

Federal Partners in Transition National Online Dialogue

**Participation Metrics
Final Report: September 23, 2013**

This document was developed and revised by Concepts, Inc. under a contract funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor.

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Introduction:

The following report outlines the results of the Federal Partners in Transition’s Online National Dialogue, *“Join the Conversation for Change: Help shape federal agency strategies for helping youth and young adults with disabilities successfully transition from school to work.”* The Federal Partners in Transition is a workgroup, led by senior federal officials, with representatives of several federal agencies involved in transition of youth with disabilities from school into post-secondary education, work, and independent living. Hosted by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services and the Social Security Administration (the Departments) and held from May 13 to May 27, 2013, the online event invited policymakers, service providers, advocates, youth with disabilities and others to help examine the impact of existing federal regulations and legislation on the successful transition from school to work of youth with disabilities, and to provide ideas on how to improve their transition outcomes. Discussions that developed online were organized into “Campaigns” or topics. In addition, by participating in this Online National Dialogue, visitors were given an opportunity to “vote” for ideas and comments that were submitted by other members of the public by rating them through the use of up or down arrows. A positive rating of a post increased the score and a negative one decreased the score.

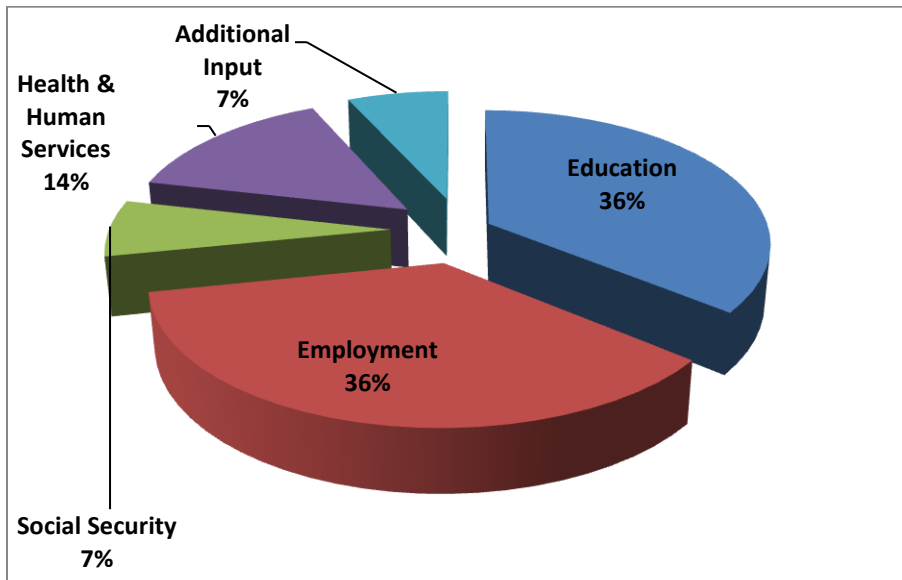
In this report are the unedited posts, verbatim language of the commenters, that were rated to be the most popular ideas. The posts fall under two main areas: “Most popular ideas related to legislative and regulatory barriers and solutions,” and “Most popular ideas overall.” A number of the most popular ideas related to legislative and regulatory barriers were included within the most popular ideas overall. The ideas and comments received during this Online National Dialogue were greatly appreciated and will help the Departments to work together strategically to develop a plan to improve transition results for youth by the year 2020.

Participation Summary:

- Registration opened on May 7, 2013
- 355 total ideas
- 1,618 comments
- 9,887 votes
- 3,387 registrants as of July 9, 2013 (3,286 registrants at close of dialogue)

Campaign Summary:

- Total number of 355 ideas
- Education: 137 ideas
- Employment: 135 ideas
- Social Security: 26 ideas
- Health and Human Services: 56 ideas
- Additional Input: 27 ideas

