Disability Program Navigator Initiative
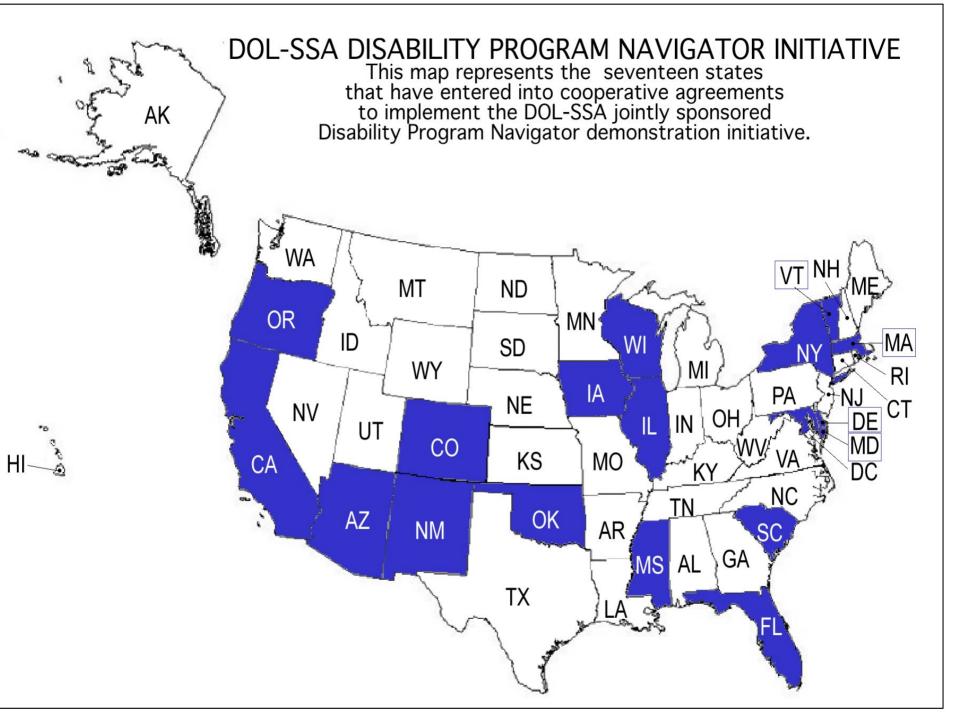
DPN Evaluation Plan

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DOL-SSA DISABILITY PROGRAM NAVIGATOR INITIATIVE

This map represents the seventeen states
that have entered into cooperative agreements
to implement the DOL-SSA jointly sponsored
Disability Program Navigator demonstration initiative.

AK

WA

MT

ND

MN

VT NH

ME

OR

ID

SD

WI

NY

MA

WY

MI

RI

NV

IA

PA

CT

CA

UT

NE

IL

IN

OH

NJ

CO

KS

MO

WV

VA

DE

MD

DC

HI

AZ

NM

OK

KY

NC

AR

TN

SC

MS

AL

GA

TX

LA

FL

Navigator States

DOL entered into cooperative agreements with 17 workforce agencies at the state level where SSA has employment support initiatives.

- ☐ Arizona (12)
- ☐ California (24)
- ☐ Colorado (19)
- ☐ Delaware (4)
- ☐ Florida (8)
- ☐ Illinois (14 + Lead)
- ☐ Iowa (15 + Lead)
- ☐ Maryland (12 + Lead)
- ☐ Massachusetts (17)
- ☐ Mississippi (8 + Lead)
- ☐ New Mexico (7)
- ☐ New York (40)
- ☐ Oklahoma (11 + Lead)
- ☐ Oregon (8)
- ☐ South Carolina (8)
- ☐ Vermont (6)
- ☐ Wisconsin (14)

Update on the Four Facets of the DPN Evaluation Plan

The Disability Program Navigator Initiative Evaluation Plan includes the following four strategies:

1. DPN Navigator Quarterly Report
2. Fourteen State Evaluation Using a Telephone Survey Approach
3. In-Depth Four State Study
4. Individual Outcome Data Study

DPN Navigator

Quarterly Report

DPN Navigator Quarterly Report

Findings from the evaluation instrument provide:

1. Description of a typical Navigator's activities, including time allocation by type of activity, system relationships and outcomes, and involvement with organizations.
2. Description of changes in Navigator's activities over quarters by type of activity, system relationships and involvement with organizations.
3. Best Practices reports or "case studies" on systems relationships, collaborations with employers, and experiences of job seekers with disabilities.

