and other post-school and adult living objectives. To accomplish this, it may be necessary to consider supports, related services, and other issues including: evaluation; planning; reasonable accommodations; access to adequate health care and insurance coverage; income supports; vocational training and rehabilitation; service learning; school-, work-, and community-based experiences (paid and unpaid); and assistive technology.

Employment: For the work of the Subcommittee, employment is defined as regular engagement in skilled activities for payment.

Policy Issues

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) identifies equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency as key goals for persons with disabilities. Similarly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) aims to "stimulate the improvement of the vocational and life skills of students with disabilities to enable them to be better prepared for transition to adult life and services." The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act in 1998 echoed these goals by incorporating IDEA's definition of transition services and increasing the focus on vocational rehabilitation services in the transition process for young people with disabilities.

Research focusing on progress toward these goals has revealed both troubling and encouraging indicators relating to transition from adolescence to adulthood and the world of work. Data generated through research, especially longitudinal research, illustrate both areas of progress and need. The Subcommittee reviewed a series of research and policy studies and conducted a series of "listening sessions" with stakeholders.

First, the Subcommittee examined the draft results of a review conducted in 1996 by the White House Domestic Policy Council on transition policy, titled *School-to-Work Transition: Disability Policy Review.* The Subcommittee also reviewed data from the Department of Education/Office of Special Education Programs' *1993 National Longitudinal Transition Study,* data analyses of beneficiaries from the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Education's participation rates of students with disabilities in postsecondary education.

The Subcommittee sponsored and participated in a series of "listening sessions" to solicit input from young people with disabilities, their families, educators, service providers and others about barriers faced by young people with disabilities transitioning from adolescence to adulthood and work. These included a Town Hall meeting in Los Angeles sponsored by the Task Force, a roundtable discussion hosted by the National Council on Disability, a Youth Policy Forum sponsored by the Social Security Administration and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, a luncheon discussion at the National Council on Disability's Youth Leadership Forum, and a meeting of the Healthy and Ready to Work Federal Interagency Work Group. During the course of its work, the Subcommittee plans to continue its participation in these types of "listening sessions" to ensure that a broad base of input is incorporated into the work of the Task Force.

From these activities, several patterns emerge which should be considered for future policy development. First, the population of young people with

disabilities is growing and becoming more diverse. For example, according to the Census Bureau, there are 25.1 million Americans between the ages of 15-21 years of age, 12.1 percent of who have a disability or chronic health condition. Among 95 million people between the age of 24-44, almost 15 percent have a disability.

More importantly, this population is growing much more diverse, with significant rises expected in the numbers of African, Native, Asian and Hispanic Americans with disabilities. According to data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (1993), an ongoing, nationally representative panel survey of the economic status of the non-institutionalized, civilian population living in the U.S., the overall rate of disability is highest for Native Americans (21.9%), followed closely by African Americans (20.0%), whites (19.7%), Hispanics (15.3%), and Asians and Pacific Islanders (9.9%).

For women with disabilities, the situation is worse. Of the total population of adults with disabilities, men are twice as likely to be employed, are more likely to work full-time, and, on average, receive higher wages. The barriers faced by all women in the workplace are compounded for women, of all ages, with disabilities. The "double discrimination" of being a woman with a disability is evident in all aspects of employment, including the employment-related programs provided to individuals with disabilities.

Second, access to health care, insurance coverage, and income supports present barriers to employment for young people with disabilities. While rapid advances in medical science have enabled over 90 percent of children born with special needs to reach adulthood, youth with special health care needs are much less likely than their non-disabled peers to finish high school, pursue postsecondary education, get jobs, or live independently. Few coordinated services have been available to assist them in their developmental transitions from school to work, home to independent living and pediatric-based care to adult-based care.

Current Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefit systems also create barriers to employment. Nearly 600,000 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 currently receive SSI benefits. Of those, only 10 percent report some form of work activity. Each year, 16,000 18-year-olds and 56,000 individuals between 19 and 25 years of age are approved for SSI benefits. In addition, data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that almost 80 percent of individuals ages 22-44 who do not have disabilities have private insurance coverage, three percent have public insurance and 17 percent are uninsured. In contrast, in the same age group, among individuals with disabilities almost 58 percent have private coverage, 22 percent have public insurance and almost 20 percent are uninsured.

Data indicates that many young people with disabilities are dependent on Federal income support and public health insurance benefits. Promoting greater self-sufficiency among beneficiaries cannot be achieved without eliminating work disincentives. The possibility of losing health insurance and other crucial benefits discourages many from seeking work. Further, for those who are employed, opportunities to increase wages and earnings may be avoided for fear of losing these benefits. As the system currently exists, many potential workers remain unemployed and dependent, not because of laziness or indifference, but because working is simply not in their best economic or medical interests.

Third, technology is transforming opportunities for young people with disabilities. Assistive technology, distance learning, and the Internet are among the technological innovations that are significantly transforming the workplace and lifelong learning opportunities for young people with disabilities, and will continue to do so at a rapid rate into the next century.

Fourth, education, vocational rehabilitation, and workforce development efforts are signaling the transformation of programs designed to serve people with disabilities. Nowhere is this trend more noticeable than in policies dealing with young people with disabilities. In the education arena, for example, the trend is toward increasing expectations and academic skills, and including young people with disabilities in all aspects of general education reform, as reflected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997,

Goals 2000, Improving America Schools Act, and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

Another example of the general systems reform trend is demonstrated by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). The WIA brings a new emphasis on how youth are served within the workforce development system. WIA's major services for young people include: (1) the establishment of local youth councils; (2) comprehensive services based on individualized assessment; (3) youth connections and access to the One-Stop Career Center system; and (4) performance accountability. The Department of Labor's publication, *The Workforce Investment Act of 1998: A Vision for Youth,* specifically mentions young people with disabilities as a specific target population under WIA. Federal policy efforts must ensure that young people with disabilities are included in the opportunities that WIA presents.

In addition, as a part of WIA, the Rehabilitation Act was amended with increased attention focused on transition. In addition to adding a definition for transition services, WIA mandates that State vocational rehabilitation plans include coordination with responsible State education officials to facilitate the transition of youth with disabilities from education to vocational rehabilitation services. State plans must include interagency agreements that provide information about technical assistance for education agencies, personnel training, agency financial responsibilities, outreach, and student identification policies and procedures.

Fifth, there is a tremendous need to improve planning and delivery of transition services. While some individuals with disabilities appear to have better transition outcomes, others do not. According to the Department of Education, 20 percent of young adults with disabilities do not graduate from high school, compared to 9 percent of young adults with no disabilities. Approximately 23 percent of young people without disabilities have graduated from college, as compared to less than 10 percent of young people with disabilities and only 6 percent of young people with significant disabilities. Youth and young adults with severe emotional disturbances, for example, experience particularly poor outcomes.

