



Key points:

- **Initiative by Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities began in FY 2011**
- **Newly funded efforts include Utah school-to-work transition project**
- **Grants part of effort to improve post-school outcomes in era of results-driven accountability**

HHS expands initiative for youth, young adults with intellectual, developmental disabilities

ED is deeply concerned about making sure students with disabilities leave school with real prospects for further education and jobs, as evidenced by the emphasis on holding states accountable for student outcomes, not mere compliance with the IDEA.

But ED is not the only agency that has a hand in post-school outcomes -- so does the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, part of the Administration for Community Living at the Health and Human Services Department.

In FY 2011, for example, it made a series of [Partnerships in Employment Systems Change](#) grants aimed at helping youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities find competitive, integrated employment, meaning jobs that pay at least the minimum wage in a setting where people with and without disabilities work side by side.

This month, AIDD announced a new round of grants under what is now the Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Initiative.

The grants to six states, totaling \$1.8 million, will "enhance collaboration across existing state systems, including programs administered by state developmental disabilities agencies, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, state educational agencies, and other entities to prioritize employment as the first and preferred option for youth and young adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities," it said.

As the agency noted, collaboration is the key in what can be a fractured sector, especially in the hand-off from schools to vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Indeed, Congress insisted that state VR units reserve 15 percent of their federal grants for pre-employment transition services as part of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#), Pub. L. No. 113-128. In addition, Congress barred districts from entering into contracts or other arrangements with employers for the purpose of paying people under age 25 less than the minimum wage, as permitted by Section 14(c) of the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) for people "whose earning or productive capacity is impaired by age, physical or mental deficiency, or injury."

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AIDD's new grantees include the Massachusetts Partnership for Transition to Employment; Able South Carolina: The South Carolina Employment First Initiative; and the Utah School to Work Interagency Transition Initiative.

Assisting in the new round of grants is [TASH](#), which will provide technical assistance.

"TASH is thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to enhance employment opportunities of youth with disabilities," according to a statement from Executive Director Ruthie-Marie Beckwith. "We are looking forward to working with our colleagues at [TransCen Inc.](#) and all of the leaders and stakeholders in our Partnerships in Employment states."

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