Data for the first four quarters—January through December 2004—have been compiled and analyzed. Quarterly reports for the fifth quarter—January through March 2005—have been submitted and are in the process of being examined.

Navigator Evaluation Results: Time Allocation

- ☐ Over the course of the first four quarters, Navigators reported allocating the majority of their time on the following activities:
  - ■ a. Navigator Training and Development (average=18.5%), b. Service Collaboration (average=16.8%), c. One-on-One Customer Contact (average=16.5%), and d. Information and Referral (average=14%).*
- ☐ The amount of time allocated to Navigator Training and Development increased in the fourth quarter after remaining at consistently lower levels in the second and third quarters. This increase is attributable to: fourth quarter data includes feedback from new Navigators in the three states that were added in July 2004 and almost all Navigators attended an intensive annual training session in November 2004.
- ☐ Time allocations for the categories of Service Collaboration, Accessibility Problem Solving and Information and Referral stayed relatively consistent across all four quarters.

*"Average" represents the amount of time spent by a typical Navigator on the activity over the course of a month.

Systems Relationships: Improvement of Collaboration

☐ Over the course of the first four quarters—January through December 2004—Navigators reported they experienced the most "significant activity" with "significant outcomes" with the following entities:

  ■ a. One-Stop Front-Line Staff to provide Core Services (61%), b. One-Stop Counselors to provide Intensive and Training Service (43%), c. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors for developing systems relationships (41%), d. Benefits Counselors from the Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach Project (37%), and e. Independent Living Centers (28%).

Examples of Building Successful Systems Relationships

☐ <u>Changes in relationship with a specific collaborator</u>
- ■ BPAO and Mental Health Agency: Negotiated with representatives of Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (the local BPAO) and a representative of the local mental health agency to reorganize Social Security benefits counseling to better serve customers. Newly organized system has brought the counseling sessions into the One-Stop and includes a brief overview of One-Stop resources available to customers, as well as an introduction of customers to the DPN. (Navigator in Arizona)

Examples of Building Successful Systems Relationships

- <u>Strategies to provide supports to serve Customers with Vision and/or Hearing Impairments in the One-Stop</u>
  - Through collaboration with the local Independent Living Center, our four comprehensive Employment Resource (One-Stop) Centers can now provide "drop-in" customers with immediate access to qualified sign language interpreters via web cameras. The ILC is also transcribing our orientation materials into Braille and facilitating workshops on disability awareness and the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for Employment Resource Center staff. (Navigator in California)

Linkages

- **Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach**: Over the course of the fourth quarter, 154 Navigators reported that their greatest linkage to the BPAO Program was through Shared Information, which represents an increase (31) over the third quarter, as well as increases over the second quarter (49) and first quarter (52).

- **Ticket to Work and Employment Networks**: During the fourth quarter, 12 Navigators reported Working with One-Stops or LWIBs to become an EN, which represents an increase of 3 from the third quarter. Six Navigators reported that their One-Stop or LWIB applied to become an EN, which represents no change from the third quarter.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**: Over the course of the fourth quarter, 173 Navigators reported that they Shared Information with the VR Agency, an increase of 52 over the third quarter and an increase of 62 over all three quarters. This was followed by Co-Location (123), an increase of 30 over the third quarter. 105 Navigators provided Training to VR Agencies, representing an increase of 23 over the third quarter, an increase of 30 over the second quarter, and an increase of 18 over the first quarter.

Relationship with Employers

☐ Over the course of the fourth quarter, 144 Navigators reported that they had developed the greatest employer relationships with the Business Development Staff at the One-Stop. This represents an increase of 42 over the third quarter, an increase of 48 over the second quarter, and an increase of 46 over the first quarter.

☐ Relationships with the Local Workforce Investment Board (106) experienced a significant increase of 25 from the third quarter (81), and succeeded in surpassing the former first quarter high (95) by 11.

Examples of Building Successful Relationships with Employers

- ☐ <u>Coordination and Collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce</u>
  - ■ The Broomfield Workforce Center in partnership with the Broomfield Chamber of Commerce put on a Business Symposium that involved many local employers. I participated in representing the Disability Program Navigator position and disability related services provided through the Workforce Center. (Navigator in Colorado)
- ☐ <u>Creation of a Business Leadership Network</u>
  - ■ On November 5, 2004, the Miami-Dade Business Leadership Network (BLN) held their kick-off event. Governor Jeb Bush was the keynote speaker. Over 300 employers and people representing various organizations, colleges and the community attended. The local chapter was organized in April, 2004, and is very committed to providing opportunities and independence to people with disabilities. (Navigator in Florida)

Referrals Made to Navigator

- During the fourth quarter, Navigators reported increased referrals from all of the entities with the greatest number from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (138), an increase of 31 from the third quarter. This was followed by 98 referrals from the Mental Health Agency, an increase of 20 from the third quarter. Navigators received 91 referrals from the BPAO Program (an increase of 22 from the third quarter), and 88 referrals from Independent Living Centers (an increase of 36 from the third quarter).