The IDEA Amendments of 1997 further strengthened transition programs. For example, the law emphasizes the need for transition planning to begin earlier (at age 14) and mandates that young people know their rights and exercise self-determination and choice in program selection and design. This is critical as findings from the Office of Special Education Programs' monitoring of State educational systems show a frequent lack of transition planing in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. As a result, too many young people never receive the counseling, career education, vocational training, assistance in obtaining adult health care, and adequate insurance and other services they need to make successful transitions from school to work, or school-to-college-to-work.

We also know that as the level of education rises, so does labor force participation, and these rates increase much more sharply for people with disabilities than those without disabilities. For example, among people 25-64 years of age who have a disability, only 16 percent of those with less than 12 years of education are working or looking for work. The rate rises to 27.3 percent for those who complete 12 years of school, increases again to 40.9 percent for those with 13 to 15 years of education, and reaches 50.6 percent for people with 16 or more years of education. Increasing academic skill expectations and expanding lifelong learning opportunities are critical aspects of future success for young people with disabilities.

The transition needs of young people with disabilities require appropriate services according to individualized needs. However, data show that consumer-driven services are elusive:

- Only a third of young people with disabilities who need job training actually receive such training.
- Only a fourth of young people who need life skills training, tutoring, interpreting or personal counseling receive these services.
- Contacts with vocational rehabilitation agencies, postsecondary institutions, job placement programs, employers, social service and mental health agencies are substantially less frequent for students with serious emotional disturbances.

- Within three to five years after exiting school more than half of all young people with emotional disturbances are arrested at least once.

The absence of needed services and the bleak outcomes of many young people underscore the need for effective policies and programs. How to improve service delivery for all young people with disabilities is therefore a fundamental policy question.

Students with disabilities want better education and training opportunities to help them prepare for employment and independent living. To keep pace with the ever increasing technical skills required by the job market, more individuals with disabilities are taking advantage of postsecondary education than ever before: In 1978, the percentage of full-time college freshman reporting disabilities was 2.6 percent; in 1991, this figure more than tripled to 8.8 percent. Still, there is much room for improvement.

Studying progress and pitfalls helps us better understand the complexities of transition for young people with disabilities. By learning from these, educated choices may be made to improve transition service delivery and to assist all young people in attaining the national goals. The needs of young people with disabilities transitioning from adolescence to adulthood are great. Issues of coordination, accountability and access must be addressed to promote positive transition outcomes, and the Federal government's leadership role must be asserted to ensure that all means all.

If post high school academic and employment outcomes are to improve, effective transition strategies and activities must occur for all young people with disabilities. Only then will the goals of equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, adequate health care and insurance coverage and economic self-sufficiency become a reality.

Current Activities

The Subcommittee's initial task was to share information among the participating agencies in order to identify innovative programs and practices, possible duplication, and gaps. The following briefly summarizes current agency activities:

Department of Education

- *Transition Technical Assistance.* The National Transition Alliance (NTA) has identified promising programs and practices from across the country which promote the transition of youth with disabilities towards desired post-school outcomes. The NTA provides technical assistance to School-to-Work State grantees and disseminates information regarding transition and school-to-work issues nationwide.

- *Model Demonstration.* Since 1985, OSEP has funded over 300 secondary education model demonstration and outreach projects that develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate new or improved approaches for serving the needs of students in high schools, and emphasize school-based learning activities that are linked to occupational skills standards and challenging academic standards.

- *Self-Determination.* Another of OSEP's sustained efforts is in the area of self-determination. This effort has demonstrated that, with appropriate guidance, students are clearly capable of participating in planning and decision-making regarding their futures. Self-determination is the ultimate goal of education.

- *Systems Change.* In 1991, OSEP initiated a special grants program, specifically intended to make available one-time, five-year grants to individual States for the purpose of establishing responsive State systems that address the school-to-work transition needs of young people with disabilities. These grants are intended to assist States in developing effective strategies and procedures for implementing new requirements for transition services included in the IDEA Amendments of 1997. To date, each State has received a five-year systems change grant.

- *Information Dissemination.* OSEP funds the HEATH Resource Center, the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, to assist in the transition from school to college.

[illegible]

- *Systems Change.* Building on lessons learned from the OSEP Transition Systems Change projects, RSA recently funded State Systems Change projects focusing on improved employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. These projects address the systemic barriers that persons with disabilities face when seeking employment, particularly those who participate in Social Security programs. Most of these six projects include emphases on youth and young adults with disabilities.

- *Special Projects.* A number of RSA's special projects target youth and young adults with disabilities. For example, Project RISE in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota has developed a transition and supported employment model program for transitioning students that addresses their employment and independent living needs. The model emphasizes coordination among businesses and State and local agencies that provide transportation, mental health services, and employment services for students with disabilities. Partners for Youth With Disabilities, Inc. of Boston, Massachusetts has an entrepreneurship program for youth with disabilities using a multi-tiered approach of classroom instruction, mentorship, and business community development in order to assist youth with disabilities in transition.

- *Attention to Diverse Needs.* RSA has provided support for persons from diverse racial and ethnic groups, as demonstrated by implementation of the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992. This was one of two major programs designed to address the high rates of unemployment for American Indians with disabilities. The initial program demonstrated how Indian tribal governments could integrate the employment, training and related services they provide in order to improve the effectiveness of those services, reduce joblessness in Indian communities and serve tribally determined goals consistent with the policy of self-determination. More recently, the "Section 121 projects" (formally known as Section 130 under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended) have sought to reduce the continuing high rates of unemployment on reservations. Data from 1996 shows that RSA funded 32 projects. In 1999 RSA expected to provide 28 additional grant awards, which may include successful continuing, as well as new projects.

RSA also supports Capacity Building for Traditionally Underserved Populations, another program to improve services provided under the Rehabilitation Act. This program targets services provided to individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds, and provides outreach and technical assistance to Indian tribes and other entities working with culturally diverse groups to enhance their capacity and promote their participation in activities funded under the Rehabilitation Act. The 12 recent awards provided grants to State and public or private nonprofit agencies and organizations, including Indian tribes and historically black or Hispanic institutions of higher education serving traditionally underserved racial and ethnic groups.

[illegible]

- *Rehabilitation Research and Training.* NIDRR supports Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC) that directly and indirectly benefit transitioning young people with disabilities. Some of these focus on mental illness, supported employment, community living, and employability. The RRTC at the University of Hawaii, the National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports, focuses specifically on postsecondary educational supports for students with disabilities.

[illegible]

- *Demonstration Projects.* OSERS and OPE have provided important technical assistance to shape the new "Demonstration Projects to Ensure Stu-

dents with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education." This $5 million program focuses on the development of education models for students with disabilities, and at least two awards will target the needs of students with learning disabilities specifically. Activities include developing innovative teaching strategies (including distance learning and assistive technology), synthesizing research, professional development and training, evaluation, and dissemination. The overall purpose of these demonstrations is to increase postsecondary faculty awareness and preparedness so that students with disabilities receive the accommodations and supports necessary for quality educational experiences.