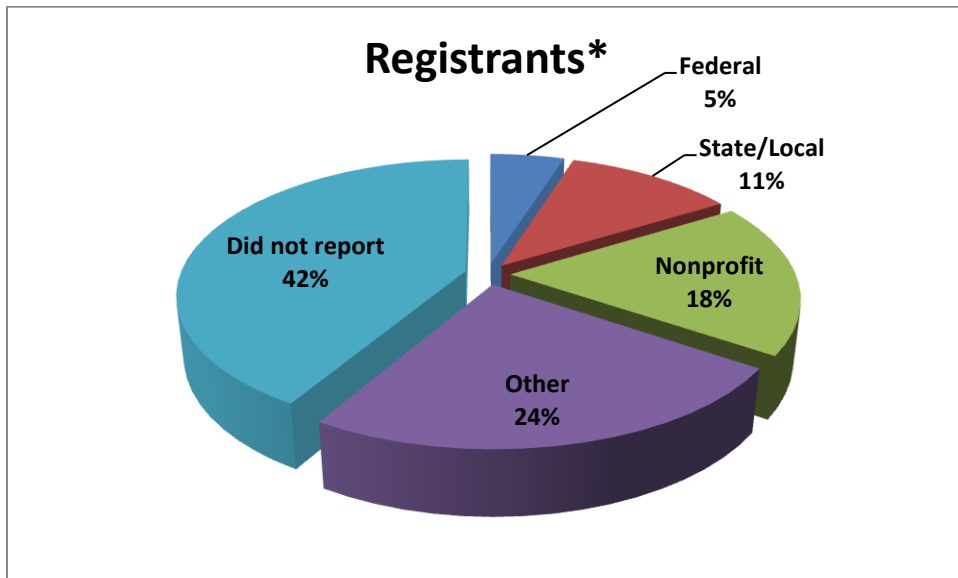


Ideas Related to “Legislative and Regulatory Barriers, and Solutions”:

- Total of 109 ideas
- Education: 34 ideas
- Employment: 52 ideas
- Social Security: 16 ideas
- Health and Human Services: 7 ideas

Registration Metrics:

- 3,387 total registrants
 - 5% federal
 - 11% state/local
 - 18% nonprofit
 - 24% other
 - 42% did not report



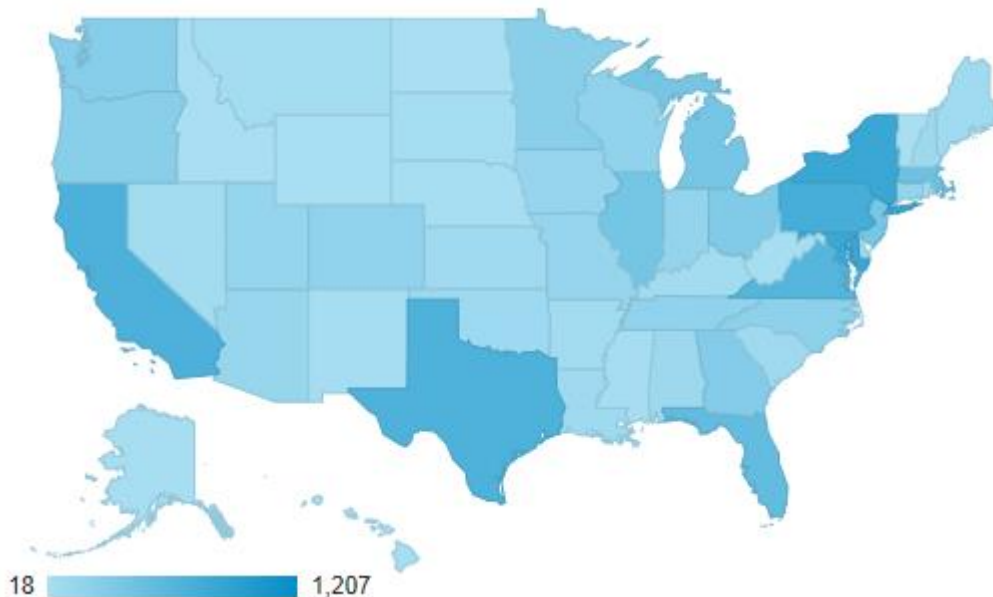
** Breakdown of self-reported affiliations*

Demographics of Visitors:

States	Visits
District of Columbia	1,207
New York	827
Maryland	814
Pennsylvania	728
California	680
Texas	672
Virginia	618
Florida	521
Massachusetts	452
Illinois	399
Michigan	378
New Jersey	372
Ohio	303
Georgia	293
Washington	267
Minnesota	253
Oregon	250
North Carolina	227
Colorado	200
Wisconsin	199
Tennessee	195
Indiana	179
Connecticut	178
Utah	160
Iowa	158
Missouri	157

States	Visits
Arizona	148
Alabama	114
Oklahoma	109
Delaware	105
New Hampshire	103
Kansas	96
Louisiana	91
South Carolina	90
Maine	82
Arkansas	70
Kentucky	70
Rhode Island	69
Nevada	66
Montana	58
South Dakota	53
Mississippi	44
New Mexico	44
West Virginia	38
Unknown	37
Alaska	37
Nebraska	37
Hawaii	34
Idaho	27
Wyoming	25
North Dakota	21
Vermont	18

Map of Demographics of Visitors:



Most Popular Ideas Related to Legislative and Regulatory Barriers, and Solutions – All Campaigns:

- **Top Idea #1: No Waiting for Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

123 Votes, 120 up and 3 down, 13 Comments (Health & Human Services Campaign)

“Individuals with disabilities should not be on waiting lists for 8 years before they receive assistance. There should be a NO WAIT IN ANY STATE POLICY for services for individuals with disabilities.”

