



University of Connecticut Health Center

Connect-Ability Infrastructure Change

Annual Report:
January-December 2009

Prepared by:

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Background

Connect-Ability is an initiative that has grown out of Connecticut's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). The purpose of Connect-Ability is to improve the infrastructure for people with disabilities who want to work. It is organized around a comprehensive strategic plan led by the Department of Social Services' (DSS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS). The plan was developed with input from a broad range of stakeholders in Connecticut including employers, people with disabilities, associations such as Chambers of Commerce and business organizations, education professionals, community providers, parents of youth with disabilities, and representatives of state and local government agencies. The plan envisions that all of these groups are part of the solution to increasing the employment of people with disabilities. Connect-Ability focuses on four priority areas: recruitment, employment, promotion and retention; transition from school to work; transportation; and stakeholder education. It is designed to address existing barriers to employment (e.g., low expectations, inadequately planned transition from school to work, inadequate transportation, and the process of recruitment, hiring and promoting) that keep employers and job seekers with disabilities from connecting with one another and aims to improve the infrastructure for people with disabilities who want to work (more information is available at www.connect-ability.com).

Connect-Ability's comprehensive marketing campaign, which was launched in June 2007, is intended to influence people's perceptions of one another and to encourage Connecticut employers to hire able job seekers with disabilities. The communications campaign centers on Connecticut people and employers who haven't allowed a disability to prevent job success and includes videos, television, radio, and print messages. The marketing campaign and website feature a number of vignettes of Connecticut employees with disabilities and illustrate how integral they are to Connecticut's work environment. Real-life employers are also featured to demonstrate that the accommodations needed to employ people with disabilities are neither difficult nor costly to make. The purpose of the campaign, with a tagline of "See the Ability," is to demonstrate that there are multiple benefits to hiring people with disabilities and this begins with seeing the abilities they possess.

Connect-Ability contracted with a research team from the University of Connecticut Health Center to measure its progress in achieving each element of the strategic plan. One key aspect of that evaluation is to capture and document all infrastructure changes relevant to the employment of people with disabilities, whether directly or indirectly related to Connect-Ability. Infrastructure change is broadly defined and can include changes to government agency policies and practices, changes to employer practices, development of new programs, and information dissemination, among others. Given the broad definition of infrastructure change, it is often hard to capture the import of these changes on job seekers with disabilities.

Methods

A series of quarterly key informant interviews were chosen as the primary methodology for this evaluation because they provide structure and consistency to information-gathering and are especially suited to getting a snapshot of a specific area of interest. These interviews are designed to access a broad cross-section of the community and to hear the perceptions of people representing many different agencies and organizations. Although this approach is time intensive, key informant interviews are valuable in providing descriptive data and documenting the knowledge and experiences of people in their own words. In addition, evaluators are able to compare and contrast responses and can look for similarities and differences in responses. It also allows for the identification of themes that may be useful in planning for the future.

The Connect-Ability Steering Committee collaborated with the evaluation team to identify a list of potential interview participants. The twenty-seven Committee members were selected for membership based on their demonstrated leadership and commitment to improved employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Further, their knowledge and experience allows them to influence their respective agency leadership or consumer groups for which they represent. Twenty-three people with knowledge of some aspect of the employment infrastructure for people with disabilities in Connecticut were identified as key informants. In addition to suggesting people on the Connect-Ability staff, key informants from the following organizations were identified as people who would be especially informative and provide a range of perspectives:

- Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)
- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)
- Business Leadership Network (BLN)
- CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- CT Department of Labor (DOL)
- CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
- CT Department of Social Services (DSS)
- CT Department of Transportation (DOT)
- CT State Department of Education (SDE)
- Disability Advocacy Collaborative (DAC)
- Job Developers Consortium - CTWorks

- Mintz and Hoke (the company hired to develop the Connect-Ability marketing campaign)

In mid-May of 2008, key informants were sent a letter explaining the evaluation process and inviting them to participate in providing feedback and documenting evidence of infrastructure change associated with Connecticut's strategic plan. To help people prepare for the interview, key informants were provided with specific open-ended questions that were developed by the Steering Committee and members of the evaluation team. Questions were designed to capture information about infrastructure changes related to the employment of people with disabilities and any barriers that may prevent infrastructure changes from taking place. Questions were worded narrowly enough to obtain this information, but were also broad enough to allow people to share their perceptions and suggestions. Prompts were included to draw out more specific information and to help people think more deeply about their responses.

During the interviews, all key informants were asked each of the following five questions.

- 1) What positive changes can you document that can be directly attributed to Connect-Ability?
Prompt: Please keep in mind this could include: policy changes, new programs or grants, program changes, information dissemination activities or cross agency collaboration.
- 2) What positive changes can you document that may not be attributable to Connect-Ability, but have directly impacted the employment of people with disabilities?
Prompt: Please keep in mind this could include: policy changes, new programs or grants, program changes, information dissemination activities or cross agency collaboration.
- 3) What changes can you document that may have had an adverse impact on the employment of people with disabilities?
Prompt: Please keep in mind this could include: policy changes, new programs or grants, program changes, information dissemination activities or cross agency collaboration.
- 4) What barriers can you document that may be getting in the way of infrastructure changes that would affect the employment of people with disabilities?
Prompt: This could include administrative barriers, delays, and/or union issues.
- 5) What promising practices, exceptional websites, model employer(s), or other piece of information have you encountered related to the employment of people with disabilities?

Key informants were also invited to respond to any of the following additional questions.

- 1) What novel and effective approaches have been successful in developing mutually beneficial partnerships for businesses and people with disabilities?
- 2) What factors have been crucial in facilitating partnerships with employers?
- 3) How does your program/agency address barriers to developing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities?
- 4) What are the best practices for forging new partnerships and expanding outreach to employers?
- 5) What steps are needed to enhance the existing infrastructure to adequately support the employment of people with disabilities?
- 6) What are the needs of employers in urban or rural areas, and how can these needs be addressed to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities?
- 7) How can we identify existing infrastructure and leverage the infrastructure to improve the Connect-Ability project?

Upon a review of the proposed evaluation strategy, the team decided to implement a longitudinal evaluation process starting with Connect-Ability's inception. The initial interview for the evaluation covered the time period from January 2007 through December 2007. Subsequent interviews have been conducted quarterly, to capture as much data as possible and to avoid the loss of information important to the evaluation, but are compiled in yearly reports.

A total of twenty-three key informants were identified for the first 2008 quarterly interviews. Two of the twenty-three key informants declined to participate in the evaluation and a third was on medical leave and unavailable to participate in the first quarterly interview. Twenty-one of the original 23 key informants were identified for the second quarterly interviews and interviews with all 21 informants were completed. The same twenty-one key informants were identified for the third quarterly interviews. Twenty interviews were completed; one key informant was on medical leave and unable to participate in the interview. Prior to the final 2008 quarterly interviews, an additional individual was added to the key informant list. This key informant was appointed Executive Director of the Business Leadership Network in August 2008 and identified as a person with valuable information about infrastructure change in Connecticut.

In 2009, twenty quarterly interviews for the time period January through March were conducted with the same individuals interviewed during the last quarter of the previous year. All first quarter interviews were completed between April 13th and May 27th. Twenty-two key informants completed interviews for the second quarter (April-June) between June 23rd and August 18th. During this quarter,

one key informant affiliated with Job Developers Consortium - CTWorks was replaced by a colleague. Two of the key informants affiliated with DSS/BRS and DDS were interviewed prior to retiring at the end of June and were not replaced. Twenty key informants completed interviews for the third quarter (July-September) between October 5th and November 23rd.

Additional Key Informants

An additional eight key informants were identified and added mid-year to expand the original key informant interview group. The additional key informants were suggested by members of the Connect-Ability staff and Steering Committee as persons with knowledge of an important aspect of the employment infrastructure for people with disabilities in Connecticut and completed initial interviews between October 20th and November 23rd that covered the time period January through September 2009. These key informants were interviewed a second time during the 9th wave of interviews and will continue to be interviewed with the original informants during 2010.

The additional key informants were asked the same questions and probes as the original key informants. All responses for the additional informants were coded in similar manner to the ongoing key informant interviews and included in the overall report. Organizational affiliations of these informants include:

- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (includes transition counseling, benefits counseling, Walgreens project, Ticket To Work initiative, and the newly created Employment division)
- CT Department of Developmental Services regional office
- State Education Resource Center
- Corporation for Supportive Housing

A total of twenty-eight informants, including the additional eight key informants, were contacted in early January 2010 to participate in the 9th wave of interviews for the time period October through December 2009. Twenty-seven interviews were completed between January 13, 2010 and February 24, 2010. One of the key informants was unable to complete an interview.

Connect-Ability Local Level Pilot Informants

Key informants chosen because of their association with the Connect-Ability Local Level Pilot (LLP) initiative were included in a one-time infrastructure change interview. Nine organizations were involved in the LLP initiative all of which implemented their strategic plans in 2009. The implementation phase started as early as January 2009 and terminated December 31, 2009 and included activities to support employment, school-to-work transition and transportation objectives in their local region. The pilot initiative involved a wide range of organizations including:

- Capitol Region Education Council (regional education services center)
- New England Assistive Technology Center at Oakhill (private provider of comprehensive services in assistive technology)
- The WorkPlace of Southwest CT and Workforce Alliance of South Central CT (Workforce Investment Boards)

- City of New Haven (city department of services for persons with disability)
- Padres Abriendo Puertas (Latino community-based parent organization to advocate for children devoted to inclusion of children with developmental and mental health disabilities providing training and services)
- Bristol Community Organization (community action agency serving low income and disabled adults and providing local paratransit service)
- CT Association of Centers for Independent Living (non-profit service agency for people of all ages and all types of disability)
- ARC of New London County (non-profit organization founded by parents of children with mental retardation to provide educational opportunities, competitive employment and community living skills)

The interview process was similar to that of the other key informants with the same list of questions and probes provided; however the time period covered during the interview was January-December 2009. Infrastructure interviews were conducted by phone for eight of the nine pilots. Key informants included a single project coordinator or leader from seven pilots, a three-member project team from one pilot, and a two-member project team from one other pilot. One pilot prepared responses to the questions in writing with other partner collaborators in lieu of a phone interview. Two other pilots also prepared written notes by the pilot leader prior to the phone interview during which additional information was collected. The written interview response was received in person on December 8, and the remaining eight phone interviews were conducted between December 16, 2009 and January 20, 2010. All responses from the LLPs were coded in similar manner to the ongoing key informant interviews and are included within the overall report.

Abbreviations used in the tables for the LLPs are as follows:

- ARC - ARC of New London
- BCO - Bristol Community Organization
- CACIL - CT Association of Centers for Independent Living
- CREC - Capitol Region Education Council
- NEAT - New England Assistive Technology Center at Oakhill
- NH - City of New Haven, Department of Services for People with Disabilities
- PAP - Padres Abriendo Puertas
- WFA - Workforce Alliance
- WKP - The Workplace

Results

Data from the interviews are organized into four tables: Infrastructure Changes, Barriers to Employment, Promising Practices, and Suggestions for Future Actions. Content within all four tables is organized by the four Connect-Ability priority areas, with an additional “Other” category.

For each of the content areas in Table 1, highlights that are directly attributed to Connect-Ability are listed first and are followed by those that are indirectly related to Connect-Ability. Within each content area, highlights are organized by a summary category and type of change (see table below), and then alphabetically by organization where appropriate. The highlights of specific organizations are not prioritized in any particular order. Two new types of change were added this year: NET - New or Expanded Network Relations and ADD-RES - Added Resources for New Hires and/or People with Disabilities, AT Training, Marketing.

Summary Category Abbreviations	Type of Change Category Abbreviations
MKT - Marketing Campaign	PoCh - Policy Change
LLP - Local Level Pilot Initiative	NPG - New Programs/Grants
REL-B - Relationship with Business	PrCh - Program Change
REL-S - Relationship with State Agency	ID - Information Dissemination
REL-O - Relationship with Other Stakeholder	NET - New or Expanded Network Relations
POL - Policies	ADD-RES - Added Resources for New Hires and/or People with Disabilities, AT Training, Marketing
PRG - Programs/New or Revised Grants	

Some highlights may affect more than one content area. These are placed in the area deemed most appropriate.

Table 1. Infrastructure Changes

Content Areas	Highlights	Summary Category	Type of Change
Stakeholder Education	<p><i>Directly attributed to Connect-Ability</i> Indirectly related to Connect-Ability</p>		
	<p><i>BRS and BESB representatives were interviewed at WRCH. They spoke on how Connect-Ability removes barriers for job seekers with disabilities and helping employers retain employees who have acquired disabilities. The interview was aired on the May 10th Spotlight (7-7:30 a.m.).</i></p>	MKT	ID
	<p><i>BRS, BESB, DAS, and DOL used American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) 2009 funds and collaborated to send a one-page stimulus flyer to CT employers in their tax letters for the purpose of raising awareness regarding Connect-Ability and the employment of people with disabilities. More than 24 employers responded with job leads and at least three people were placed in jobs.</i></p>	MKT	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability created an ad geared toward businesses called A Leading Economic Indicator. This went out as a print ad and in journals in October. Newspapers publishing this ad included: Business New Haven, Hartford Courant, New Haven Register, and the Hartford Business Journal.</i></p>	MKT	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability has given Mintz and Hoke contacts and new information on the economic stimulus and how to make it work for business. Connect-Ability helped Mintz and Hoke with their information needs by encouraging them to focus on employers and bridge the gap. It also helped them by responding to questions and providing good examples, such as the example of Matthew Radler, 19, who is the first person Ability Beyond Disability helped Pinchbeck's Rose Farm hire.</i></p>	MKT	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability created, edited, and finalized an employer 60 second television spot, 30 second radio spot, new print ad (A Leading Economic Indicator), and internet banner ads in September that aired for 3 weeks to promote the Employment Summit and National</i></p>	MKT	ID

	Disability Employment Awareness Month.		
	Connect-Ability is part of a national leadership group, Think Beyond the Label, that provides feedback to a national marketing campaign by editing creative concepts for print advertisements. The Connect-Ability state campaign was conducted in September and October, and the national Think Beyond the Label campaign will start in February 2010. Think Beyond the Label raises awareness about hiring people with disabilities and suggests that it makes good business sense to do so. More information about Think Beyond the Label is available at http://www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com/Default.aspx	MKT	ID
	Connect-Ability media campaign and Technical Assistance Center has had an impact in disseminating information to employers and people with disabilities. Consumers who have gotten the Connect-Ability number through the website or ads are calling for assistance. One person who sought information was hired as a counselor at BRS.	MKT	ID
	Connect-Ability is including Her Game 2 Productions in its additional round of success stories and is completing work on a video about an employee with a disability who works there. The video demonstrates the partnership between Her Game 2 and BRS in helping secure permanent employment for an individual as he was ending his three month internship at the company. As an employer, Her Game 2 recognizes the ability in people who are able and worked with BRS to create an opportunity for one of its clients. Connect-Ability plans to present the video during its April to June 2010 media campaign. More information on Her Game 2 is available at http://www.hergame2.com/	MKT	ID
	Connect-Ability worked with Mintz and Hoke to produce another success story focusing on the employment experience of Lisa Ellis, a lifeguard with Down syndrome who works at the YMCA in Fairfield, CT. The video shoot was in December and will be finalized by March 2010. This story will be disseminated in a one-sheet success story, video, TV, radio, website, and print ads.	MKT	ID
	Connect-Ability partnered with Mintz and Hoke to redesign the look of the Connect-Ability website and will hand it off for implementation and coding in March 2010. The goal is to have the look, feel, and navigation of the website completed by May 1, 2010. It will be cleaner, easier to navigate and include more information about success stories. Eighty percent of the work has involved reorganization of the website and 20 percent has been providing fresh information.	MKT	ID

	<p><i>Connect-Ability continued to participate in the National Technical Assistance and Research Center (NTAR) Leadership Center grant and received specialized technical assistance, leadership support, and other resources to develop innovative approaches to improve employment for people with disabilities. Specifically, NTAR helped Connect-Ability focus on the state as a model employer and assisted with marketing to employers through development of the employer toolkits.</i></p>	MKT	ID
	<p><i>Local radio advertisement on Connect-Ability and local project were especially helpful since the statewide media campaign did not reach the local Windham region.</i></p>	LLP	ID
	<p><i>From interactions with Connect-Ability pilot team and activities, WKP demonstrated visible internal organization attitudinal changes in how to include people with disabilities into programs from the beginning of 2009 to end of year.</i></p>	LLP	ID
	<p><i>BCO developed an awareness of the issues for people with disabilities seeking employment, and is now considering how to use their services (e.g., transportation) to better support people with disabilities.</i></p>	LLP	NET
	<p><i>CACIL's grant administrator and advocate continues to be involved in local government meetings (e.g., city councils) and local workforce investment board.</i></p>	LLP	NET
	<p><i>NEAT Resource Center at Oak Hill (CT Institute for the Blind) developed 5 different assistive technology kits and presented them to businesses to show the various types of assistive technology that are available. Tool kits are geared to different audiences including those with hearing problems and/or visual problems. NEAT also completed 5 podcasts and posted them on its website to explain and illustrate the assistive technology they're demonstrating to consumers and employers. More information on NEAT is available at http://www.neatmarketplace.org/</i></p>	LLP	ADD-RES
	<p><i>Connect-Ability and the ARC joined with Community Rehabilitation Providers and BRS staff to provide outreach to employers and offer them assistance as mentioned in the one-page flyer sent to CT employers in their tax letters.</i></p>	REL-B	NET
	<p><i>Connect-Ability had a brainstorming/vision meeting with BRS and BESB in March to discuss opportunities under the stimulus dollars (e.g., what to do with the funding and how to better engage employers). As a result of the meeting, workgroups were formed to address specific topics (e.g., on the job training and how to provide consistent training across agencies, how to create a fast track for people with disabilities seeking employment, and how to market and package materials for employers).</i></p>	REL-B	NET