- *Attention to Diverse Needs.* The population of young people with disabilities is growing much more diverse. While significant rises are expected in the number of Asian and Hispanic Americans with disabilities, increased attention will also need to be given to the needs of African American and American Indian youth with disabilities. High school counselors, teachers, other staff and community members must be prepared to provide culturally appropriate guidance to these students, as they provide guidance and access to resources that will facilitate successful transition to postsecondary education for all young people. Support has historically been provided to students from diverse cultural groups, students with disabilities, and disadvantaged students through special programs designed to benefit underserved populations. Recent Federal legislation provides additional assistance through the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (HEA). The intent of HEA is to improve outreach to students and strengthen linkages to employment and secondary education programs. HEA also continues to improve educational opportunities through the TRIO Programs (Educational Opportunities for Low-Income and Disabled Americans) and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) programs. The FIPSE and TRIO programs (including Upward Bound and Talent Search) have improved educational opportunities for all students, including opportunities that focused specifically on students with disabilities. HEA builds on these successes and also includes the Gear Up Program, designed to increase early awareness and encourage all students to aspire towards postsecondary education.

Department of Labor

- *Youth Opportunity Grants.* The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) will award competitive grants under the Youth Opportunity initiative in January 2000. The Workforce Investment Act specifies that Youth Opportunity grants are to be used to increase the long-term employment of youth who live in empowerment zones, enterprise communities, and high-poverty areas. These projects will develop high-quality programs that help individual youth find better jobs and increase their educational attainment, and achieve community-wide increases in youth employment rates and educational attainment. Young people with disabilities are included in the target population to be served by these grants.

- *Demonstration Projects.* DOL's 15 Disability Employment Grants spur innovation, coordination and quality outcomes for improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Many of these projects address the needs of youth and young adults with disabilities.

Department of Health and Human Services

- *Healthy and Ready to Work (HRTW).* The HRTW initiative (1) focuses on young people with special health needs and the transition to adulthood and (2) promotes wellness and improved access to appropriate health care. This includes moving from the pediatric to adult health care system and reducing health crisis episodes so youth can optimize their transition from secondary to post-secondary education, employment, and self-sufficiency. Through HRSA's Special Projects of Regional and National Significance funding mechanism, MCHB has implemented nine demonstration projects

addressing transition for young people with special health care needs and funded a national center to provide technical assistance to the projects and to State programs, and to promote interagency partnerships on the Federal level.

The projects are reporting outcome information in categories corresponding to six national MCHB performance measures that assess the health and well-being of children with special health needs, including issues such as employment status, access to a medical "home" (not a place, but a system of services that is community-based, culturally competent, comprehensive and continuous) and a source of health insurance.

[illegible]

- *Data Collection.* ADD funds three ongoing data centers, one of which provides comparative data by State on costs and outcomes associated with the employment of people with developmental disabilities.

- *Employment and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.* ADD funded a three-year technical assistance project to improve access to employment under TANF for people with developmental disabilities.

- *Self-Determination.* A three-year nationwide project to improve self- determination for persons with developmental disabilities has been funded by ADD.

- *Family Support.* ADD funded 22 States (over $4 million) to establish Family Support Systems Change projects to develop a comprehensive system of family support services. The projects focus on helping children achieve independence, productivity, inclusion, and integration by ensuring that families are supported in raising their children with disabilities at home.

Social Security Administration

In 1999, SSA announced a new, three year pilot project, known as the "Youth Continuing Disability Review Initiative," in which the particular needs of 250 young people (aged 15 to 17) per year will be examined soon after their supplemental security Income (SSI) disability review process is completed. After conducting enhanced assessments, the participants will be referred to the State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, the Department of Labor employment programs (in particular the school-to-work system), Department of Health and Human Services programs, and other agencies for services and interventions, as appropriate. From this three year pilot project, SSA will examine the impact of an early and more proactive approach on the successful transition of young people from school, and the SSI rolls, to work. SSA expects this initiative to: inform young people and their families about work incentives and work; motivate and assist them in transitioning to work; increase independence and decrease dependence on public benefits; and inform SSA operations and policy development.

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

The President's Committee operates four youth-focused programs designed to foster both the career development and leadership skills of young persons with disabilities.

- *Workforce Recruitment Program.* Each year, trained recruiters are sent to approximately 140 colleges and universities, all across the country, to interview over 1,500 college students with disabilities. Each student interviewed is evaluated and a descriptive narrative is prepared. In the early spring of each year, a listing of all these students is released to employers who either have pledged to hire these students for paid summer internships, or who are actively recruiting job applicants with disabilities for both paid summer internships or full-time employment. This program is designed to facilitate contact between college students with disabilities and interested employers.

- *High School/High Tech (HS/HT).* There are presently over 60 HS/HT programs in 20 states across the country. HS/HT is an enrichment activity designed to provide special education students with experiences, mentors and paid intern-

ships in technology-related occupations. Through these activities, students are challenged to expand their ambitions and to seek post-secondary education as well as careers in technology-related fields. Local HS/HT programs represent a coalition of community organizations, employers and school systems, all working together to provide these activities. HS/HT is a dramatic way to break down stereotypes and to offer an extracurricular activity that affords students alternative ways to find their potential.

- *Youth Leadership Forums.* In the summer of 2000, 25 state-level conferences for high school age students with disabilities are being planned to provide each state's participants with career and leadership skills development. Participating students are afforded the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with other students with disabilities and, thereby, grow in self-awareness and community spirit. The goal of this effort is to impact these students' futures as well as prepare the next generation of disability leaders. The five-year goal of this annual program is to bring this program to each of the 50 states.

- *National Youth Leadership Conference.* With the support of key federal agencies, the President's Committee holds an annual National Conference in Washington, D.C. This four day program is led by young people with disabilities and offers them programming in the areas of civil rights, empowerment and career planning.

Recommendations

Subcommittee Recommendations

The Subcommittee, recommends the following six actions be addressed by Federal agencies or funding sources. These recommendations can be implemented through budget authority or by interagency work groups. The Subcommittee will continue to examine policy options and to formulate recommendations to align and improve Federal programs for young people with disabilities (see "Future Issues," below).

1. [illegible] The Subcommittee will work to expand existing Federal government internship opportunities for young people with disabilities, such as the Workforce Recruitment Program for People with Disabilities and the High School-High Tech Program, both run by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Other opportunities should also be expanded for young people with disabilities, such as the Presidential Management Internship Program, White House and other agency fellowships and internships, and the high school summer intern jobs program. In addition, we recommend that public-private sector partnerships be created to develop new internship opportunities and to expand existing internship opportunities for young people with disabilities with an emphasis on leading technology industries.

2. [illegible] The Subcommittee is developing an initiative to stimulate higher participation rates of young adults with disabilities in postsecondary education. This will be done, in part, by emphasizing the need for lifelong learning for people with disabilities, stimulating greater participation of vocational rehabilitation consumers in postsecondary education, and focusing intensive efforts on young people who receive Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits.

3. [illegible] The Subcommittee recommends that the Social Security Administration explore fiscally sound options for regularly increasing the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level, with an emphasis on young adults with disabilities transitioning into employment. We also recommend that SSA pursue necessary legislative and regulatory changes to increase the age limit and the amount of the SSI Student Earned Income Exclusion.