- **Top Idea #2: Lower Age for Starting Transition**

113 Votes, 110 up and 3 down, 19 Comments (Education Campaign)

“The age to begin transition service planning should be lowered back to 14, or sooner. Waiting to age 16 to initiate planning is too late.”

- **Top Idea #3: Make Adult Services Transferable Between States**

87 Votes, 86 up and 1 down, 9 Comments (Employment Campaign)

“Currently, if a person who continues to need employment support is funded for that support in one state, parents are unable to leave that state without losing that support. A move can mean going to the end of a very long waiting list. IEPs transfer from state to state. Adult services should, also.”

- **Top Idea #4: Transition Class as Part of HS Grad Requirement**
83 Votes, 81 up and 2 down, 10 Comments (Education Campaign)

“All students should be required to take a course focusing on transition skills built with units to provide exposure to transition related questions and topics including state agencies, disability awareness, employment possibilities, college readiness, family involvement and support, consumer mathematics, recreation and safety (just to name a few). The idea would be to give our students a strong knowledge base and idea of what they are expected to do when school ends!”

- **Top Idea #5: Real Jobs for Students before Graduation/Earlier VR**
68 Votes, 64 up and 4 down, 8 comments (Education Campaign)

“The best outcomes are derived when young people (who are planning for employment after high school) work before they leave high school. Since there are often not enough funds for adequate job services in schools to get kids to work outside, ensure job placement in paying jobs before the end of high school (17-21), with the support of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).”

Most Popular Ideas Related to Legislative and Regulatory Barriers, and Solutions – Education Campaign:

- **Top Idea #1: Lower Age for Starting Transition**
113 Votes, 110 up and 3 down, 19 Comments

“The age to begin transition service planning should be lowered back to 14, or sooner. Waiting to age 16 to initiate planning is too late.”

- **Top Idea #2: Transition Class as Part of HS Grad Requirement**
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“The best outcomes are derived when young people (who are planning for employment after high school) work before they leave high school. Since there are often not enough funds for adequate job services in schools to get kids to work outside, ensure job placement in paying jobs before the end of high school (17-21), with the support of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).”

- **Top Idea #4: Federal Student Aid**

62 Votes, 61 up and 1 down, 8 Comments

“Federal student aid defines a full time college student as one who is taking 12 or more credits. Very often, students with disabilities would benefit from taking a lighter course load - 6 to 9 - while still being considered as a full time student. Our state funding now makes accommodations for this, but the federal funding does not.”

- **Top Idea #5: Teacher Prep in the Area of Transition/Work**

60 Votes, 60 up and 0 down, 5 Comments

“Time and time again, as a teacher you hear from fellow teachers, “They never talked about this in my teacher prep courses.” It’s time that future teachers be given intensive, hands-on, real-life instruction in what life is really like for our students with disabilities after high school, transition services, and what skills/ courses would be the most helpful for the future. This instruction should include ALL levels of future teachers. We need elementary teachers to understand and get on board with planning for and working towards the future for our students too.”

Most Popular Ideas Related to Legislative and Regulatory Barriers, and Solutions – Employment Campaign:

- **Top Idea #1: Make Adult Services Transferable Between States**

86 Votes, 85 up and 1 down, 9 Comments

“Currently, if a person who continues to need employment support is funded for that support in one state, parents are unable to leave that state without losing that support. A move can mean going to the end of a very long waiting list. IEPs transfer from state to state. Adult services should, also.”

- **Top Idea #2: Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) (HR 647/S 313)**

57 Votes, 55 up and 2 down, 4 Comments

“The ABLE Act has earned 35 cosponsors in the US Senate and 150 co-sponsors in the US House and is being led by a bipartisan, bicameral set of Congressional champions, including: Senator Robert Casey, Jr., (D-PA) and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) and Congressman Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX).”

“Under current law, people with disabilities receiving federal benefits cannot have more than \$2,000 in assets and must have a very low monthly income. The ABLE Act will give individuals with disabilities and their families the ability to save just like every other American family. The ABLE Act will help people with disabilities live full, productive lives in their communities without losing benefits provided through private insurance, the Medicaid program, the supplemental security income program, the beneficiary’s employment, and other sources. The ABLE Act will allow individuals with disabilities more options for employment rather than being constrained by the

number of hours they can work, how much they can earn, and save. Individuals with disabilities can deposit their own paychecks into ABLE accounts.