	<i>Interactions with Connect-Ability have opened communications across state agencies and various services and enabled them to work together more effectively within the confinement of state bureaucracy.</i>	REL-S	NET
	<i>Connect-Ability has provided an opportunity for agencies to broaden viewpoints, share knowledge and create synergistic overlaps and an "interweaving of agencies." Examples of agencies / services that overlap and work together partially because of Connect-Ability include: the WKP and One-Stops; Ticket to Work (TTW) activity overlaps with Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) through board member involvement.</i>	REL-S	NET
	<i>BRS in partnership with Connect-Ability finalized and is distributing a brochure for job seekers called Job Search Points of Interest. The brochure focuses on a range of services and supports offered by BRS to help job seekers with disabilities succeed.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>BRS Elderly Services Division is changing its infrastructure through MIG by planning to fund the updating of promotional materials for the Aging and Disability Resource Center. New material will include a focus on employment.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>BRS and the Social Work Division of DSS are focusing on the training of social workers in conjunction with BRS counselors for better communication between the two divisions of DDS including the updating of waiver brochures. Plans will be implemented in 2010.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability funded two Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) allowing more time for working with new clients and for active follow-up (e.g., Work Incentive Program Award, Social Security Award, and BRS non-financial support).</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability support enabled BRS Connect to Work Center to connect with more community providers and supportive housing including HomeWORK.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability media campaigns are valuable because they use people with disabilities as spokespeople and challenge the stereotypes that people (e.g., employers, family, affected persons) have. Following Connect-Ability's example, in its open house kick-off event the Corporation for Supportive Housing used a person's own experience to demonstrate a point.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability media campaigns are a positive change and support the agencies because the information disseminated helps validate the roles that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors do.</i>	REL-O	ID

	<p><i>Ability to use Connect-Ability hotline for real-time results, responses and feedback from clients has been positive and allows for better access and resources for employers and jobseekers with disabilities.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability and UCHC research staff presented at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) National MIG Conference in San Francisco in April.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability presented on Benefits Planning to DDS, DMHAS, the Workforce Development Board, and DPH. There was strong consensus among those present that the same message about employment needs to be sent to all people with disabilities.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability organized a local level pilot sharing event in September to provide an opportunity for pilots to share what their top best practices were.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability participated in three kick-off events for the HomeWORK project. A total of 155 people participated in the three events. HomeWORK is a two-year MIG-funded project and is collaboration between BRS, DMHAS, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing to build an innovative service infrastructure that improves employment outcomes for residents of supportive housing with behavioral disorders. The HomeWORK Project is a unique approach to helping supportive housing tenants enter the workforce (or advance in their employment), improve their earnings, and/or strengthen their education and training. Connect-Ability has enabled DMHAS to take a big step forward to talk about housing and employment as significant aspects of recovery. This hasn't happened in the DMHAS system before. Connect-Ability has encouraged agencies, like DMHAS, to collaborate about commonalities rather than differences. Information on the MIG grant kick-off events is available at http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=3928&nodeID=88 and more information on the HomeWORK project is available at http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=116%3Ahomework-project&layout=blog&Itemid=538&lang=en</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability staff had an interview with WILI in Willimantic in October to discuss the purpose of Connect-Ability and some of the activities of the local pilot in that area.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability finalized a paper toolkit of individual fact sheets that include information on accessing transportation resources, managing benefits, writing cover letters, and employment planning.</i></p>	REL-O	ID

	<p>Connect-Ability published two Spotlights newsletters. One was distributed to 2,400 employers. The other was a special edition created for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This was distributed in October and included a calendar of events for employers.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability received a total of 221 calls to the TA Center during 2009. A breakdown of the calls by quarter follows: Q1= 27 calls, Q2=43 calls, Q3=43 calls, and Q4=108 calls.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability received a total of 10,530 hits to the website during 2009. A breakdown by quarter follows: Q1=900 visitors, Q2=2,087 visitors, Q3=3,830 visitors, and Q4=3,713 visitors.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability was mentioned in nine articles during 2009 in the following publications: The Norwalk Citizen, Bristol Press, Sunday Hour, Indentidad Latina, Sunday Advocate, Greenwich Times, News-Times, and The Hartford Courant.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability conducted a website retreat and worked on new enhancements for the next website construction phase. The website is now Section 508-compliant and is accessible to a variety of different users, including people with disabilities, to view in multiple formats.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability enabled BRS to work more closely with DDS to communicate their client successes after finding employment.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability and DSS collaborated on a brochure called, Medicaid for the Employed Disabled (Med-Connect) The brochure will be posted on the DSS website. A link to DSS and the brochure will be included on the Connect-Ability website.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability funded the Knowledge Transfer Project to gather information from highly skilled BRS staff on strategies and resources that are crucial in addressing pre-employment issues and tasks (e.g., hierarchy of needs). Information for the project is being gathered by the Technical Assistance Workgroup and will be useful in supporting Vocational Counselors but will also be disseminated to Independent Living Centers, Transition Coordinators in the Money Follow the Person initiative, and other Human Service professionals. Information from the project will be posted on the Connect-Ability and BRS websites in early 2010.</p>	REL-O	ID

	<p><i>BRS is working with the Division of Organization and Skilled Development (at UConn School of Social Work) to create an Interactive Desk Guide. This would make it easier to access documents that are in different places through links. Other states have combined documents and made them interactive in one spot and found it useful. This may expanded to other contractors if needed.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>DDS is developing a more consumer friendly webpage for job information that will contain links to Connect-Ability, DOL, and DOT. Stakeholders can access this site at http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2042&q=390170, but until it is more complete, DDS is continuing to provide stakeholders with access to Connect-Ability job leads through its email system [completion of BRS DDS MOA task 1].</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>The DDS Employment Subcommittee of the Provider Group was started. Fifteen people representing DDS staff, consumers, family members, and private providers met three times to work on content for two brochures that were created by Mintz and Hoke. One brochure is titled DDS Employment Supports and Services and the other is Resources to get, find, and keep a job. Both brochures are being distributed to stakeholders to provide them with information on how to create their own positive employment experience, how to access and use DDS services, and what can be done individually around employment [completion of BRS DDS MOA tasks 4 and 1].</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>DDS developed a second Employment Idol video in partnership with Connect-Ability and CT People First to highlight and promote the employment of people with disabilities and to demonstrate that people with disabilities want to work, are great employees, and when provided the opportunity can contribute to the workforce in CT. Premier of the video at the People First Conference was attended by 250 people and was well received. Connect-Ability used one of the segments on their TV ads and the National Association of State Developmental Disability Directors (NASD) is considering using it as a best practice nationally. The video can be accessed at http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2042&q=390170#idol [completion of BRS DDS MOA task 3].</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>DDS was funded by Connect-Ability to make 500 copies of the second Employment Idol video. These were distributed to all CT Chambers of Commerce, CT libraries, and 200 employers. Included with the video was a letter promoting the employment of people with disabilities, resources about hiring and maintaining employment, and contact information for BRS and DDS [completion of BRS DDS MOA task 3].</i></p>	REL-O	ID

	<p><i>DMHAS staff partnering with Connect-Ability demonstrated how to navigate the Connect-Ability website to women who registered in the Access to Recovery System (ATR). ATR is a private-public partnership among DMHAS, Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Judicial Branch - Court Support Services Division (CSSD), and community, clinical, and peer based services. Training included how to write a resume. Case managers documented progress for this project. For DHMAS clients, access to Connect-Ability isn't enough. They need a bridge and resources to get back into the community and the CT ATR model demonstrates collaboration with other targeted state agencies to help people with mental illness establish an environment supportive of recovery and an opportunity to gain necessary skills and resources to initiate and sustain recovery. A maximum of 24 clients will be involved. More information on CT's ATR is available at http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/LIB/dmhas/presentations/SAMHSA06.pdf</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>The University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) in collaboration with Connect-Ability completed and distributed the State Department of Education Report to disseminate findings on special education transition services.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>UCHC, in collaboration with Connect-Ability completed and distributed the 2008 Pathways to Success Report which highlights the experiences of existing and potential workers with disabilities who have a strong desire to be employed.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability engaged new partners by inviting other stakeholders (e.g., Ability Beyond Disability, the Kennedy Center, DOT, Disability Advocacy Collaborative, and the DD council) to attend and participate in its bi-monthly meetings.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>Connect-Ability hired a project manager through the University of Connecticut Health Center for the Data Interoperability Project. Interoperability allows data to be used in applications regardless of origin and to be aggregated and compared across location and time. Goals of this data system initiative include leading the creation of a plan to share data among multiple state agencies, planning for data platform solutions, and improving program effectiveness.</i></p>	REL-O	NET

	<p>Connect-Ability had a meeting in December with the following Commissioners to discuss the Data interoperability Project: Michael Starkowski DSS, Pat Rehmer, DMHAS, Peter O'Meara, DDS, Susan Hamilton DCF, and Michael Meotti, DHE. Connect-Ability presented what's been done to date and received permission to move forward with an expanded pilot. The first pilot included OWC, DSS/BRS, DMHAS, and DDS. The expanded pilot will include these agencies plus DCF and Judicial-Court Support Services Division (Judicial-CSSD). Other agencies may be added as the pilot is expanded. A kickoff meeting in February 2010 will focus on privacy and system issues.</p>	REL-O	NET
	<p>To meet the goal of developing agency action plans with DSS, DMHAS, DDS, and BESB, Connect-Ability identified and generated a process for approaching other agencies called Development of Agency Action Plans. Elements of the work plan include: articulate the purpose, create best practices, develop agency-specific action plans (e.g., establish time frames, identify agency vision/goals, indentify ongoing linkages, develop feedback loop), develop process maps for existing hiring process, and adapt existing materials for state agencies.</p>	REL-O	NET
	<p>BRS entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DDS in 2008 to advance efforts to change the infrastructure of employment for people with disabilities by focusing on four tasks: 1) Conduct an employment marketing campaign to increase the number of DDS consumers being employed in the State of Connecticut, 2) Develop an Individual Plan (IP) Buddy Curriculum & Process, 3) Develop an Employment Idol Video II, and 4) Increase access to employment information for consumers with developmental disabilities in partnership with Connect-Ability (e.g., develop content for fact sheets to describe the employment supports and resources available to job seekers with developmental disabilities). All tasks of the MOA have been addressed and are reported on more specifically in separate areas of this report.</p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p>A new education program has been initiated on person-centered goal setting for DDS case managers who work directly with clients and provider agencies. The program includes an annual review of work objectives with the individual and ongoing education workshops online for case managers.</p>	PRG	NPG
	<p>The BRS Ticket to Work Program conducted substantial outreach to One-Stops and other agencies helping them address employment issues under the ticket.</p>	REL-O	NET
	<p>Through the Assistive Technology grant, the Eastern Connecticut Assistive Technology (ECAT) Center in Willimantic had its grand opening in June and hosted 76 participants. ECAT is the CT Tech Act Project's (CTTAP) partner agency in the Eastern part of Connecticut that provides</p>	REL-O	ADD-RES

	<p>demonstrations of Assistive Technology (AT) devices to individuals with disabilities, family members, employers, educators, etc. An AT demo is an opportunity for an individual to learn about the features of a device or variety of devices to be able to make an informed decision about whether or not the device is the right one for him or her. The Center demonstrates devices that reduce barriers in the workplace and helps increase or maintain the independence and functioning of people with disabilities at work, school, home, or in the community. ECAT has an AT Specialist who staffs the site 2 days a week and participated in an outreach event in September to about 50 individuals and has had approximately 24 additional visitors come in for demonstrations to the Center since then.</p>		
<p>Recruitment, Employment, and Promotion</p>			
	<p><i>Fall 2009 media promotions made more businesses and organizations aware of Connect-Ability, which helped NEAT to make initial contacts. Employers started to look at AT resources before hiring and as part of company planning before hiring.</i></p>	<p>MKT</p>	<p>ID</p>
	<p><i>The statewide Connect-Ability Strategic Planning Local Level Pilot (LLP) Initiative involving nine pilots developed and implemented innovative one-year strategic plans locally to bring about change, improve access, and build broad-based constituency in the areas of employment, transportation, and transition.</i></p>	<p>LLP</p>	<p>NPG</p>
	<p><i>BCO supported local ARC with Connect-ability grant to implement a job developer role.</i></p>	<p>LLP</p>	<p>NPG</p>
	<p><i>CACIL created Job Club curriculum and initiated meetings at local One-Stop which terminated at end of LLP grant, but subsequently initiated meetings for another Job Club at a local provider (Disability Network of Eastern CT) which will be sustained. Job Clubs provide a network of support, build self-esteem, teach job seeking skills, provide opportunities to share job search experiences, and hone skills on how to retain employment.</i></p>	<p>LLP</p>	<p>NPG</p>
	<p><i>NEAT created an AT lending library for businesses / organizations and provided AT training to businesses / organizations (free during LLP and will continue with fees after).</i></p>	<p>LLP</p>	<p>NPG</p>
	<p><i>NH student self-advocacy training provided at participating schools as part of pilot (additional resources necessary to continue).</i></p>	<p>LLP</p>	<p>NPG</p>

	<p>WFA created two new Ability Works centers focused on promoting services for people with disabilities in One-Stops, including trained staff and visible AT resources (e.g., text readers, software, books videos, other technology). More information on Ability Works is available at http://www.abilityworksinc.com/index.htm</p>	LLP	NPG
	<p>WFA held new training workshops that were developed and implemented for staff disability awareness and AT training for people with disabilities on job seeking skills.</p>	LLP	NPG
	<p>NH worked directly with Youth@Work to include focus on recruiting and hiring youths with disabilities into the program. This included local school support.</p>	LLP	PrCh
	<p>WKP increased awareness of employment issues for people with disabilities with the internal program administrators (at WorkPlace). As a result, more discussion across program managers occurred on how to design programs to be universal to include people with disabilities rather than create separate programs.</p>	LLP	PrCh
	<p>ARC's initial media emphasis on seeking the ability of the people with disabilities with radio ads made it easier to connect with employers. Employer interest declined when the media campaign declined in the summer.</p>	LLP	ID
	<p>NH sponsored a breakfast event focused on employers during the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce (GNHCC) Business Expo (>200 attendees). It included a dynamic guest speaker with a disability. The event increased employer awareness of availability of services through the organization (New Haven Department of Services for People with Disabilities) and allowed for collaborations with larger employers as co-sponsors. This was a one-time pilot event.</p>	LLP	ID
	<p>Approximately 200 organizations and employers attended an employer breakfast co-hosted with 4 Chambers of Commerce and one of the local level pilots, WFA. Keynote speakers were Joyce Bender and Ted Kennedy, Jr. Reaching out to employers was the focus.</p>	LLP	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability pilot activities brought together new partnerships for ARC with other non-profits in the local region.</p>	LLP	NET
	<p>BCO developed stronger relationships with Chamber of Commerce and local nonprofit and private provider agencies.</p>	LLP	NET

<i>CACIL developed relationships with a local provider agency (Disability Network of Eastern CT) and other social services agencies and job developers (e.g., BRS, BESB, Disability Program Navigator) evidenced by willingness and trust to work together to find suitable employment opportunities for people with disabilities.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>CREC developed new relationships with Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, state agencies, and CTBLN.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>NEAT developed new relationships with VA, CTBLN, DOL (CT Works, JobCorps), and a few local businesses as a result of providing services with its lending library, and assistance with AT acquisition and training.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>NH developed new partnerships with the Youth@Work program in GNHCC and CT Business and Industry Associations (CBIA). Increased awareness enabled Youth@Work leadership to consider summer employment opportunities for students with disabilities as part of the program. Continued collaborations with Youth@Work and CBIA are planned for 2010.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>NH demonstrated to City of New Haven leadership the value of partnerships with other organizations and how the city can continue to support other organizations that may hire persons with disabilities.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>NH developed a new relationship between schools and Southern Connecticut State University Adaptive Technology lab.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>WFA strengthened its relationship with multiple Chambers of Commerce in the South-Central region and increased focus/awareness of Chamber members and community on employment issues for people with disabilities.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>WFA increased awareness of employment issues for people with disabilities with the internal high-level management from pilot activities. The executive director and board became more aware and voiced their interest to continue focusing on supporting people with disabilities in One-Stop services resulting in long-term commitment.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>WKP developed new partnership with two youth mentoring programs to develop and implement disability awareness training and materials - Bridgeport Public Education funded on-site Mentoring for Academic Achievement and College Success (MAACS), and United Way of Coastal Fairfield County funded an internet based Wi-Mentor program.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>Connect-Ability provided TA to local level pilots regarding employer events.</i>	LLP	ADD-