4. [illegible] The Subcommittee will work to

coordinate and expand a Federal interagency National Youth with Disabilities Leadership Development Program funding priority.

5. [illegible] The Subcommittee recommends the inclusion of a target goal for Healthy People 2010 dealing with young people with disabilities and transition. Medical practices and health care services must be delivered in a way that empowers young people to take progressively increasing control of managing their own health care.

6. [illegible] The Subcommittee is examining strategies to coordinate various research projects being implemented by agencies. These include the Department of Education's second National Longitudinal Transition Survey, the Social Security Administration's survey of children who receive SSI, and the Department of Labor's military aptitude study and youth opportunity study. The Subcommittee believes it important to assure that these surveys are asking the appropriate research questions in order to help policymakers better understand the barriers faced by young people with disabilities. The differing goals and strategies for developing these surveys will affect the degree to which such coordination can be achieved. Nevertheless, interactions between sponsoring agencies will enhance the effectiveness of the surveys in answering important questions for young people with disabilities.

Youth Policy Work Group Recommendation

Of specific import to the work of the Subcommittee was input from young people. For example, significant input was obtained from the annual Social Security Administration and NIDRR employment conference in July 1999. This conference, which the Subcommittee co-sponsored, focused primarily on issues related to transitioning young people with disabilities to adult health care, employment and independence. One of the major activities of the conference was to create a Youth Policy Work Group, comprised exclusively of young people with disabilities, who were charged with taking the results of the conference and making policy recommendations to the conference sponsors.

The Youth Policy Work Group submitted a proposal for a "Voluntary Social Insurance Life Voucher System," a consumer-controlled vehicle for accessing needed supports for maximum independence. This includes, but is not limited to, education (elementary, secondary and postsecondary), access to adequate health care and insurance coverage, employment, housing, transportation, income supports, and technology and assistive devices.

The Voluntary Social Insurance Life Voucher System would be a program in which young people voluntarily apply and are given the opportunity to write their own budgets and ongoing "future plans" for their needed supports. In these plans, individuals, possibly with the assistance of others, would look at (1) what supports they will need annually, and (2) what supports they could acquire on their own which would require no financial assistance, such as a circle of support from friends and family. Individuals would submit their proposals for the dollars of services they would require to be equal to non-disabled peers. The financial portions could include educational supports, housing and transportation, vocational training and support, access to adequate health care and insurance coverage, as well as any other supports necessary to achieve an ultimate goal of self sufficiency.

Once a plan is approved, it would be managed by the person with a disability. If there were any changes, amendments could be made through quarterly reviews. The benefit of this idea is that it would have positive effects on the competitive market. For example, education would be forced to improve when individuals could take their dollars and receive education at the institution of their choice at any age.

Plans could be contained in a "credit card" in which individuals access their money, as well as look at their long-term life plan budget and narrative. The Youth Policy Work Group believes that this system could possibly be maintained by a corporate entity, such as Visa or MasterCard, in lieu of

the existing social service system. The existing systems (e.g., Social Security, Vocational Rehabilitation, Public Health, Medicaid, Public Assistance, Special Education) would work together to assist individuals in identifying the dollar amounts and supports to create successful life plans which are flexible and change over time. Additionally, these systems would pool program dollars into a common fund in which there was one application. Eligibility for different supports would be based on medical and financial needs.

This proposed model changes the direction of programs that "take care of" individuals by using public financial supports for a lifetime. Supports would be only those that were necessary and useful toward the person's ultimate life goals. All individuals would have to give back to this system, possibly when reaching a certain age, by being engaged in meaningful work activity, whether paid or volunteer. Since work activity in this model is mandatory, it would operate under the assumption that *all* people can contribute to their communities. When a person acquires paid employment, premiums would be paid into the voucher system.

The Youth Policy Work group believes that this system would support and encourage people to work and contribute to their communities, as well as achieve valuable experience toward chosen life goals. Under this model, all individuals would have to show productive activity. Life plans and personal activity would need to display a commitment toward achieving self-sufficiency. This system is an investment in people and their futures, not only by the system but by the individuals involved. Everyone is vested in the ultimate outcome: productive, tax-paying citizens.

While this proposal raises as many questions as it answers, it reflects the frustrations, fears and values of today's young people with disabilities. The Subcommittee believes it is significant that so much of the Youth Policy Work Group's proposal focuses on the themes of system collaboration and coordination, self-direction, consumer control and choice.

Future Issues

The Subcommittee has developed a growing list of issues to devote its attention, and that of the Task Force, over the next three years. As a follow-up to this report, the Subcommittee will develop a plan for addressing these critical issues:

Research

- Coordinate interagency research agenda, such as longitudinal studies.

- Examine and synthesize "Best Practices" and study the use of social marketing to design an awareness campaign to publicize and to replicate proven practices.

Policy Development

- Examine and develop a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the Department of Education, Department of Labor, the Social Security Administration, Administration on Developmental Disabilities, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for policy guidance and coordination to State and local agencies regarding youth transition services and programs.

- Investigate how implementation and monitoring efforts at the Federal level will strengthen enforcement of existing laws, including Title V of the Social Security Act, IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, and how these efforts can assist States in strengthening enforcement at the local level.

- Develop a comprehensive initiative focused on young people in foster care receiving SSI benefits to expand the Federal Independent Living Program, offer economic support, provide access to adequate health care and insurance coverage, and create a transitional living program.

- Create a fiscally sound grants/budget initiative within the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor, and the SSA to increase the delivery of assistive technology, including state of the art computer equipment, to transition-age students.

- Formalize the Healthy and Ready to Work Federal Interagency Work Group through a Presidential Directive or legislative change, with clear responsibilities and authority for the appropriate Federal agencies to work together around the issue of young people with disabilities transitioning to adulthood and independence. A corollary is the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council for Young Children with Special Needs that is mandated under the Department of Education's legislation.

- Conduct a review of all Federal agency goals under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), identifying those that apply to the needs of young people with disabilities in transition and examining where there is overlap, opportunities for coordination, and gaps.

- Investigate fiscally sound mechanisms, through a demonstration project or legislative change, to require the Maternal and Child Health Programs for Children with Special Needs to work with the schools and the State vocational rehabilitation agencies, to prepare young people before age 16 so they will have received the services they need to help them be good candidates for vocational rehabilitation services and real jobs for real pay, with benefits.

- Develop a mechanism to allow the blending of Federal funding when it is for the same purpose, so that funding "follows" individuals with disabilities and allows them to obtain the services they need with less bureaucratic red tape, more consumer choice and greater satisfaction.

- Institutionalize feedback from young people with disabilities into policy development and assure their participation in Federal, State and local policymaking.

Program Development

- Support and reinforce the goal expressed in the recently released Office of Personnel Management's report, *Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government,* to expand the full range of work-based learning opportunities for high school and college students with disabilities during the academic year by enhancing existing Federal government work-based learning programs, and where necessary, creating new opportunities for young people with disabilities.

- Create a "Get-to-Work" initiative focused on the large numbers of young people with disabilities who are still on Social Security and/or SSI disability benefits six months after completing college.

