

Focus Group: SWTCIE Staff Providing Direct Services

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is ____ and I work for Mathematica, an independent research firm. I'm joined by my colleague ____, who will be taking notes. Mathematica has been contracted by the US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration to conduct the national evaluation of the Disability Innovation Fund Demonstration's Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment projects, commonly referred to as the [grantee-specific project name] in your state.

The purpose of our discussion is to learn about new and innovative services provided to participants through the [grantee-specific project name] during the first year of the demonstration. We would also like to hear your perspective on what services are most important to help participants prepare for or achieve competitive integrated employment. In addition, we would like to understand what factors have helped you to provide services to participants as well as the challenges you have encountered.

The personally identifiable information (PII) requested on this form is collected as authorized by Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, P.L. 117-103 Rehabilitation Services, March 15, 2022. The researchers conducting this study follow the confidentiality and data protection requirements, as required by law. Your responses will be kept private and used only for research purposes. Your responses will be combined with the responses of other respondents and no individual names will be reported. While there are no direct benefits to participants and participation is voluntary, your participation will help us learn how states can help increase employment for people with disabilities. While your information will not be disclosed outside of the Department, there may be circumstances where information may be shared with a third party, such as a Freedom of Information Act request, court orders or subpoena, or if a breach or security incident would occur affecting the system, etc.

We would like this to be an open and lively discussion. I encourage you to share your honest views and examples from your direct experience. When doing so, we ask that you refrain from using people's actual names, such as participants and family members, during our discussion. We also ask that you do keep everyone's comments confidential, and refrain from sharing what you hear with others outside of this group. We expect this discussion to take about an hour and a half.

Ground rules

Before we begin, let me briefly explain how this discussion will work:

- 1.** Please speak one at a time and avoid side conversations so I can hear what you have to say.
- 2.** You're welcome to speak directly to one another (you don't always have to talk to me) and respond to what others are saying, whether you agree or disagree. As you do, please be courteous and have respect for what other people say.
- 3.** I'm interested in hearing your views based on your own personal experiences; there are no right or wrong answers. You're welcome to share specific examples from your own direct experience to support a point, but please avoid using actual participant's complete names or other identifying information. I encourage everyone to speak and say what's on your mind.
- 4. [If there are any virtual attendees.]** To make sure everyone has a chance to speak, I will check in periodically with anyone joining by [phone/video] to give them an opportunity to share their thoughts.
- 5. [If there is more than one virtual attendee.]** Please give your name the first couple of times you speak so that I can begin to identify you by your voice.
- 6.** I am not an expert on employment services and cannot give advice. I am here to listen to your experiences with the SWTCIE project and ask clarifying questions along the way.

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

I would like to record the discussion to make sure I do not miss anything you share. The notes and recording will be used for notetaking only and will not be shared with anyone outside the study team. Are you comfortable with recording this conversation?

[If participants consent:] I will turn on the recording now, but let me know if you would like me to stop recording at any time.

For our records, can you please indicate your consent to participating in this discussion by stating "I consent to participating"?

[Moderator note: START AUDIO RECORDER AND/OR WEBEX RECORDING NOW.]

To get us started, please take a minute or two to introduce yourself and briefly tell us about your favorite travel destination.

[Moderator note: Moderator begins, modeling brief response. Go around and give everyone a chance to speak.]

Facilitators and challenges to providing services

/ Poll via mobile device: Factors facilitating the provision of services to participants

- *[Moderator note: Provide link and QR code to the poll and poll code to attendees via email before the focus group and in the chat during the discussion. Instruct attendees to answer the questions using their mobile device. Responses will be broadcast on a screen in the room for all attendees to see in real time. Encourage attendees to raise their hand if they experience technical difficulties.]*
- *[Moderator note: Review responses and identify trends and areas of divergence. Invite attendees to share why they believe these factors have supported the provision of SWTCIE services.]*

Use these prompts to generate in-depth discussion.

- / Successes and challenges in providing services to participants
- / Perceived gaps in SWTCIE services
- / Perceived adequacy of SWTCIE services

Prioritization and perceived value of SWTCIE services

/ Poll via mobile device: Types of services most critical for increasing competitive integrated employment

- *[Moderator note: Provide link and QR code to the poll and poll code to attendees via email before the focus group and in the chat during the discussion. Instruct attendees to answer the questions using their mobile device. Responses will be broadcast on a screen in the room for all attendees to see in real time. Encourage attendees to raise their hand if they experience technical difficulties.]*
- *[Moderator note: Review responses and identify trends and areas of divergence. Invite attendees to share why they believe each type of service/support is most critical to promoting competitive integrated employment.]*

Use these prompts to generate in-depth discussion.

- / Services most critical for **youth** to prepare for and secure CIE
- / Services most critical for **adults** to prepare for and secure CIE
- / Services most critical for **people contemplating SWE** to prepare for and secure CIE
- / Services most critical for **people working in SWE** to prepare for and secure CIE
- / Services or supports to add or expand

System-level changes

- / Components of SWTICE project VR plans to continue
- / Strategies or learnings from the SWTCIE project can be adapted in different settings, or with different populations
- / Anticipated challenges when adapting a [strategy/approach/learning] from the SWTCIE project in different settings, or with different populations
- / Resources or solutions to address challenges in adapting a [strategy/approach/learning] from the SWTCIE project in different settings, or with different populations
- / Strategies or learnings from the project that cannot be adapted

Overall project impacts

- / Unanticipated positive impacts from the SWTCIE project
- / Unanticipated negative impacts from the SWTCIE project

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