		RES
<i>WFA conducted training for their CT WORKS staff and focused on hiring people with disabilities. Fifteen people completed an additional training in November on Learning Disabilities.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>WFA developed and implemented a local marketing campaign to promote Ability Works One-Stop Center and Connect-Ability resources to people with disabilities and to potential employers.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>Connect-Ability partnered with DiversityInc for the first time in 2009 and commissioned them to survey companies and organizations in Connecticut to assess their commitment to hiring, retaining and promoting employees with disabilities. DiversityInc is the leading publication on diversity and business and has an annual national competition to select the 50 most diverse companies in the United States. DiversityInc used the same questions in the CT survey as are used in the nationwide survey. From responses to the CT survey, Connect-Ability selected three top employers for the fourth annual Connect-Ability Top Employer Awards and awarded The Hartford, CTTransit and VBrick Systems, Inc. at the October Employment Summit for their leadership in removing barriers to hiring and promoting individuals with disabilities. Connect-Ability is working on another contract with DiversityInc for next year and planning on surveying 1,500 employers. Results will be shared at the 2010 Employment Summit. More information on DiversityInc and its survey methodology is available at http://www.diversityinc.com/ and http://www.diversityinc.com/article/7314/?DiversityInc_Top_50_Methodology</i>	REL-B	NPG
<i>DOL is focusing on systemic change and enhancing the Statewide Job Bank, CT JobCentral, through involvement in the Employer Designation Pilot that was initiated to help employers self-identify as "disability friendly." Funded by Connect-Ability, the Pilot provides employers in the public and private sector an opportunity to increase their organization's effectiveness by tapping people with disabilities. Key Pilot benefits include: the use of JobCentral to locate qualified CT candidates, business-to-business interaction and networking to improve recruitment, hiring, and the retention of people with disabilities, and improved productivity by identifying ways to increase workplace diversity, recruitment and retention efforts. Eight employers have volunteered to participate in the pilot. DOL received Special Recognition Honors at the October Employment Summit for its contribution to this project and continued dedication to workforce diversity. More information on CT JobCentral is available at http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/progsupt/bussrvce/jobcentral.htm</i>	REL-B	NPG

	<p>Connect-Ability sponsored and participated in a Diversity Event in February with the Hartford Business Journal called Diversity: Winning with a World Class Workforce. Connect-Ability and the CTBLN each did a presentation and suggested solutions to hiring and retaining the most important investment companies have - its employees. The event brought 100 participants together around diversity and the employment of people with disabilities. The Hartford Business Journal covers the greater Hartford business community and regularly features breaking news and profiles. More information about the Hartford Business Journal is available at http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/</p>	REL-B	PrCh
	<p>Connect-Ability finalized two Employer toolkits. One is an interactive module on the Connect-Ability website http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=65&Itemid=67. The toolkit is designed to help employers build a more inclusive and diverse organization and identifies best practices to ensure that all employees contribute their best efforts. The second toolkit is entitled "Model Employer." This toolkit was distributed at the 2009 Employment Summit and has options for employers including single pages that help employers recruit, hire, and retain people with disabilities. A new success story from the Roses for Autism initiative was also included. The toolkit is helping bridge gaps between state agencies and will be expanded over the next two years.</p>	REL-B	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability ads were responded to by numerous employers representing a wide range of companies including ConnectiCare, CT Public Network, Deloitte and Touche, ING, Unilever, Webster Bank, and Yardney. At least 15 positions were provided through these companies for people with disabilities.</p>	REL-B	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability worked with CTBLN to develop and produce employment brochures and PowerPoint presentations on the new Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Amendments.</p>	REL-B	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability and CTBLN developed an ADA Amendments Act tutorial and presented it to 40 CT employers and 2 local level pilots.</p>	REL-B	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability coordinated the 2009 Employment Summit, "Economic Stimulus: Making it Work for Your Business," in October at the Connecticut Convention Center. DiversityInc Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Barbara Frankel was a keynote speaker. The event offered interactive sessions and networking opportunities with 250 organizational disability leaders. Model Employer and ARRA Funding packets including a new success story were disseminated.</p>	REL-B	ID

	<p><i>Connect-Ability conducted training for CTWorks staff. CTWorks exists to enhance economic development in Connecticut by focusing on the special employment and training needs of job seekers and employers. More information on CTWorks is available at http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/ctworks/ctworks.htm</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability partners, BRS and BESB, created a document to inform employers about the tools (e.g., Assistive Technology - computer software and hardware devices) they offer to help employers create a more diverse workforce.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability partnered with the Hartford Business Journal and sponsored a Best Places to Work event in Connecticut. The event included an opportunity to contribute a disability question to an employer/employee satisfaction survey being developed by a central survey organization. The question focused on the hiring and retaining of people with disabilities. The survey was conducted by the central organization in the fall in 32 states. Findings available in early 2009 show that about half of the Connecticut respondents do have a program in place to engage members of the disabled community, which is the same number of companies that have practices in place to recruit and retain an aging workforce. Data also demonstrate that almost two-thirds of CT employers have policies to engage an ethnic and culturally diverse workforce.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>CTBLN has over 140 members and 68 businesses and continues to expand its membership. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Walgreens are among those organizations that are currently participating members of the CTBLN.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>CTBLN was represented at the USBLN conference and shared best practices from the conference with members at the November CTBLN quarterly meeting held at ConnectiCare. This positive outreach resulted in new CTBLN members.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>CTBLN partnered with BESB to give a presentation about On the Job Training at the quarterly CTBLN meeting in July 2009 at Aetna, Inc. The audience was very receptive to innovative opportunities for clients including the BESB demonstration project promoting internships for students with disabilities.</i></p>	REL-B	ID

	<p><i>CTBLN conducted educational ADA workshops and sensitivity/awareness training with employers at Unilever, Hartford Business Journal's Diversity Event, and Valassis. Additional training was conducted in collaboration with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) for the local level pilot initiative in New Haven and at the Torrington Local Mental Health Authority. Other disability-related trainings were conducted at an event for consumers at the CT American Psychological Association, Powerfest at the University of Bridgeport, Chambers of Commerce (e.g., Ansonia, Bristol), the Business Advisory Council, Lowes in Plainfield, CT, Workforce Alliance at NEAT Market Place, and Department of Developmental Services in Wallingford, CT. These trainings have helped people be better attuned to ADA laws and its implications. They are also useful in facilitating partnerships and engaging businesses in a nonthreatening way.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>CTBLN participated in Business Day at the State Legislative Office Building and distributed flyers on the CTBLN. The event was co-sponsored by CBIA and the Connecticut Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and provided an opportunity for businesses to hear legislative leaders' perspectives on the state's economy and to meet with their local legislators. More information on this event is available at www.cbia.com/gov/gar/0208/CTBusDay.htm</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>CTBLN had a booth at the Northwest Chamber of Commerce Career Fair in February and in addition to networking and employer recruitment did a workshop on disability information. In response to a contact made through Connect-Ability at this event, CTBLN was invited to the Northwestern Chamber of Commerce annual luncheon in April.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>CTBLN's outreach to employers included: placing an ad in the Hartford Business Journal and Manchester Journal Inquirer, partnering with the Torrington BRS office to reach out to Alcoa Howmet (a global supplier of precision-machined turbine airfoils in Winsted, CT) and the Northwest Chamber of Commerce.</i></p>	REL-B	ID
	<p><i>An increase in email communication between agencies in partnership with Connect-Ability has enabled DOL to be more connected and aware of job openings.</i></p>	REL-B	ID

<p><i>The Hartford Business Journal's Best Places to Work Award Event was held in March in Hartford, CT. Awards were given to companies that assist employees and organizational leaders succeed. Winning companies participated in a two-part survey about personnel policies and practices that was conducted by Best Companies Group, a third-party research firm in Pennsylvania that manages similar "Best" programs throughout the United States and Canada. Survey data were used by Best Companies to rank competing companies on workplace quality. More information on the winning companies in CT is available at www.hartfordbusiness.com/news8400.html?Type=search</i></p>	REL-B	ID
<p><i>BRS Walgreens initiative has helped secure full time employment with benefits for approximately 130 people with disabilities.</i></p>	REL-B	NET
<p><i>Connect-Ability partnered with the Hartford Business Journal and sponsored a Best Places to Work event in Bristol, Connecticut. Approximately 350 employers attended. The event promoted Connect-Ability and was successful in expanding employer networks.</i></p>	REL-B	NET
<p><i>Connect-Ability funding has changed employment dynamics in CT through the revitalization of the CTBLN.</i></p>	REL-B	NET
<p><i>Through associations with Manchester Community College, CTBLN acquired a database with contact information from 700 Connecticut Businesses.</i></p>	REL-B	NET
<p><i>Connect-Ability extended the CTBLN contract to include an additional 18 months and provided technical assistance related to its website, marketing and outreach materials, and the development of a sustainability plan.</i></p>	REL-B	ADD-RES
<p><i>Prior to the Grand Opening of Walgreens Distribution Center in Windsor, CT, in April 2009, Connect-Ability set up a training program for people with disabilities interested in employment. A total of 75-100 people completed the training program that consisted of 45 days for soft skills and job training and another 45 days in trial work groups. After the 90 days, there was a 45 day working test period. At the end of that time period, people were evaluated and could be hired if they demonstrate the skills and ability to do the work. Of the 100 that went through the program, 23 were hired. The training is a model Walgreens plans to use in other branches of its company. More information on Walgreens is available at www.walgreens.com</i></p>	REL-B	ADD-RES
<p><i>DDS sent out a Request for Proposal (RFP) with funds from Connect-Ability and is in the process of hiring a contractor to implement three projects that will improve employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities.</i></p>	REL-O	NPG

	<p>DMHAS submitted a proposal called Employment Practice Improvement Collaborative (EPIC) in an effort to engage agencies in a collaboration that would result in increased employment outcomes for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. The interagency collaborative would integrate several current DMHAS employment initiatives through the Connect-Ability umbrella and would allow DMHAS to build on the successful practices it has accomplished to date, facilitate systems change within and beyond the DMHAS system, and facilitate second-level infrastructure change to ensure long-term sustainability. The proposal would be funded under the second part of the MIG grant. See Appendix A for a list of current employment initiatives within the DMHAS system that would be expanded and embedded within EPIC with a focus on cross-project and cross-agency collaboration.</p>	REL-O	NPG
	<p>Connect-Ability has enabled DDS to increase its emphasis on sustainable competitive employment for clients and, compared to the past, to be more involved in employment first.</p>	REL-O	PrCh
	<p>Connect-Ability and CTBLN co-sponsored their first job fair, The Employment Conference and Career Fair, in May, at Manchester Community College. This stakeholder outreach brought together 30 employers (e.g., Kelley Services, Pfizer) and more than 300 job seekers. Workshops on disclosure, the interview process and dressing for the interview were provided. The fair was very successful and received good press.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>The Connect-Ability website is a helpful resource for educators and employers and provides a convenient way to locate a range of information in one place.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability provided the motivation for The Travelers Companies, Inc. in CT to take on different activities, such as Disability Mentoring Day, and to get companies (e.g., Aetna, Inc., CW Resources, Inc., Henkel Corporation) together to plan for and participate in the Employment Conference and Career Fair held at Manchester Community College in May. In 2007, Travelers was recognized for its participation in the Connect-Ability initiative and received a Top Employer Award for promoting diversity in the workplace.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>CTBLN spoke to people at Prime Time House during their employment dinner about the concept of employment for people with a psychiatric disability. Prime Time House provides mental health counseling and is located in Torrington, CT. More information on Prime Time House is available at prime@primetimehouse.com</p>	REL-O	ID

	<p>CTBLN entered into contracts with website developer Gurvinder Baines Associates and materials developer, Inclusion Solutions. The CTBLN website was launched on June 30. Its address is www.ctbln.com</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>CTBLN worked with Lesley Abate Graphics and Design on marketing and informational materials including: CTBLN brochure; CTBLN awareness training promotional sheet; CTBLN Power Point template; CTBLN table drape for trade shows, Career Fairs, and other events; CTBLN pens and plastic bags for events; and 7 foot tall banner promoting CTBLN's mission and services.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>CTBLN developed the Awareness Training Workbook and uses it in trainings.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>CTBLN's outreach to job seekers included speaking to students in the Disability Rights Group at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), and Disabled Student Services Event at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). Other presentations took place at Disabilities Network of Eastern CT, Hartford Job Developers Group, and the Employment Collaborative. Additional job seeker outreach included: distributed of flyers and networking at Independent Living day; a radio ad campaign for the Employment Conference and Career Fair aired on WTIC and 95.1 - CBS radio; billboard ad campaign advertising the Employment Conference and Career Fair on I-91 and I-84 in Hartford, and a CTBLN website campaign presented on CBS radio.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>CTBLN's outreach to mentees included: electronic information sheets developed and disseminated to BRS counselors and school transition coordinators; electronic information sheets developed for high school and college students and disseminated through colleges, the Youth Leadership Network, and the Transition Local Initiative; development and dissemination of an electronic information sheet for veterans; and meetings with students at Bloomfield High School, Weaver High School, Rocky Hill High School, and the Hartford and Bloomfield campuses of the Grace Webb School.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>DOL collaborated with the CTBLN in the DOL Bridgeport office in June to conduct an employer seminar focusing on ADA for employers. About 30 attended. There was positive feedback.</p>	REL-O	ID

	<p><i>The MIG Technical Assistance Group, National Consortium for Health Systems Development (NCHSD), and National Disability Advocacy presented on Understanding Benefits and Work Incentives in April. The material was useful to DDS in helping them develop and explain the benefits of employment and to inform people where to go to understand how employment impacts work incentives and benefits and the interactive nature of those things. More information on NCHSD is available at http://www.nchsd.org/</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>The Travelers Companies, Inc. in CT and CTBLN met with approximately 20 other companies to discuss affinity groups. Aetna was present to share its perspective on affinity groups and provided rationale why companies should have and support these groups. This information was well received. Aetna has 11 affinity groups called Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). The Hartford AetnAbilities ERG is a group for people with disabilities and currently has over 35 members. Affinity groups provide forums for employees to gather socially and share ideas outside of their particular business units and bring employees together based on religion, physical disabilities, age, military service and many other parameters.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>The Connect-Ability website is a positive resource for BRS Connect to Work Center staff and has enabled them to educate people during outreach events.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>BRS invited BESB regional counselors to participate in its regional staff meetings for at least part of the meetings on a monthly basis. This practice encourages the exchange of joint information and new ideas related to job outreach and connections with employers.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>Connect-Ability encourages partnerships between agencies and different providers. There is a greater potential to open up and share job opportunity options now, rather than keeping options to one's own agency (e.g., less silo work and more collaboration between agencies.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>Connect-Ability's efforts have resulted in better outcomes with Employment Network (EN) contractors in communicating and following up with potential employers.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>The CTBLN jobseeker database has grown to over 200 jobseekers.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>Through associations with Connect-Ability and the CTBLN, DDS has formed partnerships with stronger connections and partnerships with other agencies, such as DOL, around employment.</i></p>	REL-O	NET

	<p><i>Connecticut was one of three states selected to participate in the National Technical Assistance and Research (NTAR) Leadership Center grant that Connect-Ability helped write. The initiative involves the State Leaders Innovation Institute, which is part of a national effort to improve employment for people with disabilities by connecting state workforce policies to state and local economic growth and development goals. Throughout participation in the 15-month State Leaders Institute, teams of state policymakers from Connecticut, Maryland, and Minnesota will receive specialized technical assistance, leadership support, and other resources as they work to develop innovative approaches to improve employment for people with disabilities. All three states have similar goals in the pilot including looking at the state as model employer, exploring employer toolkits in other states, and collaborating to avoid duplicating efforts. As it participates in this initiative, the Connecticut team has developed stronger relationships between state agencies particularly between BRS and BESB, and BESB marketing materials reflect its partnership with Connect-Ability. More information about this initiative is available at www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Pilot%20States%20Press%20Release.pdf</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>DDS Employment Subcommittee of the Provider Council is expanding to include the CTBLN and Connect-Ability staff. The Subcommittee is currently working on initial activities in developing a fact sheet for providers. Other activities include working on disability employment mentoring, job fairs, and connecting to the national employment month and the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE). More information on APSE is available at http://www.apse.org/about/index.cfm</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>DDS engaged more consistently with provider groups because of Connect-Ability's encouragement to network with others.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>Connect-Ability has enabled the potential for all agencies to share more job leads and experience increased success in finding the right job for clients.</i></p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p><i>DOL participated in the CTBLN Disability Mentoring Day in October and hosted 2 students from local high schools who received training on creating a resume and other employment-related activities.</i></p>	REL-O	ADD-RES