- Navigators also reported increased referrals from "Other Agencies." During Quarter Four, Navigators received referrals from a total of 245 types of "Other Agencies." This represents an increase of 46 from Quarter Three, 170 from Quarter Two, and 231 from Quarter One.

Referrals Made to Other Systems Collaborators

☐ Navigators reported making a total of 7475 referrals to the 12 identified systems collaborators, which represents an increase of 1441 referrals from the third quarter (6,034). The majority of these referrals were to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (1786, average of 11.4, an increase from the third quarter), followed by BPAO referrals (1135, average of 8.5), and referrals to Social Security Field Offices (763, average of 6.6), Independent Living Centers (673, average of 6.8) and Housing Resources (602, average of 5.8).

Fourteen State Evaluation

Utilizing a

Telephone Survey Approach

Goals of the Telephone Survey

☐ Describe barriers and facilitators to services, supports and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in the Workforce Development System.

☐ Monitor changes in barriers to services, supports and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in the local areas.

☐ Describe Navigator activities in facilitating improved system relationships and impact on reducing barriers to system relationships and improved individual outcomes.

☐ Assess awareness of the DPN, DPN roles and responsibilities and contact with DPN and provide information to document the DPN's impact on barrier changes.

☐ Provide stakeholder perspectives that may need to be addressed with technical assistance and training activities.

☐ Assess association between activities measured by the Navigator Quarterly Reports and impact questions from the Telephone Survey with barriers and changes in barriers measured by the Telephone Survey.

Timeline and Sample

- (T1) conducted from September 2004 through February 2005 and will be repeated in Fall 2005 (T2).
- The Sample:
    - 819 people completed the survey.
    - 149 (18%) were Navigators and 670 (82%) were non-navigators.
    - Includes approximately 11 One-Stop and local workforce development system staff, partners and stakeholders for each DPN Navigator.
    - The cooperation rate for the eligible participants was 96.8 percent.
    - Sample success rate overall is 75.4 percent, with 819 completed of 1086 potential participants.

Survey Participants

Internal participants included:
- ☐ Workforce Director and/or Senior Management Staff
- ☐ Navigator's Supervisor in the Workforce Center
- ☐ One-Stop Director
- ☐ Navigator
- ☐ Employer Liaison
- ☐ Case Manager or Career Director
- ☐ One other individual designated by Navigator

External participants included:
- ☐ Representative from Vocational Rehabilitation
- ☐ Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) Specialist
- ☐ An Area Work Incentives Coordinator (AWIC) or Representative from Social Security Administration Field Office
- ☐ One other designated by the Navigator

Key Findings

- ☐ Overall satisfaction with DPN services was high, and rated an average of 7.54 on a scale of 1 to 9, with 9 being "very satisfied."

- ☐ DPN services on average exceeded the threshold of "expectations met," rating DPN service a 7.01 average, where 9.0 denoted "exceeds expectations."

- ☐ DPN services compared very well to an ideal set of services, rating DPN services an average of 6.65, where 9 represented "very close to ideal."

Advantages to having a DPN in the System

□ The greatest advantages of having a DPN in the system noted are:
- ■ Improving interagency coordination.
- ■ Improving programs/service access.
- ■ Improving availability of benefits counseling.

□ Other significant advantages noted include:
- ■ Being a good resource.
- ■ Providing staff training and education.
- ■ Meeting with people with disabilities one-on-one.
- ■ Providing knowledge and expertise about people with disabilities and service systems.

Facilitators and Barriers to Employment

- ☐ The greatest facilitators to employment, as identified by respondents, were:
  - ■ Interagency coordination.
  - ■ Local board policies.
  - ■ Job placement services.
  - ■ Availability of skills training.
- ☐ The greatest barriers to employment, as identified by respondents, were:
  - ■ Transportation.
  - ■ Employer attitudes.
  - ■ Client variables.

Perceived Outcomes

☐ The highest-rated perceived outcomes of the DPN include providing job seekers with disabilities greater access to programs and services, and benefits from improved service coordination.