- Develop and expand use of individualized accounts for young people with disabilities available through the Health Care Financing Administration.

- Assure that health insurance incorporates the Title V requirement to develop a community system of services that provides health care through a medical "home" (not a place, but a system of services that is community-based, culturally competent, comprehensive and continuous).

- Examine and develop initiatives which strengthen the critical role of family members in the transition of young people with disabilities. This effort could also examine the link between family involvement and self-determination, choice and consumer control.

- Develop a National Youth Mentoring Program in partnership with State and local government and private sector employers.

- Examine how Federal programs serving young people with disabilities can be enhanced to increase and integrate academic and career development skill outcomes critical to successful transition results.

Public Awareness, Technical Assistance and Training

- Launch a public relations campaign to increase student, parental and provider expectations of young people with disabilities.

- Investigate methods for effectively reaching underserved populations, including those with low literacy levels, non-English speakers, those who speak English as a second language, and those without access to the Internet.

- Conduct a *Transition Summit and Research Forum* for State and local educators (e.g., secondary, adult and postsecondary education), vocational rehabilitation professionals, workforce development providers, SSA staff, researchers, grantees, advocates, young people with disabilities and families to address transition services policy and implementation issues for the future.

- Work with the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to develop a technical assistance, training and outreach campaign that assures youth with disabilities are properly served and participating in DOL's youth programs, including Job Corps, Youth Opportunities, School-to-Work, Year Round Youth, and Summer Youth.

- Direct the Department of Education to develop a model "Personal Learning Plan Guidance" that assists all students in receiving educational services and transitioning from school to work, or school to college to work.

- Build, expand and coordinate self-advocacy instruction for youth with disabilities.

- Develop training materials and programs for schools and community-based organizations to educate young people with disabilities about accommodations.

- Have accommodations follow individual from school, postsecondary education and into work.

- Emphasize the need to expand career preparedness and development in elementary and middle school years as well as during the early years of high school education.

- Develop a disability diagnostic tool(s) that can follow the person with a disability from early assessment through the entire life span and multiple service delivery systems.

- Refine and publicize the Department of Labor's Youth2Work and "YO! Movement" Web sites and use them as vehicles to disseminate information on young people with disabilities in transition.

Conclusion

Based on the Subcommittee's activities and input from stakeholders, several themes emerge: raising expectations; family involvement; employer involvement; changing demographics; and connecting and strengthening access to adequate health care and insurance, education, vocational rehabilitation and workforce development, and work incentive reform efforts.

It is imperative that specific strategies be examined and implemented to change expectations for young people with disabilities. The Subcommittee will develop innovative strategies to work with families and service providers around expectations and to widely promote a message about increasing expectations for young people with disabilities. Another theme is the crucial role of family members in the successful transition of young people with disabilities. Balancing the role of families with the emerging role of young people in determining and choosing their own road to transition and independent living will be addressed.

Employers, both large and small, are increasingly raising concerns that many young people do not have the necessary entry-level skills (academic, vocational, and employment) to be successful on their first job. Public-private partnerships with a variety of employers will be initiated in order to expand and increase the full range of work-based learning opportunities for young people with disabilities.

The Subcommittee is committed to addressing the theme of changing demographics and increasing diversity of young people with disabilities and how current Federal programs are meeting the needs of a

changing, and more diverse, population. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in future reports.

Finally, the Subcommittee continues to assess health, education, vocational rehabilitation, workforce activities, and work incentive reform efforts. We are looking at how strengthened enforcement of existing laws, coordination of general system delivery activities, and improved use of work incentives can improve transition results and ensure that young people with disabilities access, participate, and benefit from these important programs. The Healthy and Ready to Work Federal Interagency Work Group will be crucial to this assessment and resulting Federal activities.

The issues facing young people with disabilities who need to transition into the workplace are immense. They face multiple barriers — low family and provider expectations, poor self esteem, lack of educational and vocational supports, inadequate service delivery coordination, and health care and income support disincentives. The Subcommittee is raising all of these issues in an informed, research-based approach to problem solving. It will craft a coherent national policy addressing the needs of young people with disabilities that the Task Force can adopt and promote.

We refuse to throw another generation of young people into a welfare-like dependency system of public benefits. We must instill a strong sense of personal worth and responsibility, self-direction and independence, personal productivity and self-sufficiency in future generations of young adults with disabilities.

Resources

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Department of Education:
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services — Rehabilitation Services Administration and Office of Special Education Programs; Office of Postsecondary Education; Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs; Office of Adult and Vocational Education

Departments of Education and Labor:
National School-to-Work Office

Department of Health and Human Services:
Office of Family Assistance; Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs; Office of Civil Rights; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Office of Community Services

Department of Labor:
Employment and Training Administration — Office of Disabilities Initiatives and Office of Youth Programs; Women's Bureau

National Council on Disability

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

Social Security Administration:
Disability and Income Security Programs — Office of Employment Support Programs; Office of Policy

GROUP REPORTS
DAY ONE
June 20, 2000
National Transition Summit

Group #1

Desired Outcome:

Independent living and "meaningful citizenry" (includes sustainable and meaningful employment)

Action:

Educate local one stop operators and partners; state agencies; Federal agencies on the impacts of Employment On Public Entitlements and Insurance.

step: create partnerships with state agencies that govern financial institutions to produce educational materials–Model at Federal Level.

Action:

Increase Employer Involvement

step: provide real financial incentives (e.g., tax credits)

Action:

Align educational systems, including standards-based education, to produce multiple opportunities for young people.

steps:

1) increase department of education budget
2) policy directives that specifically target kids with all disabilities

Priority: Accessible health care and expanded affordable coverage

Action:

Create vehicles that ensure continue insurance of young people (post 18 years of age)

step: Federal policy (e.g., universal health care, expansion of title V)

Action:

Empowerment of young people and families

step:

1) educate on rights & resources grant monies from Federal agencies)
2) Federal/National Bill of Rights with mandate to states to create Bill of Rights as well.

Action:

Encourage multi-agency collaborations through transitions.

steps:

1) flexibility in funding at sate and Federal levels

2) look at "limiting" language in policy to prevent tracking of young people with respect to services (loosen the definition of "whose kid is it?")

Group #2 Day 1

1. Fully fund IDEA and follow through with implementation.

2. Enhance Inter Agency Collaboration through a system where funding follows individual.

3. Provide person-centered One Stop Services from date of diagnosis where funding follows individual.

4. Provide competency based professional development to all service providers.

5. Fund a media campaign to raise expectations.

Group # 3 Day 1

1. Reauthorization of IDEA with language change
   –"person-centered" strategies

2. Federally sponsored technical assistance to all stakeholders–include WBL; info on all systems, programs (system alignment).

3. Research/development for model programs; include evaluation.

4. Public information/awareness campaign.

5. Accountability for stakeholders –schools, employers.

Group 4 Day 1

1. Make all Federal agencies accountable by tying dollars to youth outcomes through GPRA, medicaid; monitor local providers (education community providers, medicaid) by outcomes.