	<p><i>The Travelers Companies, Inc. in CT participated in the CTBLN Disability Mentoring Day in October and hosted 12 individuals from high schools and other agencies. The event helped employees become more aware of people with disabilities. For example, as a result of this awareness, Travelers began using a sign language interpreter at meetings so people with a hearing impairment are accommodated.</i></p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p><i>DDS sent out an RFP with money from Connect-Ability and is in the process of hiring a contractor to implement three different projects: an education project to develop an employment first conference and provide training and technical assistance to job developers. A second education project to develop a comprehensive financial literacy and benefits planning training program for Individual Planning (IP) teams. This project will provide Financial Literacy training to 40 IP Teams with resulting impact on 25 individuals who will obtain employment as a result of the increased knowledge, skills and abilities of their support staff. A third project will focus on group to individualized employment outcomes and will provide intensive and prescriptive technical assistance to IP teams and their organizations on changing their internal systems from a group employment model to a customized employment model. This project will help ensure that 25 IP teams will be the recipients of the technical assistance leading to employment outcomes for a minimum of 16 individuals.</i></p>	PRG	NPG
	<p><i>Achievements for the DMHAS HomeWORK project include: Securing an expanded (and new for Connecticut) rent-based work incentive program, the Earned Income Disregard, for eligible recipients of State Rental Assistance Program rental subsidies (in partnership with the Department of Social Services); developing and implementing a sustainable and replicable model of linking supportive housing tenants with newly-available training and job placement resources (through the Weatherization Program), and linking participants to employment opportunities in career path job; and focusing on job creation, HomeWORK staff have been active in the facilitating supportive housing providers to become Employment Networks (EN) through Ticket to Work (a total of 6 providers are ENs or in the process of becoming one) and linkage with Census Bureau job opportunities in New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport.</i></p>	PRG	NPG
	<p><i>BRS filed a request to process eligibility changes to the DSS Medicaid for Employed Disabled Automated system. Notices that go out are confusing to people under the Employed Disabled system. People who are paying a premium are confused and sometimes pay the wrong amount. The system needs to be overhauled and Connect-Ability will fund this project in 2010.</i></p>	PRG	PrCh

	WKP included the career-readiness program in the One-Stop for mature worker program after learning about it as part of pilot.	LLP	NPG
	NEAT has expanded its focus now on adult employment (previously focused primarily on student AT needs) and as a result has hired positions for adults with disabilities and developed internships for adults with disabilities.	LLP	ADD-RES
	WFA continued funding of a Disability Program Navigator (DPN) through DOL to provide training and outreach to people with disabilities and to potential employers.	LLP	ADD-RES
	DDS has more providers that want to work with employers to replicate the Walgreens model. Employers are requesting resources to do this and DDS is working with Connect-Ability to begin the process of providing resources. Some of the companies are big and DDS is excited about these potential partnerships.	REL-B	NET
	BRS created and filled a new Director of Employment position with ARRA 2009 funds to oversee six new employment consultants in different state regions who work closely with employers. Within agency collaboration from Connect-Ability provides employer contacts to BRS. Consultants track positions that are available and do the direct service that Connect-Ability is unable to do. The Division had 24 placements, on-the-job training, working interviews, or internships. In addition, there were 724 work development activities. These included cold calls, employer meetings, job leads, job fairs, chamber or business meetings, and presentations.	REL-B	ADD-RES
	The ConnPACE Plus proposal (H.B. 6146) is legislative change that increases the eligibility requirements for the federal Medicare Savings Program (MSP) in Connecticut so that ConnPACE enrollees can qualify for the MSP. ConnPACE Plus is an innovative approach that maximizes federal dollars and takes advantage of increased cost-sharing included in the federal Reinvestment and Recovery Act (economic stimulus plan), to save the state money, while protecting and in some cases expanding, benefits for low income seniors and people with disabilities who work. Implementation of this program attracted over 18,000 new MSP beneficiaries and increased benefits for more than 23,000 current ConnPACE recipients. More information on the program is available at http://www.aarp.org/states/ct/advocacy/articles/connpace_plus_expands_prescription_benefits_for_seniors.html	REL-O	PoCh

<p>A grant from the state of Connecticut was awarded to Focus on Recovery-United (FOR-U) to implement and manage the Connecticut Recovery Employment Consultation Service (C-RECS) initiative, a Transformation Workforce Development project aimed at increasing the number of individuals employed in the behavioral health workforce with lived experience of mental illness and/or addiction. As a consultant for FOR-U, Advocacy Unlimited, Inc. is developing an online job search and candidate recruitment website to enable and facilitate the recruitment of persons in recovery into the mental health workforce. More information on FOR-U is available at http://www.focusonrecovery.org/site/programs/c-recs.html and information on Advocacy Unlimited, Inc. is available at http://www.advocacyunlimited.org/</p>	REL-O	NPG
<p>BRS Connect to Work Center staff promote attitude change, support competitive employment, and remove barriers to employment by disseminating information about Medicaid for the Employed Disabled and encouraging people with disabilities to become employed as they understand what will happen to their benefits when they're working.</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>BRS Connect to Work Center staff have been involved in the Supportive Housing and Employment Roundtables taking place around the state to demonstrate that people with disabilities are able to work and keep their medical coverage and cash benefits. The project, Reaching Home Campaign, purposes to stem the rise of homelessness by restoring funding for permanent housing.</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>Using DMHAS Mental Health Transformation grant funds, CT State University and Laurel House led an effort to create a statewide newsletter to provide a venue for testimonies of student consumers who have experienced success through education in getting competitive employment. The first newsletter was published in May 2009.</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>DOL Disability Navigators have been attending orientations when BRS works with clients. Navigators have connected clients not qualifying for BRS services with One- Stop Centers. This has been helpful in connecting people to employment resources.</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>The Travelers Companies, Inc. in CT posted jobs on the DisaboomJobs website. Travelers is testing the site out and asking DisaboomJobs for demographics to find out how many people with disabilities utilize it. More information on DisaboomJobs is available at http://www.disaboomjobs.com/</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>The Travelers Companies, Inc. in CT is utilizing GettingHired as a vendor. It has a database to look at resumes and post job postings on their site. The website assists with employment training to offer opportunities for people with disabilities and includes job finder sections. More information on this website is available at http://www.gettinghired.com/</p>	REL-O	ID

	<p>New relationships exist between BRS and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for the state to consider on-the-job training with employer consultants.</p>	REL-O	NET
	<p>AARP is developing a strategy to launch more resources for older workers and older workers with disabilities including web based tools for individuals.</p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p>DOL is playing an important role in enhancing young workers' skills by providing job shadowing opportunities through the Job Corps Center in Hartford and New Haven. A special mentoring event was held in February with approximately 30 participants. More information on the Job Corps Center in Hartford and New Haven is available at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/JobCorps/hartford_desc.html and www.ctdol.state.ct.us/JobCorps/newhaven_desc.html</p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p>A DMHAS Addictions Employment Coordinator is working closely with the Recovery-Oriented Employment Services (ROES) Guide Team to promote employment opportunities and outcomes for persons with addiction disorders. The ROES Team has identified best practices and developed recommendations for making employment services available throughout CT. Over 50 percent of those in the ROES program have stable employment.</p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p>Through a \$250,000 DMHAS grant, the Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Center (ADRC) has teamed with the CT Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) to pilot best practices for assisting individuals in recovery to obtain and maintain jobs. ADRC staff provide job placement services and CCAR staff provide telephone support retention services.</p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p>New federal regulations allow Ticket-to-Work (TTW) to blend funding so ENs can work for BRS with fee-for-service while also increasing their client support with the goal of reaching full time status and receiving additional TTW funds. The result of this policy change is to increase EN involvement in client support and overall increase in services available to people with disabilities looking to gain employment in 2009.</p>	PRG	PoCh
	<p>BESB developed its Internship Demonstration Project with federal funds and modeled it after college internship programs. The demonstration project focuses on internships for adults with disabilities, includes traditional on-the-job training, and a durational hire of at least 1 month but no more than 6 months. The goal is to expose students to the world of real work and to have them be confident about what they might like to do with their life. The project helps students gain experience, build their resume, and in some cases find meaningful employment. BESB hopes this project will result in the development of a best practice that leads to systems change.</p>	PRG	NPG

	<p>BESB used stimulus dollars to pay for an increase in monetary incentives through October 2012. The two-year program increases monetary incentives for vendors (e.g., Easter Seals) who complete service successfully within 30 or 60 days. The incentives are offered in an effort to create opportunities for BESB clients and enable them to try a job. This creates relationships that sometimes pay off later.</p>	PRG	NPG
	<p>BRS is participating in a national benefit pilot through Social Security that allows people with SSDI to work for as much as possible during the first year including all SSDI, then a gradual decrease in SSDI benefit. A past evaluation (Two-for-One Benefits Offset Demonstration Project) found positive associations and outcomes for the test pilot group that worked and enabled some to eventually come off of or decrease their SSDI.</p>	PRG	NPG
	<p>BRS, BESB, and DOL received ARRA funds allocated for vocational rehabilitation and employment services. This joint collaboration will enable BRS, BESB and DOL to expand employment services to underserved and un-served populations, students transitioning from school to work, and improve overall vocational rehabilitation services. One goal of the project is to educate employers who have misconstrued beliefs regarding the advantages of hiring people with disabilities.</p>	PRG	NPG
	<p>DDS is participating in a pilot study of employment interventions sponsored by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI). The goal is to assess the value of customized job development and to improve the skills of job developers. ICI is comparing how effective its curriculum is in MN and CT. A total of 14 providers (50 people) received development training on customization in June in CT with follow-up mentoring over 18 months. Training to a control group will occur in the spring of 2010. More information on ICI is available at http://www.communityinclusion.org/</p>	PRG	NPG
	<p>DOL Disability Navigator grant was extended for an additional year of funding. Under the extension, there are 4 instead of 6 Navigators. They are making good connections with clients and receiving positive feedback related to services.</p>	PRG	NPG
	<p>BRS hired more Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to replace retirement staff. The new staff has increased referrals to benefits counseling and the potential for more people with disabilities to be hired.</p>	PRG	PrCh
	<p>DDS preserved self-determination and employment as priorities in its reorganization.</p>	PRG	PrCh
	<p>In January, Disability Navigators began attending BRS bimonthly orientation meetings to encourage people looking for employment to use services located at One-Stops. Given staff shortages, this has been useful and prevents people from having to wait for some services.</p>	PRG	PrCh

	Partnership agreements between ENs and BRS include new non-traditional organizations to act as ENs (e.g., One-Stop centers, Centers for Independent Living - transition counselors, and Community Rehabilitation Program's partners for Vocational Rehabilitation services).	PRG	PrCh
	Hartford Business Journal has demonstrated infrastructure change by making meetings more accessible to people with disabilities. They moved tables further apart to better accommodate people with disabilities and are making plans to get a sign language interpreter.	PRG	PrCh
	WKP posted a comprehensive report on people with disabilities as part of the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) activities online at www.thehiddenworkforce.com (DOL launched the WIRED initiative in November 2005 as a Research Demonstration Project Disability Services in the Southern CT and New York region). The Hidden Workforce report presents new information and insights on employment and education for people with disabilities in the CT-NY Talent for Growth region.	PRG	ID
	DDS is prioritizing employment development in its business plan, which includes an employment subcommittee, developing sites with incentives for work/employment services, revising the IP, sponsoring a mentoring day, and offering support for ongoing training. DDS still has funding available to cover providers' related costs for training.	PRG	ADD-RES
	DMHAS and BRS are linking the employment services of both agencies to achieve improved outcomes for persons with behavioral health disorders. As part of this linkage, a DMHAS Mental Health Employment Coordinator occupies a shared position with BRS. In her liaison position she works with staff of agencies, transferring resources and best practices between the two agencies, promoting local collaboration, organizing staff training and troubleshooting systemic problems that arise. Two BRS counselors are co-located in DMHAS LMHAs (Greater Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center and CT Mental Health Center). With clinical treatment teams, including DMHAS employment staff, the BRS counselors coordinate BRS services and resources with those of the DMHAS system. Both agencies report that this partnership is resulting in improved employment outcomes and a broader range of services for people with mental illness.	PRG	ADD-RES
	As a result of its relationship with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), a joint program of the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at UMass Boston and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDS), DDS conducted a Job Coaching Training program. Monthly teleconferences with SELN have been helpful and focused on communicating with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) about rewriting definitions on supported employment. More information about the SELN is	PRG	ADD-RES

	available at http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2042&q=390170&pp=12&n=1#seln		
	State Leaders Innovation Institute (SLII) completed an inventory of assistive technology (AT) available at all One-Stops and local community colleges. New AT purchases occurred for One-Stops and staff trainings. The inventory is a resource to help students identify community colleges with AT resources that students with disabilities might need.	PRG	ADD-RES
Transportation			
	<i>Synergy between CACIL and local agencies provided an alternate paratransit option when one service region did not extend to a destination town (Windham Regional Transit District takes clients to pick-up location at service border and clients transfer onto Horizons vans to be transported to Groton submarine station, an employment location). Services will continue after LLP grant ends.</i>	LLP	NPG
	<i>WFA helped create a transportation voucher system by building on an existing voucher system for DSS eligible clients, resulting in expanding the number of persons with disabilities able to get to work or job interviews.</i>	LLP	NPG
	<i>CACIL, in Willimantic, partnered with the transit district in that part of the state and expanded hours of operation and bus routes to provide extended service to a 2 mile range with availability 7 days a week, and earlier and later hours. This enables people with disabilities to get to and keep their jobs, and to increase hours of employment. CACIL is charting the effectiveness of what expanded transportation is doing and is chronicling the cost and keeping a log of each rider who has taken advantage of the services. They're also gathering information from consumers on increased employment opportunities that are a result of the expanded transportation opportunities.</i>	LLP	PrCh
	<i>CACIL sponsored a transportation seminar at a local university (Eastern Connecticut State University) for individuals in the region seeking assistance with transportation for employment; need sponsorship to continue.</i>	LLP	ID
	<i>Local level pilots have brought additional partners and viewpoints to DOT's coordinated planning process to know how to use federal transit funds designated for seniors, low income people and people with disabilities.</i>	LLP	ID
	<i>BCO developed a relationship with local transportation planning (Central CT Regional Planning Agency) and pilot organization.</i>	LLP	NET

<i>CACIL developed relationships with local transit district resulting in temporary changes and an interest to pursue other resources to continue better service.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>PAP developed new partnerships with Greater Hartford Transit District, the Kennedy Center, and Transition Academy during the pilot. The relationship will continue and trainings will be dependent on additional funds.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>CACIL, in Willimantic, worked with the Windham Regional Transit District to conduct a training workshop in September at Eastern Connecticut State University on available transportation options in that area. Forty attendees represented businesses, individuals with disabilities, community rehabilitation providers, and community-based organizations.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>Connect-Ability provided TA to local level pilots regarding transportation events.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>Connect-Ability helped two local level pilots with their application for New Freedom Initiative funding for transportation. NH applied for funding to purchase a wheelchair accessible taxis, and ARC applied for funds to hire a mobility manager to provide information and services regarding transportation. More information on the New Freedom Initiative is available at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NewFreedomInitiative/</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>Connect-Ability developed and distributed a resources guide on transition and transportation for local level pilots as part of providing TA.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>Research done by the Connect-Ability Transportation Workgroup was useful in helping DDS build transportation resources on its website. To view the DDS transportation page visit http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2653&q=429550</i>	REL-O	ID
<i>Connect-Ability funded the last two of five transportation guides that were commissioned by Ride Share. Mintz and Hoke did the design, layout, and publication of the guides for the Eastern and North Central Getting on Board guides. The guides continue to be distributed and can be directly accessed on the Connect-Ability website at http://www.connect-ability.com/media/pdf/032491_DSS_ECT_finalRel.pdf and http://www.connect-ability.com/media/pdf/032793_DSS_NCTG_finalREL.pdf. Three earlier Getting on Board guides were funded and completed by DOT for the Southwestern, Northwestern, and South-Central regions. These are also posted on the Connect-Ability website at http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=109&Itemid=</i>	REL-O	ID