Suggested Improvements to the DPN Program*

☐ Provide enhanced funding.

☐ Provide more DPNs.

☐ Conduct more community awareness activities about the DPN.

* These findings are consistent with the suggested improvements reported through the four state in-depth site visits.

Satisfaction and Support (Quotes from Participants)

- ☐ A wonderful idea.
- ☐ One of the best models to meet needs of people with disabilities.
- ☐ One of the best ideas from the government; good impact on people with disabilities.
- ☐ It's working; customers know it's there.
- ☐ It helps significantly, the info and communication.
- ☐ Puts pressure on administration to provide what people with disabilities need in obtaining employment.
- ☐ Beneficial to staff and customers. Don't know how they did it before. Services have always been needed.

In-Depth Four State Study

Purpose of the Four State Study

- Four state study is designed to address:
  - Navigator activities or promising practices for future study or implementation to improve employment or economic sustainability for individuals with disabilities as a result of participation in the workforce development system.
  - Satisfaction by individuals with disabilities with the Navigator intervention strategy.
  - Test reliability and validity of the Telephone Survey.
- Four states were selected: Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Colorado, and Florida. These four states include approximately one-third of the total number of originally funded Navigators (48 of 128).
- Within these four states, two sites—one rural and one urban for a total of 8 sites—were selected to participate in the in-depth study - Massachusetts: Fall River (rural) and Salem (urban); Florida: Jacksonville (urban and rural) and Ocala (urban and rural); Wisconsin: LaCrosse (rural) and Fox River (urban); and Colorado: Boulder (urban) and Glenwood Springs (rural)
- Site visits to all four states were conducted between February and June 2005 and will be repeated between February and June 2006.

Site Participants

- Internal participants included:
  - Workforce Director and/or Senior Management Staff
  - Navigator's Supervisor in the Workforce Center
  - One-Stop Director
  - Navigator
  - Employer Liaison
  - Case Manager or Career Director
  - One other individual designated by Navigator
- External participants included:
  - Representative from Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Benefits Specialist, BPAO representative
  - AWIC or Representative from Social Security Administration Field Office
  - Two or three others designated by the Navigator
- Customers

Preliminary Observations

As a result of the efforts of the DPN Initiative and the work of the Navigator:

☐ Enthusiasm for the DPN program is strong from all levels of participants that were interviewed: One-Stop staff, One-Stop Center and regional management, the LWIB, internal and external partners, and customers.

☐ There is more interagency cooperation. Navigators are building infrastructure and serving as valuable resources despite meeting with some initial resistance to the Navigator initiative in their systems.

☐ All of the participants see the value of this program and the impact that it has made to date and want to see the DPN initiative continue and become embedded as a natural position within the One-Stop system.

Examples of Best Practices/Main Themes

- **<u>Disability Partners Committees/Teams</u>**: Navigators have created a mechanism, or are in the process of creating a mechanism, through which representatives from the disability community, along with One-Stop staff and partners meet on a regular basis to bring issues to the table and to problem solve as a team.

- **<u>State, Regional and Local Buy-In</u>**.
  - All four states have formed a coalition of partners at the state level and two of the states—Massachusetts and Colorado—have entered into agreements with partners to ensure clear direction and a consistent message towards addressing disability issues and working with customers with disabilities.

  - There is buy-in at the regional and local level through the commitment and involvement of the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB).

Examples of Best Practices/Main Themes

- ☐ **<u>Benefit of Work Incentive Grant Funding</u>:** All four states are previous and/or current recipients of Work Incentive Grant (WIG) funding.
  - ■ WIG projects have helped to build the capacity of the workforce development system to provide effective and meaningful participation to job seekers with disabilities.
  - ■ WIG projects laid the foundation for the infrastructure and the DPN Initiative has served as a natural extension of efforts and processes that had been put into place.

- ☐ **<u>State Navigator Meetings and Technical Assistance</u>:** A mechanism is in place for information sharing and problem solving to keep Navigators connected through regularly scheduled face-to-face meetings, listservs and conference calls. Each state provides a technical assistance component to address state specific issues and challenges.

Examples of Best Practices/Main Themes

- **<u>Internal and External Partners working collaboratively as a team</u>**:   Through the outreach efforts of all eight Navigators connections and linkages are being made to the One-Stop system.
    - In some cases the Navigator has rebuilt the connection between Internal partners, such as VR, and the One-Stop.
    - External disability partners report in many instances that this is their first connection to the One-Stop system. Through this linkage, external partners now have a new resource for their customers. Likewise, the One-Stop has a new community connection.
    - In all instances, both the internal and external partners shared that these linkages have expanded their resource and referral base and have allowed the community to reduce, if not eliminate, the duplication of services, and to blend funding to more effectively serve customers with disabilities.