2. Require that state improvement plans and grants incorporate core competencies related to long term planning, goals, and outcomes for youth with disabilities; addressing raining needs of educators, related services, and medical.

3. The Task Force should conduct a comprehensive, nationwide, culturally sensitive campaign to increase awareness of the capabilities and contributions of youth with disabilities; target all audiences.

4. Create and fund a Federal interagency commission for transition-aged youth; including all stakeholders.

5. Collect, analyze, and disseminate information and data related to the intended and unintended consequences of standards-based education for youth with disabilities.

Group 5 Day #1

1. Require interagency collaboration with strong mandates to co-fund programs/services.

2. Require postsecondary schools to offer a broad range of curricula and support services to prepare individuals for employment and self-sufficiency.

3. Develop a system of professional development that cross-trains educators, employers and related service providers that reflects the education/service provider licensor/certification framework.

4. Require workforce development programs to document the participation and successful completion of students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities.

5.Infuse STW (school-to-work) principles (contextual teaching and learning, work-based learning), functional skills, career development, and lifelong learning into the curriculum across all subject areas.

Group #6 Day 1

1. Task Force should work with Congress to redefine eligibility for public. Income support and related benefits so that the definition supports employment.

2. Enforce the requirements of IDEA and other legislation, particularly that which pertains to the education of individuals with disabilities.

3. Establish local youth councils to promote the training and education of youth with disabilities regarding their civil rights.

4. Create tax incentives and recognition which encourage employers to participate in job fairs, STW and hire people with disabilities.

5. Improve and support student skills and employability skills:
   - create community based experiences;
   - courses in job employment skills; and
   - include in all STW programs.

Group #7 Day 1

1. Refocus Federal policy to support individual choice and control.

2. Fully fund and implement IDEA with a focus on accountability for outcomes.

3. Clearly identify and disseminate information about existing employer incentives to support hiring and retention of people with disabilities.

4. Ensure that youths and adults with disabilities have all of the support and opportunity necessary to reach their full potential.

5. Build community capacity through public education and awareness that goes beyond the K-12 school system.

6. Create a system of access to information that facilitates the competency and capacity of youths with disabilities and their families to advocate for their needs.

Group #8 Day 1

Priorities

1. A public awareness campaign concerning the needs of students with disabilities and the wide range of disabilities.

2. Review, identify, and re-align existing policies that support services for students with disabilities across federal agencies.

3. Identify "best practices" for students with disabilities to:

Improve skills by:

a) self-knowledge
b) self-advocacy
c) social skills

To provide a good match in education/training programs, careers, and jobs, and to promote success.

4. Provide funding for the development of mentorship programs for youth with disabilities.

5. All Federal policy concerning youth with disabilities will have a focus upon the development of self awareness and advocacy skills:

- Is the language there?
- Is stated properly?
- Include in all "Request for Proposals" (RFP's).

Group #9 Day 1

Priority #1

Initiate–

Comprehensiveness and consistency in training which empowers stakeholders and results in:

1. Flexible delivery of culturally competent supportive services.
2. Strategies unique to the community.
3. Which results in positive outcomes for the individual.

Action–

Increased funding for research and training that mandates cross agency participation.

Priority # 2

Increased availability of funding and resources that promotes a range of housing options that honors individual choice.

Action–

Create and expand creative financing options for individual home ownership and other housing options.

Priority # 3

Create authentic collaboration and coordination in service delivery through a single point of entry for information and services.

Action–

Create and promote an integrated national database* that promotes collaboration and coordination.

*to access any database.

Group # 10 Day 1

Priority #1: The Task Force will create strategies to ensure success in supporting goals of all students and families with a special emphasis on underserved populations.

Priority #2: The Task Force will establish community wide strategies to provide and develop partnerships to ensure resource integration for all students.

Priority #3: The Task Force will put forth an agenda that promotes inclusive (i.e. most integrated) lives and redefines special education as a means of support.

Priority #4: The Task Force will promote data-driven change strategies to build capacity to do things differently.

Priority #5: The Task Force will promote funding to appropriately support the priorities.

Group #11 Day 1

1. Create a user friendly transition system.

2. Promote youth empowerment.

3. Produce a positive image campaign.

4. Demonstrate to employers the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

5. Expand access to health coverage.

6. Crate a Presidential Youth Task Force.

Group #12 Day 1

The Task Force should:

1. Increase the number of youth with disabilities who participate in work based learning within the federal government and outside.

2. Change SSI policy:
   - to ensure work-based learning does not threaten SSI eligibility
   - to increase income and assets for student-earned income exclusion
   - to ensure that SSI participants retain entire cash benefits until combined income exceed poverty level.

3. Examine ways to identify and reclaim youth with disabilities who are out of school:
   - seek ways to engage out-of-school youth with disabilities in training, education, and developmental opportunities (e.g., WBL)
   - examine the impact of high stakes testing on youth with disabilities to ensure no adverse impact.

Group #13 Day 1

Guiding Principles:

- Build a system of consumer-driven (student/"family") support based on civil rights and self advocacy

that.....

- is customized to individual needs (over system needs)
- offers informed choices
- recognizes diversity of individuals (socio-economic, ethnic, racial, gender, cross-disability)
- maximizes use of funding; manages resources effectively
- is a life-long continuing process that integrates child and adult model (e.g. learning, teaching, program, service delivery)
- aligns system goals and outcomes to consumer needs, evolving as needs change
- establishes a national baseline of expected services and support

Recommendations

- Federal government models the coordination/collaboration and linkages of services and program and research efforts.
- Eliminate redundancy in Federal programs.
- Establish a national education campaign to build awareness of services and rights.
- Increase capacity of community to focus on unserved and underserved populations by professional development training and competitive employment for community members to meet service needs.
- Federal funding guidelines should require a standard representation of paid consumers, where Federal money flows.
- Add disability to SBA Section 8A to promote consumer-owned businesses.

GROUP REPORTS
Day Two
June 21, 2000
National Transition Summit

EMPLOYERS: Group #1 Day 2

Actions to take:

1. Help educate other employers about STC. Help them understand importance of involvement especially in career and technical education. Communicate benefits of participation.

2. Help education groups understand how to market to employers.
   - Heightened understanding from employer perspective of what employers need.

3. Employers need to better communicate the skills people need to function the workplace including technical skills but especially assisted technology skills.

4. Employers should assist with and inform the curriculum development process.

Federal Support Needed:

- Minimize points of contact for employers (better coordination through One-Stops)

- Identify and promote intermediary entities to broker connections between employers, schools, and agencies.

- More help from schools and agencies to provide young people with the support they will need to succeed beyond secondary ed in the workplace. (E.g., employers need support to effectively accommodate young people with disabilities.)

- Better communicate availability of existing financial supports that help businesses accommodate workers with disabilities. (Especially to small and medium sized businesses, includes health care.)

LOCAL PROVIDERS: Group #2 Day 2

- Come to common understanding on the nature and importance of customer choice/control/responsibility.
- Help build employer led intermediary organizations.
- Develop local collaboratives to achieve system alignment (a la youth councils)
- Enhance, strengthen and expand professional development opportunities **and** recruit and prepare transition specialists.
- Create opportunities to participate in post Summit follow on activities, e.g. working groups, issue groups.