	528&lang=en		
	<i>Connect-Ability funded an additional transportation resource for people with disabilities called, Transportation, Making Connections, Options, and Resources in Connecticut for People with Disabilities. More information on this resource is available at http://connect-ability.com/media/pdf/downloadBrochure.pdf</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>The Connect-Ability website provides useful transportation information for BRS benefit counselors to share with consumers. A counselor recently referred a twenty-one year old client to the website who no longer qualifies as a student, has lost town support for transportation, and needs to find other ways to get work.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability enabled DOT to have more face-to-face interaction with a lot of different agencies and to gain information more quickly about whether rear access or side access in a taxi is better. Without the communication that occurred, this decision would have taken longer and been more difficult to make.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability and the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) cosponsored three transportation workshops at Union Station in Hartford. The first was titled Transit Oriented Development and involved a panel discussion. The second was called The State of Public Transportation. There were 75 attendees at each of these workshops. The third workshop had 110 attendees and was on the topic of The Federal Surface Transportation Authorization. Twenty-two percent of attendees represented organizations/agencies serving people with disabilities. The rest represented organizations/agencies that were transit related including the Federal Transit Administration, the Community Transportation Association of America, and the American Public Transportation Association. In addition, there was congressional representation from Senator Dodd's office. More information on CACT is available at http://www.cact.info/</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>Connect-Ability and CACT are in the process of planning at least 5 workshops on transportation during January-June of 2010. Workshops will focus on a range of topics including how federal legislation affects surface transportation in Connecticut, what the data indicate about trends, gaps, and need in bus services in Connecticut, and the Health Equity Index and how it can help a community strengthen its health and well-being.</i>	REL-O	ID
	<i>The Connect-Ability Transportation Workgroup compiled the Federal Transportation Grant Repository, a list of various federal transportation grants and description of how agencies can apply for federal funding. The Repository was distributed to the local level</i>	PRG	ID

<i>pilots and Steering Committee.</i>		
<i>The Connect-Ability website has contributed to an overall increased awareness of available transportation options in Connecticut. More information about these options is available at http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=38&lang=en</i>	REL-O	ID
<i>The Connect-Ability Transportation Workgroup developed a Transportation Glossary that is on the website at http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=49&Itemid=51. The glossary is used as a handout during community trainings to better inform people about aspects related to transportation.</i>	REL-O	ID
<i>The Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) disseminated the Getting on Board transportation guides to students with positive results.</i>	REL-O	ID
<i>DOT Diversity Council sponsored a lunch and learn event on November 25, 2009 for DOT employees. Brian Dunphy from Supportive Employment Services presented on how Connect-Ability enables organizations to engage new partners (i.e., businesses). Approximately 20 people attended. This kind of event is a positive change in opening people's eyes to perceive work differently.</i>	REL-O	ID
<i>Connect-Ability helped resolve a major transportation barrier for the BRS Walgreens initiative by making connections with a transportation provider and arranging for transportation to Walgreens. Since January 2009, the bus service has been consistent with approximately 8 round-trips daily. BRS requested additional routes at night; these will start in February 2010. In addition, Walgreens employees with physical disabilities who live close to a regular bus route are now eligible to request ADA transportation to the Walgreens distribution center (previously not eligible if no bus route access).</i>	REL-O	NET
<i>Connect-Ability added a Transportation Calculator to its website to help people compare the price of using public transportation with purchasing/driving their own car. The calculator can be directly accessed at http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=111&Itemid=533&lang=en</i>	REL-O	ADD-RES
<i>As a result of Connect-Ability's advocacy for accessible taxis, the City of New Haven's Department of Persons with Disabilities and Metro Taxi (West Haven) independently</i>	REL-O	ADD-RES

	<p><i>purchased one wheel chair accessible taxi. Recently passed state legislation permits this type of wheelchair accessible taxi and around the clock service for eligible people. More information on accessible taxis is available at http://www.connect-ability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=50%3Anews&layout=blog&Itemid=52&lang=en</i></p>		
	<p><i>BRS entered into a MOA with CTTransit to advance efforts to change the infrastructure of employment for people with disabilities by focusing on the development of a new software module for web-based trip planning. Trapeze Info will assist people with disabilities who use ADA paratransit transportation. The planner will allow its computerized schedule information data base to be accessed on-line for the purpose of trip planning. Since very little transit coordination is currently done in CT, coordination with fixed-route bus service can make paratransit service more efficient. The Trip Planner was tested in mid-December and went out on the beta site (allows a review of the site and changes before going live) at http://cttransit.com/triplanner/. The Trip Planner will be available in January 2010 on the CTTransit website and on the Connect-Ability and DOT websites.</i></p>	PRG	NPG
	<p><i>Connect-Ability is funding the extra development needed to help CTTransit be a participating transit system with Google Transit. Route and schedule information for the Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford divisions have been submitted to Google. This data will allow Google's web based trip planner to develop itineraries for CTTransit customers. The go live date in 2010 will depend on Google's workload and business conditions.</i></p>	PRG	NPG
	<p><i>Connect-Ability applied for participation in the Easter Seal's Project, the 2010 Accessible Transportation Coalitions Initiative (ATCI). This one-year process is designed to support systems change at the local level and begins with a two-day event facilitated by Easter Seals Project ACTION staff and continues through one-year of follow-up technical assistance to support implementation. More information about the process is available at http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_mobility_planning</i></p>	PRG	ADD-RES
	<p>DOT hosted United We Ride workshops February 24-26. The three workshops were called: Funding and Regulatory Issues; Fragmented Service Delivery; and Vision Turf Issues and Political Will. Five state agencies were represented at the workshops: DDS, DMHAS, DSS, and DOT. United We Ride is an interagency Federal initiative that supports States in developing coordinated human service delivery systems. It also provides State and local agencies with a transportation coordination and planning self-assessment tool, technical assistance, and other</p>	REL-O	NET

	resources. More information on United We Ride is available at www.unitedweride.gov/		
	Plans to purchase two wheelchair accessible taxis in Hartford and two in New Haven will progress when DOT releases some of its federal funds.	REL-O	ADD-RES
	In July the house and senate voted to override the Governor's veto of the DOT bill, HB 6649-AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, containing the wheelchair accessible taxicab section (Section 10). This section became law on October 1, 2009.	POL	PoCh
	DOT received a grant through United We Ride to collaborate with other state agencies to develop a State Action Plan for improving coordination of human service transportation as a means to increasing mobility for older adults and people with disabilities in CT. More information on the grant is available at http://www.connectability.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=50%3Anews&layout=blog&Itemid=52&lang=en	PRG	NPG
	Effective January 20, 2009 states have the option to establish a non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) brokerage program, and to receive the Federal medical assistance percentage matching rate. This authority supplements the current authority that States have to provide NEMT to Medicaid beneficiaries who need access to medical care, but have no other means of transportation. Under this final rule, states can choose to select brokers (both government and private agencies) through a competitive bidding process that will assess the broker's experience, performance, cost, and qualifications including whether drivers and personnel are licensed and courteous. Brokers could use wheelchair vans, taxis, stretcher cars, buses, or any other type of vehicle that is deemed acceptable by CMS. The State must submit state plan amendments to implement the final rule. CT DDS will be trying to see how they can take advantage of this and implement this rule.	PRG	NPG
Youth in Transition			
	<i>CREC revised policies and procedures in a local school to better plan for student referrals to state agencies in a timely manner to ensure approval for services confirmed in the spring before they exit from school.</i>	LLP	PoCh
	<i>ARC established the Best Buddies program with a local high school to match students with local college students for mentoring.</i>	LLP	NPG

<i>CREC developed job shadowing opportunities for high school students with middle schools and implemented a continuum of employment experiences for students from lower grades and internships for grade 11 to 12.</i>	LLP	NPG
<i>PAP developed the Latino Transition Training Academy and offered a five week class for parents of students with disabilities. A total of 62 families completed the course. Classes focused on informing parents of bilingual children in New Britain and Hartford about Individual Education Plans (IEPs). An assessment of career/job choices and interests was also conducted. Information from the assessment was used to structure a disability mentoring day for the kind of work bilingual students want. The mentoring day was held October 21st on Disability Mentoring Day. Continuation of the program depends on funding.</i>	LLP	NPG
<i>WKP identified career-readiness programs (KeyTrain training program and WorkKeys certification) and funded implementation for a 3-year seed period at multiple schools to support transition of students into work including students with disabilities.</i>	LLP	NPG
<i>BCO helped the school systems in Bristol and Plymouth change the transition form they use with youth with disabilities in assessing transitional goals.</i>	LLP	PrCh
<i>WKP revised a 2010 contract for Disability Program Navigators to focus more on youth outreach with high schools work with YouthWorks (unit of the WorkPlace) and focus on support for youth with disabilities in transitions, including transportation resources.</i>	LLP	PrCh
<i>WKP developed a relationship with local high schools and expanded discussions with schools to include a holistic perspective of what students need to transition into adult life (life skill focus) as part of transition planning and not only focus on vocational programs.</i>	LLP	PrCh
<i>Connect-Ability grant coordinator had an opportunity to provide more feedback on transition needs to the organization leadership and pilot committees. This allowed for increased contact with SDE to identify transition resource needs.</i>	LLP	ID
<i>CREC implemented and will continue parent information night to disseminate information about transition planning.</i>	LLP	ID
<i>Three of the local level pilots participated in Disability Mentoring Day. One pilot reported that 22 students from 2 high schools visited 5 businesses. Another pilot reported that 5 high school students visited 6 students with disabilities on a college campus and 13 college students provided peer mentoring. The third pilot reported that 8 students were</i>	LLP	ID

<i>matched with local businesses.</i>		
<i>PAP identified new transition materials to communicate to the community and provide direct outreach to parents during the pilot. Continuation partly depends on funding.</i>	LLP	ID
<i>ARC's pilot program resulted in more engagement with a variety of stakeholders including local high schools, self-advocacy groups, private providers, public health services, and community action groups to work towards a common goal to improve transition. It created a network of transition coordinators that will continue to meet together regularly.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>BCO developed a relationship with SDE and a local school district.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>CACIL developed relationships with a local school district and other social services agencies (e.g., BRS, BESB, Disability Program Navigator), and visibility with locally based universities.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>CREC created partnerships with colleges to provide field trip opportunities and to have higher education representatives come to high schools to present to students with disabilities.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>CREC developed relationships with directors of the Special Education administration to increase their collaboration efforts with transition coordinators and school district. This resulted in gaining access to the IT department and Principal's office. Local level transition meetings will continue.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>PAP developed a new partnership with BRS transition coordinators and SDE allowing the organization to focus on transition issues. Relationships will continue.</i>	LLP	NET
<i>WFA strengthened relationships with local BRS Vocational Rehabilitation staff to continue collaboration to find students and adults who can benefit from the organization's services for people with disabilities (e.g., AbilityWorks center at One-Stops).</i>	LLP	NET
<i>CREC purchased AT for a school.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>CREC provided financial support for staff transition training opportunities during 2009 pilot period.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES
<i>Connect-Ability provided TA to local level pilots regarding transition events.</i>	LLP	ADD-RES

	<p>BRS Transition Committee put a new initiative in place and revised the content and appearance of School to Work brochures that were developed earlier to reflect the partnership BRS has with Connect-Ability. The slight shift in content is toward shared responsibility between the consumer and agency in their move toward employment. Changes to the brochures will be made on the website when funding is accessible. More information on the brochures is available at www.brs.state.ct.us/SchoolToWork/brochure.htm</p>	REL-O	NPG
	<p>Connect-Ability's Youth webpage is being used for transition planning with positive results.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability attends the statewide transition education expositions as a vendor and has had a positive outreach to over 150 students, parents, educators, local businesses, insurance, and legal agencies. Expositions took place in different Regional Education Service Centers (RESC) including ACES, LEARN, and CES, and are repeated annually.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability has consistent visibility to the 45 stakeholders involved with the state-level taskforce on Transition who meet every other month for half a day. These include statewide representation from community agencies, parents, students, employers, and RESCs.</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability finalized a School to Work Transition Toolkit that is a physical kit of different options for students and counselors to use. More information on this toolkit is available on the BRS website at http://www.brs.state.ct.us/SchoolToWork/toolkit.htm</p>	REL-O	ID
	<p>Connect-Ability sponsored Disability Mentoring Day on October 21st and developed materials to raise awareness of the event, which coincided with October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month and included National Disability Mentoring Day. The national program is coordinated by the American Association for People with Disabilities and promotes career development for students and job seekers with disabilities. CTBLN took a lead role in coordinating statewide efforts for the event. Ability Beyond Disability coordinated separate efforts for the Danbury area and Padres Abriendo Puertas coordinated additional events in the Hartford area. Connect-Ability also served as the host site to five students from Bloomfield High School and had a structured program that included information about Assistive Technology, Marketing and Media, and Transportation. Mock interviews were also conducted. The transition coordinator at Bloomfield High said, "The Disability Mentoring Day was a roaring success!...The students talked all the way back to school about the great time they had..." Overall, 16 groups partnered with Connect-Ability, more than 50 businesses posted mentees, 10</p>	REL-O	ID

	<p><i>schools and over 175 mentees were involved. The experience was successful in increasing student exposure to different employment opportunities and possibilities. More information on the 2009 Disability Mentoring Day is available at http://www.ctbln.com/news.details.asp?id=1502705990</i></p>		
	<p><i>Connect-Ability enabled BRS to engage new partners through the inclusive mentoring training program with the Governor's Prevention Partnership and Partners for Youth with Disabilities (the trainers). This model includes introductory and advanced training. Introductory training provides basic information about disability. Participants complete a self-assessment on how inclusive their programs are and develop an action plan. Advanced training focuses on specific disabilities and includes young adults with specific disabilities in their mentoring programs. Attendees are administrative program staff that develop and run programs for schools, workforce boards, or any other community-based mentoring programs. Many good things have resulted from the trainings, for example, the Governor's Prevention Partnership has decided to include disability as part of its diversity training. This wasn't part of their demographics before. DCF participated in the program in the fall and is now providing training to its own mentoring contractors. For the year, there were a total of 6 in-person trainings and 1 webinar that reached 69 individuals and included 45 mentoring organizations in 4 regions.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>Connect-Ability and BRS expanded Professional Development Training on how to use the Connect-Ability website to DMHAS. Twenty-five participants represented a cross-section of DMHAS employment providers and staff. Attendees were very positive about the training.</i></p>	REL-O	ID
	<p><i>In March 2008, SDE and Connect-Ability co-sponsored an initiative involving all 128 state school districts to collect baseline data on the types of transition, work experience, and community participation services available to students ages 16 to 21 who receive special education services. School districts were provided with background information about Connect-Ability and advised that the information would be used to inform the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) about the range of services used by districts to support transition age students in reaching their post-school outcome goals. A report on the initiative, CT Special Education Transition Services: Results of a Statewide Survey, was approved and posted on the SDE website in May 2009 at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Transition_Survey.pdf. Information on the initiative has had a positive impact on school districts and is encouraging change.</i></p>	REL-O	ID

	<p><i>The School to Transition Workgroup members have been pivotal in their agencies to make things happen so when Connect-Ability wants to do training in an agency, the increased networking capability helps people get in touch quickly.</i></p>	REL-O	NET
	<p><i>Building a Bridge transition guide was revised by members of the Connecticut Transition Task Force and distributed. The handbook for high school students and family members helps with preparation for life after high school and is a useful tool in planning for additional education, training, and employment. More information on the guide is available at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/BuildingABridge.pdf</i></p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p><i>Connect-Ability provided BRS in New Haven with support for youth and job coaching at Wilbur Cross, Hill House High School, Riverside Academy, and some magnet schools including Common Grounds High School and Career High School.</i></p>	REL-O	ADD-RES
	<p><i>Connect-Ability and SDE developed a MOA to work on Indicator 14. Indicator 14 of the State Performance Plan (SPP) specifically requests data regarding the percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school. A SDE workgroup meets to discuss this indicator and are exploring ways to increase the response rate to the post-school outcomes survey for exiters of special education services and to get districts more involved. Goals for the MOA over the next two years under the MIG grant include increasing the response rate and translating the survey into Spanish. A key piece of the MOA is to do some training. The National Post School Outcomes Center has the Data Tool Kit which was unveiled in March, 2009. SDE hopes to use this free toolkit but will need to learn how to use it and train the districts in its use. The process will include inputting data (e.g., comments students make about helpful, nonhelpful services) for a school into the toolkit so it can be evaluated. This will inform practice. The Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT is the contractor for the evaluation.</i></p>	PRG	NPG
	<p><i>SDE in collaboration with the State Education Resource Center (SERC) developed professional training to demonstrate how the Connect-Ability website would be used in school curriculum. SERC and Connect-Ability staff conducted two trainings at Regional Education Service Centers. These were well received and were attended by a total of 35 people.</i></p>	PRG	ID
	<p><i>DDS completed the Individual Plan (IP) Buddy Curriculum and Process and trained twenty consumers to be IP buddies who are currently meeting people and using the skills they learned. The curriculum is modeled after a program at the University of California and is a</i></p>	PRG	ID