Changes in the Workforce System attributed to the DPN

- ☐ One-Stop Centers are more accessible (physically, programmatically and technologically).
- ☐ Customers with disabilities have better access to One-Stop services.
- ☐ One-Stop staff have more tools and resources to serve all customers.
- ☐ Processes are in place to access and provide accommodations and needed supports.
- ☐ Youth with disabilities are being connected to the workforce development system.
- ☐ The Navigator is helping to build the bridge between partner and community agencies and the One-Stop to reduce duplication of services.

Satisfaction with the DPN Program: Workforce System

☐ The regional Workforce Director in Colorado (who works with three different regions) shared the following about the DPN program "the way it has been designed, how the knowledge flows, the constant follow-up, the constant technical assistance that we have had over the last two years, has been one of the best program structures that she has seen." Further, the Workforce Director shared that their area really likes the program and stated "if we did not have the program, we would see a big hole within our system."

☐ The Director of Workforce Services for a Local WIB in Florida shared in respect to this Initiative that: "for the first time she feels that the Federal government has provided funds, they have provided the structure; they have provided all of the tools and training up front, which to her made it much easier on their end."

Satisfaction with the DPN Program: Partners

- The Benefit Planners in all four states shared that the Navigator and the BPs have a good sense of what each others roles and responsibilities are and they have a great networking system and a trusting relationship in which they are collaboratively able to address issues.

- According to a Transportation Specialist in Massachusetts, she feels that the Navigator made connections that otherwise may not have ever been made. It is important to have a human service individual, Navigator, available at the Center to connect with, but also to serve as the facilitator to connect the Center staff. The Navigator serves as the link to facilitate all of these connections and it is an important piece of building system capacity within and outside of the Centers.

Satisfaction with the DPN Program: Partners

☐ In Wisconsin, the state VR program is experiencing great budget issues. They are on order of selection with a waitlist of over 12,000. A VR counselor shared that through great collaborative and coordination efforts with the DPN program they have been able to bridge the gap for their customers by introducing them to the services of the One-Stop and the Navigator. For example, as a standard practice when VR sends a letter to a customer stating they are on a waitlist for VR services, they include contact information for Navigators in the region, as well as for the One-Stop Centers and recommend this as an interim resource to obtain services and supports.

☐ Per a CIL Employment Specialist in Florida, she has been in this field for 10 years and having worked with the staff within the One-Stop for the last 6 years has really seen the impact that this Initiative has made through the services the Centers now provide, the awareness and knowledge the staff now possess and in the streamlining of services.

Satisfaction with the DPN Program: Customer

☐ Customer in Wisconsin: 44 y/o, currently unemployed with a high school diploma and one year of college. Customer noted that it is difficult to find information and the "right" people to talk to in the workforce system. He feels strongly that better information is needed at a basic level so that individuals seeking help will know who to contact and where to obtain the most basic information. This should include better information about the services provided by the Navigators….He explained that he needed "help to take the first step" and he simply didn't know where to start. The Navigator tied all of the pieces of information together for him and made referrals for him to get him on a path toward employment. The Navigator provided him with an understanding of how to use the resources he already had in order to "get moving in the right direction."

Individual Outcome

Data Study

Purpose of the Individual Outcome Data Study

- ☐ To address whether the Navigator intervention strategy is associated with improved employment or economic sustainability for individuals with disabilities.

- ☐ Data will be examined in order to determine if the DPN program has an effect on the individual outcomes of people with disabilities who are receiving SSA benefits.

- ☐ Employment and wage status will be examined as well as benefit levels and status.

- ☐ The data from this program evaluation will help evaluate the hypothesis that DPNs will improve the employment status and/or decrease benefit payments for individuals with disabilities.

- ☐ This data will also help SSA and DOL determine if the DPN program should become part of the workforce system nationwide.

Individual Outcome Data Study Evaluation

- ☐ The evaluation will attempt to combine information and records from the four states (Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin) selected to assist with piloting the evaluation strategy.

- ☐ The research will identify participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce development system through combining SSA records and Workforce records, including outcomes after exit through WIASRD and Employment Service data. Disability status will be determined through WIASRD data and SSA beneficiary records.

- ☐ The evaluation will compare areas covered by DPNs with areas that were similar but not covered by DPNs.