How Federal Government Can Help

- Encourage and fund expansion of employer-led intermediary organizations.
- Offer incentive grants to states and localities to accomplish inter-agency cross training.
- Fund the creation of a collaborative of national organizations that would concentrate on developing consistent principles and common language.
- Encourage and support the development of more transition specialist education and training programs.

LOCAL PROVIDERS: Group #3 Day 2

What 5 (five) actions can our stakeholder group, Local Agencies, take to make the priorities happen? We took 2 of the 5 priorities.

1st–Improve employment rate:

- Include the infusion of STW
- Employer partnerships
- Health insurance

What we can do?

1. Educate employers about youth with and without disabilities.
2. Include employers to:
   a) understand their needs and vice versa
   b) be a part of planning development process of STW curricula
3. Collaborate internship with employer financed by service provider
4. Get community to support participating employers

How can the Federal Government equip, empower, and support us to do it?

1. Streamline tax incentives for hiring youth
   a) user friendly
   b) publicize the tax incentives
2. Examine tax incentive policy remove ceiling/make it flexible –maybe replace hiring with mentoring or other activities.
3. Support the development of web based clearinghouse that's local and relevant–"One-Stop WordNet."
4. Assure outcome accountability: for funded programs.
5. Make community organizations aware of availability funding sources.
6. Align SSI/work incentives.
7. Improve access to health care so it's not a dis-incentive to employers.
8. Long-term public service/awareness campaign.

2nd Align programs and services and foster community partnerships to improve outcomes.

What we can do?

1. Willing to communicate/offer services to foster partnerships.
   a) committed to be a partner in "One-Stop Shops."

2. Coordinate information and application for all community organizations so consumer can access in one place and process is user friendly.

What Federal government can do?

1. Universal application for services➡ Federal and local services.

2. Provide funding incentives, i.e. matching grants to those communities with a proven track record of collaborative team-work resulting in successful outcomes for youth.

National Advocacy Organizations: Group #4 Day 2

Action #1: Establish and cultivate opportunities for young people with disabilities and their families to acquire leadership skills, knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and control of the services and supports designed for their benefit at the local, state, national, and international level.

Federal Action:

1. RFP's will include the priority action as a requirement for funding.
2. New and existing state implementation plans will be required to incorporate this goal.

Action #2: Advocate for full funding and implementation of IDEA to realize the spirit as well as letter of the law.

Federal Role: Need presidential and bipartisan leadership supporting this action without negatively impacting other education or human service programs.

Action #3: Develop partnerships at the local, state, national, and international level with private sector employers to assist youth with disabilities to transition to productive and satisfying careers.

Federal Role:

1. Make tax incentives consistent and easier to understand.
2. Involve businesses in strategic planning.

Action #4: Advocate that Federal systems impacting youth with disabilities (i.e., education, health, employment, and income supports) work to align their goals and practices to support equality of opportunity, economic self-sufficiency, independent living and full participation in all aspects of society.

Action #5: Advocate for the strategic alignment at the local, state, and Federal levels of general, special, and vocational services in K-12 systems.

Federal Role:

1. Require that teacher preparation and instructional methods be based on scientific research.
2. Increase collaboration among departments and programs of the U.S. Department of Education.

Action #6: Set national goals targeting quantifiable outcomes for employment, dropout rates, independent living, postsecondary enrollment, community participation, and quality of life.

Federal Role: Accept goals established by national advocacy organizations and establish regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Action #7: Refocus Federal policy and redesign systems to focus on person centered services with individuals choice and control.

Federal Role: Each agency develop plans to move to individual choice and control of budgets, services , and supports.

National Organizations: Group #5 Day 2

1. Create, maintain and market a database that is comprehensive, searchable, user-friendly, interactive of all state and federal resources and programs that is easily accessed.

Federal Role: fund this database either issue an RFP or use existing projects (IDEA Partnerships?)–Long term commitment.

2. Create and share information/articles including best practices with other national organizations that can be used in publications to be disseminated to a variety of audiences e.g. educators, families, employers, rehab professionals, policy-makers, and other key opinion leaders.

Federal Role: Assist in dissemination, review materials within 90 days, initiate materials to be disseminated to members of national organizations

3. Advocate for full funding for existing legislation not at the expense of other education or human service programs.

Federal Role: Fully fund legislation–administration can request Congress can approve.

4. National organizations can work together to develop a model set of valid and reliable indicators used to measure the success of the system to produce desired outcomes.

Federal Role: Share expertise and make this a priority.

5. Encourage increased employer and labor involvement through employer led organizations promoting employers as a valued constituency group.

Federal Role: Disseminate information; involve Department of Commerce; learn from past failed efforts; and provide incentives.

Parents/Parent Organizations: Group #6 Day 2

Parent Action: Advocacy for our children

Federal Role: Enforce law/policies that exist

- Pull funding for organizations not in compliance
- Require Federal and state/tribal interagency councils
- Transition Department of cross-agency dedicated staff, within state government
- Capture and distribute data regarding transition

Parent Action: Learn options/opportunities and provide info to our children

Federal Role:

- Seamless system of services
- Easy to understand written info about what is available, where to go for assistance
- dedicated funding for transition, including cultural competency/sensitivity and family values

Parent Action: Partnership with our children in planning/development of training for medical people

Federal Role: Dedicated funds to train/support healthcare professionals in serving adults with disabilities (seamless transition from child→adult medical/health services).

State Agencies: Group #7 Day 2

Action: Create more flexibility within the curriculum to require the development of life and career-focused skills, together with academic skills, on an individual basis.

Federal Support:
1. Funding streams that support the development of career-focused skills, including co-mingled funds.
2. Legislate the availability of financial aid for career programs at the postsecondary level for less than an associate degree and part-time students.

Action: Increase interagency coordination

Examples:
3. reorganize agencies to facilitate working together
4. joint planning or state plan submission
5. high-level agency staff coordination/problem-solving, e.g. kids cabinet

Federal Support:
6. Require federally-funded programs to submit coordinated plans
7. Provide for possibility of co-mingling funds

Action: Increase number of qualified teachers (e.g.)

8. increase level of respect
9. increase number of related service personnel to assist teachers
10. use community health and employment service providers in the schools
11. sponsor cross-training programs for teachers, related service providers and leadership

Federal Support: Discretionary grants should compel collaboration of agencies related to purpose of grant.

Action: implementation and monitoring of IDEA, particularly transition requirements. →Provide targeted technical assistance.

Federal Support:
12. Increase funding for TA
13. Funds tied to outcomes
14. do not fund states not implementing the requirements.

Action: Require student-lead IEP's and goal-setting.
15. require self-determination training and experiences for family and students
16. staff development for teachers around self-determination
17. feedback from students and families as part of IEP for accountability.

Federal Support: Add Federal requirements for above in IDEA with additional funding.

Universities/Projects: Group #8 Day 2

Action 1: Develop the leadership for state and local stakeholders to promote the understanding of the philosophy of transition and its interpretation across all disciplines.