<p><i>people first buddy system. It encourages self-determination, helps develop and strengthen self-advocacy skills, provides information on rights around employment, encourages participation in IP meetings and provides follow-up after the meetings. Upon request, DDS provides funds to pay for a peer advocate for three meetings.</i></p>		
<p>Local school districts from an LLP project implemented Career Development courses for 2010.</p>	LLP	NPG
<p>BRS developed an educational process sheet, Secondary Transition School Referral Process, for districts and BRS liaisons to help connect potential students with counselors. The sheet includes recommended steps for engaging BRS and helping schools understand the BRS process (e.g., How to start a referral to BRS and how to look at who may or may not be eligible). More information on this sheet is available at http://www.brs.state.ct.us/SchoolToWork/TransitionReferralProtocol.pdf</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>BRS developed an additional sheet, In the Meantime, to address the number of vacancies in liaisons and to help students prepare for their first meeting with a BRS counselor and to make it more productive. More information on this sheet is available at http://www.brs.state.ct.us/SchoolToWork/InTheMeantime.pdf</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>BRS Connect to Work Center staff are making more of an effort to speak with educators and transition counselors about how benefits are affected for people in high school who are moving into the business world. People have responded favorably. Parents who attend the meetings have been impacted by the information shared, and this has resulted in a shift in peoples' mindset. Parents used to discourage a child with a disability from working and were apprehensive about losing the income they depended on, but are beginning to be more open to employment for people with disabilities.</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>SDE posted its newest revision of Building A Bridge: A Transition Manual for Students (2009). This document was disseminated to Local Level Pilots as well as all school districts and BRS transition counselors. More information on the manual is available in English at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/BuildingABridge.pdf and in Spanish at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/BuildingABridge_Spanish.pdf</p>	REL-O	ID
<p>A SDE workgroup is in the process of developing two fact sheets from outcomes of the CT Special Education Transition Services Survey. One is on transportation and the other on stipends for work experiences. Workgroup members have completed two-thirds of the calls to special education teachers and transition coordinators to collect information for the fact sheets.</p>	REL-O	ID

BRS worked with DMHAS and BESB to provide stronger linkages with urban school systems and Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) and are building employment opportunities for people with disabilities. For one job description, three people that were referred to the job had mental illness; this is utilizing the concept of opening the door to opportunity.	REL-O	NET
National organization ARC of the US received a Walmart grant 2009 for young adults to transition from school to community.	PRG	NPG
BRS has a new program to contract with providers (e.g., job coaches) for interview preparedness to help students who are BRS consumers learn about work, including how to look for work. This will help young consumers with intellectual disabilities that are illiterate. Youth without work experience will be targeted.	PRG	NPG
The City of New Haven new employer outreach position has been very effective in creating linkages with employers who actually hire students with disabilities.	PRG	NPG
Connecticut is now monitoring student transition goal writing through Program Reviews (compliance) and raising the visibility of transition planning; better aligning transition goals to IDEA 2004 (Special Ed Law).	PRG	PrCh
SDE revised four pages of its Individualized Education Program (IEP) to assist districts with more accurate data collection and maintaining compliance with the secondary transition requirements found in IDEA 2004. The revised IEP forms and updated manual are posted on the Department's website: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/ED620_Highlights.pdf	PRG	PrCh
As a result of IEP revisions, SDE developed a training called Transition Assessment and the IEP to help people approach transition more comprehensively. This training was offered 4 times and in addition to being a philosophical shift, is the best hands-on training SDE has done to date. In addition, a frequently asked questions sheet on the revisions was included in the March SDE bulletin and is available at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Updates/BulletinMarch2009.pdf	PRG	PrCh
SDE hired a new consultant in 2008 who has helped with transition beginning in January 2009.	PRG	PrCh
Two additional consultants with secondary level experience were hired by SDE in 2008 and started on January 30, 2009 to help with transition-related activities. These two people joined an existing person to offer help to 8th grade level and above transition services. One of the two people hired is directly involved with transition and the other responds to questions about	PRG	PrCh

	transitions.		
	SDE developed a self assessment checklist that's currently in draft form and being voluntarily piloted by 10 school districts to see how it works. Since 100 percent compliance is expected, districts not in compliance with transition goals will be expected to use the checklist to see what they have not done correctly.	PRG	PrCh
	ARRA 2009 funds have given BRS new opportunities to engage employers and move its consumers more quickly into jobs with shorter term training. Programs involving on-the-job training and that don't require a four year degree are being considered.	PRG	ADD-RES
	ARRA 2009 funds enabled BRS to hire more counselors and staff (e.g., hired placement specialist in central office for each region in CT).	PRG	ADD-RES
	DOL received ARRA 2009 funds and through the Workforce Investment Board allocated some of those to a summer employment program for young adults with disabilities. BRS counselors signed up approximately 500 of its consumers for the program. In one region, 26 youths were hired for summer jobs. Although there weren't as many jobs as applicants, the experience and connections they made were good.	PRG	ADD-RES
Other			
	<i>Connect-Ability received two Bell Ringer awards from the Publicity Club of New England for the "Kathy" TV advertisement and video.</i>	MKT	ID
	Positive organizational changes as a result of the synergy between staff members internally. (e.g., additional staff hired for the Connect-Ability grant increased the capacity to continue the organization's work).	LLP	ADD-RES
	Beginning April 1, Medicaid funding became available to support community-based services to help people with serious mental illness avoid long stays in Connecticut nursing homes. The program is one of four in the nation approved under a special Medicaid waiver. The initiative allows Connecticut to support community-based mental health services with Medicaid dollars – money that previously had only paid for a person's stay in a nursing home. More information on this funding is available at http://www.ct.gov/governorrell/cwp/view.asp?A=3675&Q=437738 (see press release 3/31/2009)	PRG	NPG

Similar to Table 1, data in the following Tables are organized by content areas and include highlights and a summary category. Table 2 focuses on barriers to employment. Barriers are listed by summary category (listed below) but not prioritized by any particular order within categories.

- ECO - Economy Related
- ATT – Attitudes, Biases, Fears, Lack of Awareness
- PPR - Policies, Procedures, Regulations
- NSP - Deficiency in or No Services / Programs
- NTR - Deficiency in or No Transportation
- COM - Lack of Sharing or Communications Between Agencies
- REL - Lack of Relationships or Partnerships

Table 2. Barriers to Employment

Content Areas	Highlights	Summary Category
Stakeholder Education		
	A hold on the majority of purchase orders significantly delayed the completion of the final piece of numerous projects.	ECO
	Inability to use Connect-Ability funds for advertising during certain quarters was reflected in a low rate of calls to the toll free line.	ECO
	The immobilization of a state parent agency prevented the dissemination of marketing materials.	ECO
	Difficulty getting front-line staff and clinicians to buy into the systems changes and change messaging to be supportive of people with disabilities to believe that these people should expect to be able to work.	ATT
	Infrastructure change affecting the employment of people with disabilities takes a long time especially with long-time existing agencies and procedures; time is needed to change attitude and processes.	ATT

	Some organizations demonstrate mistrust and don't initially see the direct benefit of working with Connect-Ability.	ATT
	Continuing negative attitudes and ignorance to capabilities of people with disabilities and stereotypical responses by employers affects employment outcomes for people with disabilities.	ATT
	Attitude challenges and barriers are more often at mid and low level management and not as much at the top level of organizations; need to work on attitude changes at lower levels.	ATT
	Disability community continues to work with same partners over the years creating a barrier to new opportunities and attitudinal change; should try to expand network to new "non-traditional" partners.	REL
	Lack of involvement of SSI on committees with Connect-Ability. There is a need to collaborate with SSI to change the message from how to stay on benefits to how to maximize opportunities.	REL
Recruitment, Employment, and Promotion		
	As a result of layoffs, Connect-Ability lost important connections with top employers at Pfizer, Inc. and Aetna, Inc.	ECO
	Layoffs at agencies across the state have increased stress for providers. These service providers are trying to be flexible and creative to offset the economic impact, but are struggling to be effective.	ECO
	Given the current economic and employment landscape, service organizations may be less able and less willing to support persons with disabilities who also lack skills to successfully compete in an ever more highly competitive workforce with newly unemployed experienced people.	ECO
	The economy and tighter restrictions on how money is spent impacts how contracts are viewed and how spending occurs in state agencies.	ECO
	The retirement incentive program removes a knowledge base that takes years to develop. Staff reductions have stretched employees, changed dynamics between agencies, and made it more difficult to make infrastructure changes because employees are focused on day-to-day activities and completing the additional workload.	ECO
	The Employment Summit was delayed from June to October because of state budget issues and had to be scaled down.	ECO

	<p>There is strong competition for jobs in the state and more so for people with disabilities and "hidden disabilities." Entry level jobs are being taken by people with more education leaving fewer jobs for people with less education.</p>	ECO
	<p>Connecticut closed the State Medical Assistance for Non Citizens (SMANC) program. Under Medicaid rules a person is not eligible for Medicaid for 5 years after he/she first comes to the United States. Because the state was unable to get reimbursed for the medical assistance these people were receiving, the program was eliminated. The elimination of this program could impact people with disabilities who are not citizens and who want to return to work.</p>	ECO
	<p>Lack of funds has prevented the development of a marketing team to help employers work towards having a diverse workforce.</p>	ECO
	<p>CTBLN lost three board members and as a result important contacts with businesses. The implications of this can't be underestimated.</p>	ECO
	<p>Funding cuts in the City of New Haven for job coach hours have impacted consumer services. Some job coaches who worked full time are now only working 12 hours weekly.</p>	ECO
	<p>Labor market challenge is having the largest negative impact on people's stability as evidenced by an increase in homelessness. The problem of increased homelessness is compounded by the fact that people living in subsidized housing are not moving out since their economic situations are not improving.</p>	ECO
	<p>It's difficult to approach employers to do job development (e.g. job sharing or carving out jobs) when businesses are experiencing layoffs.</p>	ECO
	<p>Slow rate of economic recovery with employers not feeling secure enough to re-hire laid off workers or hire new workers - particularly difficult in more rural regions.</p>	ECO
	<p>Significant number of layoffs (50%) at One-Stop due to budget, later reinstated budget and re-hired many but not all same staff resulting in a net loss of experience; extra time needed to hire and train new staff results in staff training delays and service delays.</p>	ECO
	<p>Poor economy makes it difficult to identify employers willing to hire new job positions for people with or without disability even with funding for on-the-job training</p>	ECO
	<p>Biggest barrier for people with mental illness seeking employment is the lack of cultural change. Case managers in particular need to see that skills and employment are important for people in recovery.</p>	ATT

Businesses can't work to everyone's advantage if they don't see a role for someone who has a disability.	ATT
The inertia of doing something new is a barrier to infrastructure change.	ATT
Many people with disabilities don't know what they have to offer. This limits self confidence, which is necessary when seeking employment.	ATT
Difficulties with the Social Security system related to overpayments and underpayments frustrate people with disabilities and influence their willingness to seek employment.	ATT
Low expectations of the employer for people with disabilities gets in the way of advancing people with disabilities who could be doing more than they're doing.	ATT
Employers' concerns about retaliation if they hire a person with disabilities who is not performing well and how to terminate someone who is not working out.	ATT
The work-culture within the agencies is slow to change from separate agency-focused resources to a shared common good among all agencies; people talk about the common good but moving to action to use resources as a common good with the focus on the client is still not the predominant mindset within the state agencies.	ATT
Messaging still needs to overcome employer biases to willingness to hire, and change from focus on disability as different which creates more fear and reluctance to accommodate (e.g. job coach in workplace highlight employee as "different")	ATT
Misinformation from Benefits Counseling creates a disincentive to work; counselors find it easier to just explain what is the maximum income to keep benefits and do not encourage seeking opportunities for higher incomes and jobs that may offer benefits	ATT
The state contracting process in general is time consuming and gets in the way of moving forward with infrastructure changes.	PPR
State agency hiring process is too rigid to allow a non-direct match of interviewee skills and job requirements resulting in fewer people with disabilities being employed or having time to develop skills or knowledge with on-the-job training.	PPR
CT Works assessments are not appropriate for a person with an intellectual disability.	PPR
Problem of knowing who to go to in a business with decision-making responsibility for hiring and approving provision of AT support for a person with a disability.	PPR

Employers attending events by other organizations/pilots express interest in hiring people with disabilities but do not know where to go for a pool of qualified skilled applicants other than general referrals to BRS/Connect-Ability. This is problematic if not done in a timely way or with a specific response.	PPR
Provider funding cuts potentially reduce employment opportunities and services available to clients.	NSP
It's difficult to find vocational resources other than BRS for certain clients. Some people need a group supported environment but the current focus is on competitive employment.	NSP
The new computer case management system has been problematic for BRS staff and takes considerable extra time away from training clients and finding employment options for them. The system requires continual revisions and has led to difficulty with authorizations and in purchasing outside services for consumers. As a result of the breakdown in necessary communications, information about certain BRS programs is unavailable to Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and the EN.	NSP
Connect-Ability program lacks focus on Latino prospective employers, not included in employer outreach, need Spanish ads (i.e. media campaign) and materials.	NSP
Lack of supervisory training in general and gap in businesses (especially small business) to understand how to hire and manage people with disabilities is a barrier.	NSP
Lack of AT support available to employers sometimes hinders the consideration of hiring someone with a disability.	NSP
Anticipation of potential damage of state budget cut-backs is a huge stress for small provider agencies that may not survive or have to cut programs and creates a lot of fear and anxiety.	NSP
Trouble with accessible and affordable transportation (especially in rural areas) deters people with disabilities from working.	NTR
The fragmentation of state systems prevents the state from making headway as a model employer.	COM
State agencies with stimulus funds are not connecting with BRS to identify potential job seekers from the pool of people with disabilities. For example, underserved people aren't being hired for the low income housing weatherization project.	COM
Problem of lack of coordination between state agencies and provider agencies results in unclear communications from Connect-Ability central phone contact to refer clients back to local providers and local pilots.	COM

	Some increase in communications is occurring between organization and other agencies (e.g., DDS) related to AT resources, but there is a continued problem of lack of effective cross-agency communications, overlap in services, and lack of explanation on how initiatives in one agency overlap or differ from work in another agency (particularly unclear for private provider organizations).	COM
	Problem of knowing who to go to in state agencies. It's not always clear who is responsible for a client, and there are many different paths within the agency that could provide services and across agencies. It's unclear what support the agency person will give a client who has funds or approval to receive AT. More and clearer communication of this information would be useful for private provider organizations	COM
	Confidentiality issues, manpower to facilitate communication, and lack of resources prevent high-level leadership in organizations from supporting disability employment.	COM
Transportation		
	Lack of funding has decreased access to public transportation.	ECO
	Transportation is not a priority for most agencies. Those that provide transportation don't have a central office person in charge of transportation and as a result the information related to transportation is fragmented.	ATT
	The funding silo and lack of understanding of how transportation could be provided more efficiently prevents leadership in organizations from supporting disability employment. Additionally, there is lack of time to focus on how to resolve these issues.	ATT
	Regulations limiting access to ADA paratransit are particularly difficult in rural areas with longer distances to local transit systems.	PPR
	Regulations do not encourage coordination and sharing of available transportation resources among various agencies which are limited to only serve their own clients.	PPR
	DOT appears to lack support and willingness to change and make new initiatives to address the lack of coordination and availability of transportation resources for people with disabilities (e.g., unable to get to work).	PPR
	Lack of case managers or transition coordinators available through DDS due to budget cuts result in inability to refer students to DDS.	NSP

	Students lack knowledge of how the bus system works if not involved in a vocational program, and counselors are unable to provide youth with transportation education in a timely manner. If a job is available tomorrow, but no known transportation options for students with disabilities exist, the job opportunity is lost.	NTR
	Lack of transportation from north of Windsor into town without having to travel into Hartford is problematic for access to jobs at Walgreens.	NTR
	Transportation options vary significantly from town to town. In one town, door-to-door service is provided, but in a different town a paratransit van is unavailable for pickup and when there are also no public bus options, it is difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to get to work.	NTR
	There is a lack of accessible vehicles and routes close to residences (3/4 mile rule) for people with disabilities. Fragmented paratransit service (e.g., service too late to get to work and too early to stay at work to end of day, missing weekdays and weekend service) makes it difficult for people to take jobs in the Windham region.	NTR
Youth in Transition		
	With fewer staff, it is more difficult to serve BRS consumers well and to explore options for accessing interagency information that would facilitate consumer service.	ECO
	School administrators want to provide training and opportunities for youth, but are financially limited.	ECO
	Schools do not have budgets available to support purchases of AT, to send transition coordinators for training, or to hire dedicated transition coordinators.	ECO
	Current economy has resulted in the loss of key employers previously committed to working with transition (e.g., ARC Employment Transition Center).	ECO
	Many students who have dropped out of school and are without a diploma or GED are not eligible for training and as a result have difficulty in finding employment.	NSP
	Students who leave the city lack a disability liaison and have difficulty finding work because there is no liaison/job coach available to follow-up with leg-work for applications or to help them get accommodations in the workplace.	NSP
	End of LLP grant resulted in losing the resource who was responsible for training youth about disability awareness and supporting; schools are unable continue the disability awareness training and advocacy training due to lack of staffing resources, and BRS staff are likely unable to continue without	NSP

	more time available.	
	Job opportunities sent from Connect-Ability are poor matches for youth or young adult job-seekers who lack experience and education.	NSP
	There is a lack of focus in school systems to educate youth to get competitive and independent employment.	NSP
	Limited resources exist for some school districts to get more para-professionals trained as “job coaches.” Some school districts train their own job coaches or hire consultants through another agency (e.g., ARC, other local community providers).	NSP
	Lack of communication and coordination (e.g., messages weren't answered, information went out after deadline dates) within and between agencies has made it difficult for students to receive current employment information.	COM
	The transition process from youth to adult services is very poor; youth are suddenly dropped from support and then are either lost or on a long wait-list. Youths transitioning into adult services also often lack parental support and assistance from case management.	COM
	Need more focus on connecting schools with local non-government agencies and employers.	REL
Other		
	Managers and other high level leaders who are focused on keeping their programs alive do not currently have the opportunity to focus on infrastructure changes.	ECO
	New counselors hired to replace retirees cause considerable delay because of time needed to train for the position and then additional time needed to learn the job and how to navigate through the agencies and community successfully.	ECO
	Clients' fear of benefit loss and concern about SSDI cash benefits and Medicaid coverage; clients do not want to go beyond the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level.	ATT
	HUD lacks the “income disregard” policy which would otherwise enable people with disabilities (e.g., mental illness) to continue to receive housing support benefits and make a reasonable income. Other HUD programs include an income disregard, but the program which would benefit this population does not include the income disregard and as a result clients may not continue receiving the support.	PPR