Federal:

1. Funding to support training of state and local stakeholders
2. Continue model demonstration programs.

Action 2: Promote awareness and develop strategies for integrating transition/STW into standard-based education.

Federal: Provide monitoring and technical assistance to ensure the realization of this goal.

Action 3: Expand the role of Centers for Independent Living (CIL) in transition services.

Federal:

1. Provide funds to support these services.
2. Within RFP process, encourage collaboration CILs.

Action 4: Universities should make available programs for students with all disabilities including those students with developmental disabilities.

Federal: Develop model university level programs for students with developmental disabilities.

Action 5: All youth and adults with disabilities shall have accessible, expanded, and affordable health care.

Federal:

1. Promotion of medical education
2. Assuring coverage beyond 18 years of age
3. Expansion of coverage by Title V programs, managed care organizations, and sate children's Health Ins. programs.

Universities/Projects: Group #9 Day 2

Action: Advocacy for national database

Federal Support: Create multi-source databank which integrates data refunding and resources.

Action: Training packages for MOU for educators.

Federal Support: Provide access to existing MOU's web based.

Action: Web based laboratory.

Federal Support: Fund it.

Action: Demonstrate/model the importance of career development and applied academics at all levels of education.

Federal Support: Examine statutory changes and personnel prep grant priority. Design a seamless funding mechanism among DOL, DOE, HHS that are responsible for providing services to young adults with disabilities.

Action: provide TA, program evaluation and training in:

4. transition systems change
5. evaluation/outcome data
6. teacher preparation
7. others (distance education, technology resources)

Federal Support: Priorities for grants and support.

Federal Participants: Group # 12 Day 2

What will support the different Federal agencies in aligning resources and keeping disability issues on the "radar" screen?

1. Establish an inter agency committee to develop "seamless" grants that include the priorities discussed (e.g., WBL, focus on OSY with disabilities).

2. Develop a resource map to share with Federal agencies and grantees.

3. Train and educate **ALL** Federal staff on disability issues and legislation.

4. Create a one-stop shop for providers to access resources and available training to better serve PWD.

5. Hold Federal agencies and their grantees accountable to disability law and regulations.

Youth: Group #10 Day 2

1. The Task Force on Youth with Disabilities will advise Federal agencies on ways to facilitate self-advocacy and self-empowerment for youth with disabilities.
   - ✔Mentoring
   - ✔Access to information
   - ✔Inclusive and representative appointee's

2. The Presidential Task Force will recommend to the President the creation of the Task Force on Youth with Disabilities.

3. The Federal government will financially support the youth group (from the Summit) coming back together to finish its task force proposal.

4. The youth group commits to staying in touch through a listserv, a bulletin board, and other ways. WWW.halftheplanetyouthsummit.com (?)

Youth Policy Agenda Recommendations

Technology

- Increase access to technology; increase funding for assistive technology
- Encourage the federal government and agencies at the state, national, and international levels to use the Internet to disperse information
- Utilize the latest technology, including the internet, to communicate with the youth community

Youth Specific Issues

- Provide information, including relevant laws and public policy, in youth friendly language
- Increase ease of access to complaint procedures
- Give youth a legitimate voice in policy making with meaningful positions on government boards and other policymaking bodies
- Support youth programs at the state and local levels

Employment

- Provide additional opportunities for youth to receive work experience without it negatively effecting their SSI Benefits
- Recommend that the Social Security Administration create a program specifically for youth in transition
- Create additional youth related internships, job shadowing and volunteer programs directed at including disabled youth; create a volunteer program within the federal government to fill empty federal positions in a temporary capacity while the government searches for permanent employees
- Create mentoring programs which match young people with disabilities with other people with disabilities who hold jobs in their interest areas
- Redefine eligibility for SSI/SSDI so that it is not based on employability, employment status, or income

High school transition

- Create policy at the state level which requires that young people, while in high school, receive training on the relevant policies which affect them. This should include the American's with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and policies regarding transition for students who receive special education services. Learning about disability policy should be a requirement of all transition plans and individualized education programs.

- Educate high school students about registering to vote and the importance of voting as a part of the transition process from high school to adult life

Education/training

- Recommend that federal organizations promote and provide funding for youth education regarding disability systems and related policy including Social Security, Vocational Rehabilitation, ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and other relevant disability policy

- Recommend that federal and statewide agencies provide training on the basics of how to navigate systems. This would include understanding how to use support programs, the benefits and disincentives associated with transitioning to public supports, and could focus on basic understanding of SSI, Vocational Rehabilitation, and how national legislation affects the lives of youth with Disabilities

- Educate families through positive support and training on the importance of independence and youth leading their own lives

Teacher Training

- Modify special education teacher certification curriculum to include mandatory courses on disability legislation and policy such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and transition planning for students who receive special education services

- Train teachers to support all students in moving to meaningful careers rather than transitioning to public support programs such as SSI

- Modify general teacher certification to include a course on basic disability issues

- Provide training and education for educators and those service providers for individuals with disabilities, including congressional offices and federal offices

Youth Leadership

- Encourage youth held positions on local, statewide, national, and international boards, councils, taskforces, and other organizations

- Promote the development and funding of local and statewide youth leadership conferences and organizations as a method of training and promoting information dissemination

- Support through funding and endorsement the development programs at the state and local levels which would involve youth mentoring youth

- Ensure the involvement of young people from multiple cultures, disabilities and languages

- Create a Presidentially appointed Task Force on youth with disabilities to empower youth and advise federal agencies

- Create a position to support the assistant secretary on disability at the Department of Labor to concentrate on youth issues

Culturally Competent Outreach

- Department of Labor – Alexis Herman to visit sheltered workshops
- Department of Health and Human Services – Donna Shalala to visit nursing homes
- Department of Education - Richard Riley to visit segregated Special Education classroom
- Department of Housing and Urban Development – Andrew Cuomo to Visit segregated housing projects
- Create a survey directed at gaining youth perspectives, ideas, and opinions regarding programs and services directed at youth

Media

- Use various non-print media such as radio, television and the internet to reach youth and culturally diverse populations

- Recommend the development of a public awareness campaign on disability issues which concentrates on the message "Everyone can work and everyone should work"

- Hold the media accountable for incorrect information

- Partner with other youth organizations to educate the public on the positive attributes of young people

Enforcement

- Recommend the full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- Enforce IDEA, ADA, Section 504, and other disability legislation
- Include disability under all equal employment opportunity notices in all places of employment
- Support hate crimes legislation

Services

- Fund satellite offices of independent living centers in low income and culturally diverse communities
- Increase the number of partners in local One-Stop centers; include independent living and other community agencies
- Increase funding for translators and interpreters

Other logical partners to build coalitions:

Prudential Youth Leadership; Do Something; YMCA; Campus Student Services; Boy and Girl Scouts of America; Americorps; Jesuit Volunteer Programs; corporate sponsors; 4H of America; local, national and international celebrities; faith communities; Future Business Leaders of America; Trial Lawyers Association; parent organizations; students in juvenile detention centers; Peacecorps