	<p>Inefficiencies in state agency systems lead to redundancy in effort (e.g., BRS repeats procedures with the same client if no services within a few years, then all documentation/verifications are redone - renewal for personal handicap vehicle modification), slow process, overburden case workers, and results in lack of capacity to support persons with disabilities who have higher education or extensive work experience. This leads to fewer people being served and a disincentive to seek services.</p>	PPR
	<p>Large state agencies (e.g., DOL, DOT) have not demonstrated a greater capacity to work with people with disabilities.</p>	NSP
	<p>Interagency cooperation is hindered when people get delegated to be on a committee and those people are busy or they delegate to someone else and no one is that committed to the outcome.</p>	REL
	<p>The new administration in Washington, DC has new people on board who are disorganized and give indication of not being sure what they want to fund. They say one thing in written communications and something else when you speak with them in person or on the phone. This hinders future planning at the state level.</p>	COM
	<p>Agencies are unable to share data due to the use of different software systems, and as a result there is a duplication of effort.</p>	COM
	<p>Lack of information coordination across state agencies regarding addiction, mental health, and primary health care has a profound impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of services. It can limit efforts to assure continued care from prison to the community and hinder sustained recovery once a person is back in the community. Data sharing is essential across state-funded systems for care coordination, public safety, program evaluation, and policy and policy development.</p>	COM
	<p>Ineffective communication about the economic stimulus funds and how they can be used creates a barrier.</p>	COM

Table 3 lists promising practices that were reported by key informants. These practices are categorized as either a promising practice (PP) or a suggested resource (R) and are not prioritized in any particular order within summary categories.

Table 3. Promising Practices

Content Areas	Highlights	Summary Category
Stakeholder Education		
	<p>The RACI model used by AARP identifies stakeholder's roles and responsibilities for a decision, project, or task. If people take the time to work through the model, they will have a conversation that leads to a better partnership. In the model, R=Responsible, A=Accountable, C=Consulted, and I=Informed.</p>	PP
	<p>CACIL, in Willimantic, started a consumer job club as part of its pilot to share resources among consumers seeking employment and transportation solutions.</p>	PP
	<p>CT Council on Developmental Disabilities has a web-only publication, A Media Guide to Disability, that is instructive and demonstrates how to effectively interact with people with disabilities. For example, it suggests people first language versus unacceptable language (i.e., Nora uses the wheelchair versus Nora is wheelchair bound) is helpful and instructive. Sections of the guide include: Language We Choose, Interviewing People with Disabilities, The Language We Hear: Abbreviations and Acronyms, and The Language We Hear: Words and Phrases. More information on the CTCDD is available at www.ct.gov/ctcdd/cwp/view.asp?a=1994&q=290726&ctcddNav=</p>	R
Recruitment, Employment, and Promotion		
	<p>BRS, BESB, DAS, and DOL used American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) 2009 funds and collaborated to send a one-page stimulus flyer to CT employers in their tax letters for the purpose of raising awareness regarding Connect-Ability and the employment of people with disabilities. This novel approach was inexpensive and profitable.</p>	PP
	<p>Walgreens is a model employer in hiring people with disabilities. The company is the nation's largest drugstore chain with fiscal 2008 sales of \$59 billion and operates drugstores in 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Walgreens Senior Vice President, Randy Lewis, has a son with autism and is committed to making jobs available to job seekers with disabilities. In the Connecticut</p>	PP

	<p>Distribution Center, 37 percent of people hired by Walgreens are people with disabilities. More information about Walgreens commitment to people with disabilities is available at Walgreensoutreach.com.</p>	
	<p>The GettingHired internet based portal, at http://www.gettinghired.com/, proposes to create sustainable employment growth and opportunity for people with disabilities and achieves its goal by serving and connecting job seekers with disabilities, committed employers, advocacy organizations, and service providers. A growing list of participating employers include: Sears and Roebuck Company, KMart Corporation, Lands' End, and the Service Master Company. The website encourages employers to sign up and gain access to a valuable pool of workers and also invites providers to join the network and advocacy organizations to partner with them. This national website is a good resource and as more states partner with GettingHired can strengthen advocacy efforts related to job seekers with disabilities.</p>	PP
	<p>The Hartford promotes diversity in the workplace including the hiring of people with disabilities.</p>	PP
	<p>Valassis, a manufacturing company in CT, has participated in a number of initiatives to create awareness related to hiring people with disabilities and has an affinity group specifically for people with disabilities.</p>	PP
	<p>ConnectiCare, a non-profit Connecticut-licensed health maintenance organization in Farmington, CT, is a model employer and has listed 5 jobs that are disability friendly. More information on ConnectiCare is available at http://www.connecticare.com/aboutus.aspx</p>	PP
	<p>The Roses for Autism Program was started in 2009 and is a collaboration among Pinchbeck's Rose Farm, Growing Possibilities (a nonprofit social enterprise founded by Connect-Ability's Ability Beyond Disability), and the CT Autism Spectrum Center. The program is dedicated to meeting the needs of both the autism and agricultural communities and is changing perceptions about the abilities of individuals with autism spectrum disorders while helping Pinchbeck's successfully compete with foreign growers. As a model the program not only embraces the talents of people with autism, but brings communities together and can be replicated to develop opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum. Pinchbeck's will employ as many as 25 with autism spectrum disorders. More information on Roses for Autism is available at http://www.rosesforautism.com/inner.cfm?siteid=389&itemcategory=37702&priorId=0</p>	PP
	<p>CT Coalition for Addiction and Recovery (CCAR), one of the largest grassroots agencies for addiction, underscores recovery by providing the one-on-one support that people need for employment, help to find sponsors, and if clients have issues on the job they link them to a support network. More information on CCAR is available at http://rcsp.samhsa.gov/about/grantees/CT.htm</p>	PP

	<p>The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) has developed and is offering a career ladder strategy in property management and a sequenced certification program at several CT community colleges. The program is linked to HomeWORK and is a career ladder pathway to prepare individuals as qualified workers for entry level jobs in property management. Linking training with housing and a potential employment opportunity for underserved populations allows students to gain real-world skills as they complete coursework that will transfer to jobs in property management. At the Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, there were 17 graduates from the property management pilot project. The intent is to expand in the coming year.</p>	PP
	<p>CT DMHAS was one of the first states to use the evidenced based Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model in its employment services. In the late 1980s, Deborah Becker, a member of the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center (PRC) teamed up with Dr. Robert Drake, director of the PRC, to create a better way of helping people with severe mental illness find competitive work. The IPS model they created has solid success record. With IPS supported employment, more people not only find work faster, but working seems to lessen their psychiatric symptoms. In partnership with Johnson & Johnson, Dartmouth's PRC has helped implement IPS in 115 sites in 12 different states. More information about IPS supported employment and the people it has helped is available at http://dartmed.dartmouth.edu/spring10/html/working_wonders.php and http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=19E115B0BE5D53BF</p>	PP
	<p>CT DMHAS Recovery Oriented Employment Service (ROES) was launched in July of 2008 and demonstrates that employment is one of the best predictors of success for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders. ROES was initiated in the north central and eastern regions of Connecticut and connects treatment providers and the recovery advocacy community with clients; coordinates vocational services with treatment and person centered recovery plans; provides recovery-oriented vocational skills development curriculum; provides orientation and training; collects and evaluates data; and offers a full-time employment specialist located in Community Recovery Centers to connect clients to employment/education and recovery resources. To be eligible a participant must be in treatment, be in need of employment services, and participate in a vocational screen used to determine the best employment or educational options. Eligible clients receive: immediate activation of CT Community for Addiction recovery (CCAR) Telephone Recovery Support service for employment/recovery related support; referrals to community employment/educational resources and employers; phone and in-person assistance to monitor progress; participation in at least 20 hours of CCAR peer support recovery activities for volunteers; job experience reference; and mutual support groups focused on employment and job skills. More information on the success of ROES is available at http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/lib/dmhas/publications/recoverytimes/january2009.pdf</p>	PP

	<p>The CTBLN continues to show a real growth in the business community and has a strong tie back to Connect-Ability.</p>	PP
	<p>The Minnesota BLN and Department of Employment and Economic Development participated in a project called Pathways to Employment and created a series of short videos on mentoring. The website has inspiring stories about real people with disabilities and businesses working together to develop meaningful mentorships, internships, and long term job opportunities. It also provides resources for employers to help them understand the benefits of working with people with disabilities and for job seekers to assist them in preparing for and finding employment. More information on this project is available at www.ableandwilling.net</p>	PP
	<p>A supported employment and support volunteerism manual, Working in the Community: A Guide for Employers of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders, provides an introduction to the characteristics of autism, certain practices that enrich the experience of an employee or volunteer and practical strategies that promote positive interactions with new employees or volunteers. Produced by Alpine Learning Group, the manual is very well done and easy to read. Job developers or employers would find it useful. The manual will be included in the employment materials on the DDS website. More information on the manual is available at www.alpinelearninggroup.org/resources/documents/Alpine_Employment_Manual.pdf</p>	PP
	<p>The State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) and their work in redefining employment services supported through CMS is noteworthy and will have a huge impact on supportive employment. If a person with a disability is on a work crew, he/she would be in that job for a determined time and then would move on to a different job and not get stuck in the same kind of work for the rest of his/her life. More information on SELN is available at http://www.seln.org/</p>	PP
	<p>Boehringer Ingelheim, a pharmaceutical company, based in Ridgefield, CT, is the U.S. headquarters to seven subsidiaries, and a member of the Boehringer Ingelheim worldwide group of companies. The U.S. Boehringer Ingelheim subsidiaries employ nearly 9,000 people. The company has a diversity initiative that enhances employee satisfaction and promotes motivations and productivity. More information on the company is available at http://us.boehringer-ingelheim.com/about-us/about.html</p>	PP
	<p>The Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) has spent the last 15 years developing strategies to target people who are disconnected from the workforce and create job opportunities through support of social enterprises that help people gain the skills to help themselves. REDF's model approaches can be expanded and shared across the country, and they disseminate practical tools to help others replicate these efforts. More information on REDF is available at www.redf.org</p>	PP

	<p>UConn Storrs campus and Eastern Connecticut State University both are model employers with a history of employing people with disabilities.</p>	<p>PP</p>
	<p>Partnering local agencies with Job Developers, supporting clients with the job developer and Job Clubs.</p>	<p>PP</p>
	<p>AbilityWorks One-Stop centers as model resource for job seekers with a disability with knowledgeable staff able to support people with disabilities on how to use AT.</p>	<p>PP</p>
	<p>NEAT Marketplace AT resource lending libraries and training resources available, and expansion by collaborating with providers to serve more employers / organizations.</p>	<p>PP</p>
	<p>Distribution of marketing materials to local Chambers of Commerce to inform members of services available for employers and people with disabilities to support employment; use forums to bring together employers and agencies working with people with disabilities such as informational breakfasts with some "draw" such as special guest speakers (e.g., Ted Kennedy and Joyce Bender presentations to employers and agencies as part of pilot activity).</p>	<p>PP</p>
	<p>AetnAbilities Employee Resource Group at Aetna (e.g., presentation at BLN quarterly meeting demonstrated their success in supporting people with disabilities and enabling managers to become better listeners and managers overall as a result of learning how to support people with disabilities better).</p>	<p>PP</p>
	<p>USBLN connects employers to a diverse group of people and resources. It serves as the collective voice of more than 60 Business Leadership Network affiliates across North America and represents over 5,000 employers. More information on the CTBLN is available at http://www.usbln.org/</p>	<p>R</p>
	<p>Connect-Ability introduced BESB to Mintz and Hoke, one of New England's largest advertising and public relations agencies. The agency has worked closely with BESB to help them develop marketing materials and a marketing approach that's consistent with Connect-Ability.</p>	<p>R</p>
	<p>The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a useful website for information on adaptive equipment and workforce productivity. It includes an ADA library and a Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system designed to let users explore various accommodation options for people with disabilities in work and educational settings. The website also allows users to search materials by disability and by topic, and has separate pages for employers and job seekers. More information on JAN is available at http://askjan.org/links/about.htm</p>	<p>R</p>

	www.capitalworkforce.org is a resource that has numerous links to One-Stops and other programs (e.g., Work Investment Youth Program) and is user-friendly. Capital Workforce Partners is a regional Board in North Central CT that coordinates programs and initiatives to develop a skilled and educated workforce. It promotes and invests in youth and future workforce solutions, identifies and supports the development of sustainable career paths for adult workers, and assists employers in targeted industries, helping them grow and remain competitive.	R
	Work Ability: Opening Doors to Work at Workabilityutah.org has a newsletter that helps people communicate effectively about disability employment.	R
	www.ct.networkofcare.org is a mental health resource for individuals, families, and agencies that provides information about mental health services and can be used in preparing for potential employment.	R
	www.earnworks.com provides employers with free consulting services and other supports to advance the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities.	R
	www.theHiddenWorkforce.com is a website that presents information and insights on employment and education for people with disabilities in the CT-NY Talent for Growth region. A report discusses regional challenges/opportunities, identifies useful resources, and features short stories of real people working in the region.	R
Transportation		
	The CT Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Jobs Access program began in 1997 with a grant from the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CT DSS) in the amount of \$300,000. The program ended with 645 riders for that year and currently serves approximately 3,600 riders on an average daily basis. Due, in part, to the increased cost of fuel in CT, ridership in the program continues to increase.	PP
	United We Ride (UWR) is a federal interagency initiative started by the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) in 2004. The initiative is aimed at improving the availability, quality, and efficient delivery of transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes, and is effective in breaking down barriers between separate funding agencies. More information on UWR is available at http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_3_ENG_HTML.htm	PP
	Hosting transportation seminars to disseminate information with training and updates.	PP

	Partnering state and non-profit local service providers to review local issues and offer alternatives to meet local needs.	PP
	Transportation voucher system created by building on existing voucher system to expand services to people with disabilities for employment purposes.	PP
Youth in Transition		
	The City of New Haven Parks and Recreation Department were helpful to the Youth at Work Program in New Haven, CT and requested students with disabilities. They hired a student with autism over multiple years to run tours in the nature center and canoeing. They have consistently been willing to be open-minded, repeat hires, and want to give students with disabilities the challenge of working.	PP
	The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FET PIP) is a data warehousing tool that stores data from Florida state agencies. The system, formally created in Florida statute in 1988, collects personally identifiable information and holds student records and matches data sources from other state agencies to determine what agency services a student is involved with and to study student outcomes. FET PIP has been commended by USDOL, USDOE, and NGA.	PP
	The Philadelphia Integrating Factors initiative is a case management system for use by The Department of Human Services, Department of Behavioral Health, Prisons, Health Department, and the Office of Supportive Housing. School/education data is not included. The data system relies upon client consent. Case managers use the data to determine other services the client is receiving; this helps the client receive the best complement of services. The system provides aggregate reports with demographic data.	PP
	The Connecticut Youth Leadership Forum (CTYLF) is one of two programs run by the Connecticut Youth Leadership Project (CTYLP) and is a week-long program that has been held at the UConn Storrs campus for the past eleven summers. The program helps young adults with disabilities become leaders in their school and community through self-awareness and team building activities. Delegates explore personal leadership skills, define career goals and leave the forum with a specific action plan that describes what they will do back in their local communities to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. More information on CTYLF is available at http://www.ctylp.org/	PP
	Local employers who have made a positive impact on youth with mental illness disabilities giving them work experience and life skills. (e.g., handyman for local yoga studio in New Haven mentored a youth with mental illness disability who had dropped out of school).	PP

	Best Buddies between youth with disabilities from high schools and college students (e.g., UCONN and Eastern Connecticut State University)	PP
	Provision of updated AT software for career planning programs (e.g., Choices, NAVIANCE) to support students with disabilities; provide other AT support.	PP
	Collaboration of Special Education Directors, Transition coordinators and Guidance Counselors to support students with career planning.	PP
	Disability Mentoring day with new partnerships directly between schools and local businesses, novel method to connect students to more and different types of job opportunities	PP
	CTWorks presented The Summer Youth Employment Program at the end of March, 2009. The program is for residents in Eastern CT and had 1,100 slots for youths aged 14-24. Applicants must meet certain income guidelines (e.g., receive cash welfare or food stamps) and have at least 1 barrier to employment (e.g., deficiency in basic literacy skills, disability, homeless, offender, youth from a single family).	R
Other		
	City of New Haven as model city and employer for hiring persons with disabilities, has been a finalist in the National Organization on Disability (NOD) Accessible America Competition in 2009 (and 2007), plus other awards; it is an equal Opportunity Employer with an accommodation request attached to all job test announcements, provides reasonable accommodations to all employees, posters are visible on how to request an accommodations, and policies exist for accommodation and harassment.	PP
	PCA services were added to the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) in Public Act 09-64 and will be effective April 1, 2010. The act requires DSS to provide PCA services under the CHCPE and under circumstances noted in the act. Adding PCA services as a service option may be especially beneficial for a small pilot of people with disabilities who are under age 65. More information on CHCPE is available at http://www.ctelderlaw.org/HealthCare/medicaid.home.htm	R

The last Table (4) contains suggestions made by key informants for future action. These are listed by the following summary categories but not prioritized within categories in any particular order.

- MKT - Marketing Campaign
- REL-B - Relationship with Business
- REL-S - Relationship with State Agency
- REL-O - Relationship with Other Stakeholder
- POL - Policies
- PRG- Programs New / Revised / Grants
- ADD-RES - Additional Resources

Table 4. Suggestions for Future Action

Content Areas	Highlights	Summary Category
Stakeholder Education		
	More effort is needed to communicate the value of the economic stimulus program.	MKT
	Increase outreach to demonstrate the value of people with disabilities through mainstream media (e.g., segment on CBS news).	MKT
	Increase focus on persons with intellectual disabilities and promote self-advocacy.	MKT
	Provide more information to local Chambers of Commerce on how to accommodate people with disabilities, in particular AT information (e.g., NEAT program).	MKT
	Develop specific marketing strategies for diverse local groups including Latino employers (typically small employers) rather than continuing a general media campaign.	MKT
	Continue marketing to employers; need employers to believe in employing people with disabilities the same as other employees and be willing to act.	MKT

	<p>Use the Connect-Ability website as a repository of information to share among agencies/service providers by trying to adopt the concept of open source. This would allow Connect-Ability to share program information content and become a broader resource base for providers.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Use Connect-Ability as an organizing tool to help both state and non-profit agencies that are entrenched in their ways and processes.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Connect-Ability staff and committees need to continue being persistent with linking departments and state agencies to pull together and promote the Connect-Ability philosophy in order to ensure actions and outcomes for clients.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Consider creating a speakers bureau and/or participate in opportunities to inform federal level agencies on needed policy change. For example, people are afraid of losing affordable housing if they become employed. HUD created an incentive where the largest program, Shelter Plus Care, targeted homeless people with disabling conditions. In CT policy change has occurred for the state program to include an income disregard to allow people with disabilities to return to work and increase their income but not lose their housing subsidy for up to 24 months as long as work continues and the person's health permits him/her to work. More information on this program is available at http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/cwp/view.asp?a=2902&q=335286</p>	REL-O
	<p>Connect-Ability could more actively solicit input from other agencies (e.g., infrastructure partners), and make real attempts to seek legitimate and concrete feedback that is actionable and then act on it.</p>	REL-O
	<p>More follow-up with clients calling in for help to Connect-Ability is needed. Staff should find out what is working and how satisfied consumers are with service referrals.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Mechanisms to share information need to be in place in all agencies so communication is more effective.</p>	REL-O
	<p>The Connect-Ability media campaign was successful, but more needs to be done to create ongoing or permanent change.</p>	REL-O
	<p>In many state agencies there are a lot of worker bees doing the day-to-day work, but the engagement of policymakers is crucial in developing a stronger infrastructure. People with more influence and the authority to make decisions are essential in order to change the infrastructure.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Getting state agencies (e.g., DOL, DOT) together is central to providing assistance once the grant is over and is necessary to sustain the work that's been accomplished to date.</p>	REL-O

	Need to encourage local-level community stakeholders to participate in strategic planning and priority setting with Connect-Ability rather than high level state bureaucracy planning; it's time to reach local constituents.	REL-O
Recruitment, Employment, and Promotion		
	Connect-Ability and its partners should continue supporting sustainable development by educating employers about the value of hiring people with disabilities through the Connect-Ability website and other media efforts.	MKT
	Connect-Ability should be more proactive and formalize a sales group that does statewide outreach and networking to employers. There needs to be a determination of a niche, whether to focus on outreach to larger companies or smaller companies, and then to compile marketing materials that make sense for those people and have sales people go out and demystify the myths about employment and people with disabilities.	MKT
	Connect-Ability needs to make it clear that it is not providing job placement or job replacement services.	MKT
	Connect-Ability is key in interagency communication and is a strong liaison, but agencies need to follow through on collaborative opportunities in order to improve the existing infrastructure. They need to be willing to move from small networks to a larger spectrum in building relationships.	MKT
	Make employers aware of the importance of facility location and how to best design their facility to accommodate people with disabilities and public transportation. Corporate parks make it difficult to provide service. Information should be distributed when new employers are coming into an area and/or when new companies are building facilities.	MKT
	Encourage people with disabilities to seek help from other entities (e.g., DOL) besides disability agencies.	MKT
	CTBLN is providing a lot of information on ADA, but much more ADA education is necessary. Some employers don't realize that accommodations just need to be reasonable.	MKT
	Consider more formal meetings with employers and having employers put job openings on Connect-Ability website.	MKT

	<p>Include success stories from BRS Employment Division on the Connect-Ability website. For example, two recent employer contact calls through Connect-Ability in September were a result of the mailing and radio ad. The calls were referred to an Employment Consultant who returned the call to the employer within a day to receive job lead information. The Employment Consultant shared the leads with other agencies and prospective employees were sent for interviews within a week. Both leads resulted in job offers to agency clients with disabilities. Feedback demonstrates this was a positive experience for both employers, and subsequently led to two additional job leads.</p>	MKT
	<p>Need a cohesive and more extensive marketing campaign on who and what are the available services (e.g., in state agencies) for employers who are hiring persons with disabilities; repetitive marketing should be directed at decision-makers or policy makers within the employer agencies (e.g., the President or executive VP); businesses need to know who to go to in the state agencies for support when hiring a person with a disability (e.g., most businesses do not know what to do and subsequently avoid hiring because of the extra work and unknown liability); repeatedly send information on AT support to employers.</p>	MKT
	<p>State as a model employer initiative needs to create new partners with state agencies and their contractors and to explore best practices for hiring people with disabilities.</p>	REL-B
	<p>Employers need a website where they can retrieve information more quickly and don't have to do a lot of work to utilize it.</p>	REL-B
	<p>Public education directed at employers is needed to help employers view people with disabilities as individuals who can accomplish something worthwhile.</p>	REL-B
	<p>Connect-Ability could consider providing more recognition for employers who work with students with disabilities and promote their success stories.</p>	REL-B
	<p>More outreach is needed for the small businesses or chain companies with high turn-over (e.g., McDonalds).</p>	REL-B
	<p>Be more creative in job shaping and developing internships outside of the cities.</p>	REL-B
	<p>Ongoing and consistent ADA education for employers with high turnover management positions so new hires understand the impact of ADA and the potential of hiring people with disabilities.</p>	REL-B
	<p>Culture change within agencies is still needed from bottom-up. Agencies should focus on the employability of persons with disabilities in meaningful jobs and not just send people to group or sheltered workshops outside of mainstream employment.</p>	REL-B

	More attention on smaller local level employers is needed; they do not receive the attention deserved when making an effort to employ people with disabilities	REL-B
	Continuous two-way communication is necessary between the employer and provider agency.	REL-B
	More partnering with professional employment agencies is needed to learn about hiring practices which can be applied when supporting people with disabilities.	REL-B
	Leverage private sector more (e.g., participation on advisory boards, more input into planning activities implemented through Connect-Ability or public agency)	REL-B
	Consider incentives to employers for hiring people with disabilities (especially students), and financial assistance to understand AT.	REL-B
	Need agency/organization to make direct connections and develop relationship with key people in businesses in order to better provide services such as education and training to employers and better support the actual hiring of people with disabilities.	REL-B
	Need agencies/organizations to be active participant in business organizations including Chamber of Commerce and others.	REL-B
	Consider a project with businesses/industries matched up with a resource agency and provide in-depth training over extended time period to help change practices and knowledge; use job internships or job shadowing to increase awareness and reduce unfamiliarity; goal is to make hiring changes within a local business and to develop best practices.	REL-B
	Need organizations to develop direct relationships with partners and to work with non-traditional partners such as CBIA (statewide has 10,000 members); need to be connected to a respected conduit that is a person who can become a direct contact and knows the members of the other agencies; "who you know" matters.	REL-B
	Need a well-publicized portal for employers looking for applicants with disabilities with a wide range of employment experience and education	REL-B
	Need to create a direct relationship between agency/provider organization and potential employers to participate in mentoring day and other job internships or job shadow opportunities.	REL-B
	Need to help employers become more aware of AT and low costs associated with most AT; provide more AT information and training to employers; add more information on Connect-Ability website for employers regarding AT.	REL-B

Provide employer recognition for disability friendly environment; DOL starting to recognize employers with icon on job board; provide more incentives to employers for employing people with disabilities.	REL-B
Need integration across agencies to provide simultaneous services to same client; need adequate services and support before client can focus on employment opportunities/options.	REL-S
More Disability Program Navigators (DPN) at One-Stop centers are needed to support persons with disabilities in seeking employment. Due to funding limitations, Waterbury and Bridgeport are without a navigator.	REL-O
Ongoing need for collaboration between community resource providers and BRS employment consultants; without collaboration there is competition for the same job leads.	REL-O
Need more job developers who are educated and understand person-centered objectives, how to work with businesses, identify employer needs, and how to match these with person's ability.	REL-O
Change the attitudes of clinicians and case managers regarding the benefits of employment for people with mental illness.	REL-O
Define what infrastructure change is and explore what changes should be being made in each agency.	REL-O
Staff in agencies need to be more educated on the philosophy of employment and to cooperate more across agencies (bottom up approach is as important as top-down leadership buy-in).	REL-O
Expose employers to AT. Use NEAT or expand to other agencies to provide information, resources and training to potential employers.	PRG
Promote on-the-job training with available Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (DOL) funds.	PRG
Need WIA re-authorization to mandate DPN roles at One-Stops to help employer and job seeker navigate the system; need to promote DPN role to achieve realistic objectives and be accountable with more involvement from the DOL; link the DPN role to support meeting Connect-Ability objectives to increase good employment opportunities to people with disabilities.	PRG
Create more AT lending libraries.	PRG
Find funding for people in the cracks between BRS and DDS and how to identify these people and their needs.	ADD-RES
Develop more innovative models, such as Walgreens, with training in industry – business run training programs either as integrated training or specific to meet needs of people with disabilities.	ADD-RES

	Create good healthcare packages for employees with disabilities that do not negatively impact costs to the employer. One of the reasons employers are reluctant to hire people with disabilities is fear of potential costs for health benefits or supports.	ADD-RES
	Encourage companies to adopt universal design and adaptive designs that benefit everyone, rather than focus on individual person with disability as “different or special.”	ADD-RES
	Staff development, training, and intensity of services are needed to enhance the existing infrastructure to adequately support the employment of people with disabilities.	ADD-RES
	Explore how to create new business and work opportunities in poor rural areas.	ADD-RES
Transportation		
	Encourage networking and partnering agencies to collaboratively use transportation resources already available in different private providers.	REL-O
	Provide resource allocation for student transportation from school to employment opportunities.	PRG
	Use existing transportation options to implement voucher system.	PRG
	Enhance the existing infrastructure by providing transportation needs for regular transit and ADA paratransit options in areas where there are job opportunities.	ADD-RES
Youth in Transition		
	Connect-Ability media campaign should focus more on minority youth from urban city centers. Spanish versions should be included on the website. More media information in youth magazines and flyers at school is suggested; consider using FACEBOOK for messaging for youth.	MKT
	Develop more outreach between agencies, other than BRS, to youth with disabilities.	REL-B
	Develop direct relationships between school district and Chambers of Commerce and employers; need more outreach to employers to establish relationships with transition coordinators to consider students for job shadowing, internships, or appropriate job experiences; consider employer breakfasts to meet Special Ed teachers/Transition Coordinators and students	REL-B
	Need more parents meetings to advocate for student education.	REL-O

	Develop and support relationships between schools and One-Stop agencies as resources for students;	REL-O
	Need more emphasis on transition planning for youth with disabilities so they can receive training and guidance to offset the expected biases when seeking employment.	PRG
	Allocate more time in student schedules to permit employment experiences (e.g., job shadowing, field trips, internships) as part of career planning in school.	PRG
	Include more courses in career development as part of the student curriculum.	PRG
	Create job shadowing, career assessments, and after-school transition training programs in schools.	PRG
	Expand programs to educate parents on rights and resources of transition planning for children with disabilities to mobilize a critical mass that can help to change school districts with inadequate services.	PRG
	Additional training should be provided to school districts to help forge better school-to-work partnerships.	ADD-RES
	More internship opportunities are needed for students.	ADD-RES
	There needs to be one infrastructure that supports people looking for jobs and includes school districts so students can benefit.	ADD-RES
	Transition counselors need to become more integrated into the business network, focus on developing skills in youth and matching them with a diverse group of employers.	ADD-RES
	Provide soft skills training for students with disabilities (e.g., "people skills" - personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions) and give them opportunities to demonstrate these without parents hovering.	ADD-RES
	Need resources to hire full-time transition coordinators in schools and to provide training opportunities to transition coordinators.	ADD-RES
Other		
	More communications between agencies and the community since many resources exist but are not used optimally due to communication gaps.	REL-S

	<p>Promote more cross-agency information sharing to better serve the client with complete information from state agencies and provider agencies rather than working with client from just a single agency perspective.</p>	REL-S
	<p>State agencies need to break free of their silos and collaborate with each other.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Leverage pilot outcomes and work effort by making resources/new program information (regarding employment, transition and transportation) created or prepared by pilots available to other organizations and state agencies through the website.</p>	REL-O
	<p>Provide easy access to federal and CT statistical resources on employment (e.g., DOL data) and other information on people with disabilities making these data available on the website (e.g., allows organizations to access current data in one location).</p>	REL-O
	<p>Take best practices from pilot initiative, which was a great start, and expand practices (e.g., for employment, transition) over the long-term until there is evidence of a breakdown of barriers.</p>	PRG
	<p>Need more staff at BRS that have the ability and experience to work with a wide variety of people with disabilities (e.g., people with secondary and advanced education, significant work experience versus only serving lowest level education and low-salary jobs).</p>	ADD-RES

Appendix A:

Current DMHAS Employment Initiatives

Current employment initiatives within the DMHAS system that would be expanded and embedded within EPIC with a focus on cross-project and cross-agency collaboration include:

- **DMHAS Mental Health Employment Initiative:** The goal for these activities is to build staff capacity within the DMHAS system to provide effective employment services while extending BRS-DMHAS collaborative approaches beyond the three embedded BRS counselors.
- **DMHAS Recovery-Oriented Employment System (ROES):** The goal of these activities is to increase DMHAS staff capacity and awareness of cross-agency resources regarding employment with an emphasis on networking with employers. Linkage strategies with the DOL will be facilitated and recovery-relevant resources will be created for the Connect-ability website.
- **Specialized Training for Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Counselors:** The goal of these activities is to increase BRS staff capacity to serve persons with psychiatric disorders and raise awareness of evidence-based supported employment strategies to more effectively link with DMHAS employment services.
- **Department of Social Services Connect-Ability Program:** The goal of these activities is to increase DMHAS consumers' and providers' usage of the Connect-ability Technical Assistance Center and website as well as increasing their interface with the local level pilots.
- **DMHAS Peer Support Staff:** The goal of these activities is to increase the awareness of mental health and addictions peer staff of employment resources as well as link peers with MIG partner agency employment resources.
- **DMHAS Women's Services:** The goal of these activities is to build staff capacity on employment strategies and resources among women's service programs, assisting them to tap services beyond DMHAS.
- **CT Department of Labor/Workforce Investment Boards and Other MIG Partner Agencies:** The goal of these activities is to increase awareness of resources and the dynamics of recovery among MIG partner agency staff to better coordinate services for persons in recovery and improve employment outcomes.
- **Criminal Justice Clients:** The goal of these activities is to promote collaboration between DMHAS providers, other MIG partner agencies and the criminal justice system to increase employment outcomes for persons with criminal justice involvement.