The account could fund a variety of essential expenses for individuals, including:

- medical and dental care
- education
- community based supports
- employment training
- assistive technology
- housing
- transportation

“The ABLE Act will utilize the 529 college education saving account program, in which thousands of Americans are already familiar. As with existing 529 accounts, contributions to ABLE accounts would grow tax free and would be easy and inexpensive to create. The ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities the same types of flexible savings tools that all other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts, and individual retirement accounts.

The legislation also contains Medicaid fraud protection against abuse and a Medicaid pay-back provision when the beneficiary passes away. It will eliminate barriers to work and saving by preventing dollars saved through ABLE accounts from counting against an individual’s eligibility for any federal benefits program.”

▪ **Top Idea #3: Disconnect Between Schools, Voc Rehab and Adult Services**

54 Votes, 54 up and 0 down, 11 Comments

“As someone who has worked in both the education and rehabilitation services fields, I have observed a serious disconnect between schools doing IEPs/ITPs and the regional VR and adult programs. VR cases should be opened while the student is still in school (Jr and Sr years) and the regional VR counselors assigned should attend IEP/ITP meetings along with an appropriate adult service provider or guidance counselor if student is college-bound.”

▪ **Top Idea #4: Transition Skills Earlier**

54 Votes, 54 up and 0 down, 11 Comments

“I know that transition services do not begin technically before 14-16 years of age, but any lesson at any age can teach transition skills like organization, self-advocacy, goal setting etc. Why wait until it is mandatory?”

▪ **Top Idea #5: Mandate Recreational Therapy in Schools**

51 Votes, 50 up and 1 down, 2 Comments

“Recreational Therapy (RT), is a cost-effective covered service in IEPs, yet, to date, this service is underutilized in the school system. Typically, the underutilization is due to lack of awareness of its scope of practice. Recreational Therapists (RTs) are nationally certified/licensed health

professionals who provide services aimed at the development of functional skills aimed toward the successful integration of individuals into the community. Because of this lack of awareness and understanding of the role of Recreational Therapy, the services is under prescribed within the school system, schools do not regularly employ RTs, and parents of children with disabilities are not aware that the services is an option. This disconnect is in need action. By more clearly mandating that RT be considered a standard therapy option in the development of all IEPs students with disabling conditions will be better served and generate the skills needed for effective transitions from school to work and community.”

Most Popular Ideas Related to Legislative and Regulatory Barriers, and Solutions – Health and Human Services Campaign:

- **Top Idea #1: No Waiting for Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

123 Votes, 120 up and 3 down, 13 Comments

“Individuals with disabilities should not be on waiting lists for 8 years before they receive assistance. There should be a NO WAIT IN ANY STATE POLICY for services for individuals with disabilities.”

- **Top Idea #2: Maintaining Medical Assistance thru Transition**

47 Votes, 45 up and 2 down, 4 Comments

“One of the most aggravating systems to navigate is the application/renewal process for Medical Assistance. When my children moved into their adult years, the amount of hassle and paperwork to keep their Medical Assistance active was overwhelming.

There are some disabilities that are simply never going to change. Why then do we have to re-apply for Medical Assistance insurance just because they changed in age from 17 to 18? There needs to be a way to move those individuals from the "kids" Medical Assistance to "adults" Medical Assistance without starting completely over.”

- **Top Idea #3: Data Sharing Across Federal Agencies**

39 Votes, 39 up and 0 down, 7 Comments

“Each federal (and state and county and city) agency across sectors collects its own data on the populations it serves. We need a data platform shared across agencies that serve youth and adults with disabilities to measure quality, track progress, assist with population planning. This will also decrease the redundant paperwork and administrative burden on already burdened families, youth, physicians, teachers, and service providers.”

- **Top Idea #4: A Cabinet Level Position on Disabilities**

36 Votes, 30 up and 6 down, 8 Comments

“The voice of Disabilities people have a varied needs and wants in life. The basic needs is we are needed to be treated as people and numbers or even dollar signs. We need an advocate on

secretary level to make sure we get adequate Health Services, it is Uniformed from State to State, matches our age group, and were are adequately Educated to meet the changing workforce of both public and private sector.”

- **Top Idea #5: Funding to People, not Agencies**

38 Votes, 29 up and 9 down, 6 Comments

“Funding for any type of services intended to serve people with disabilities should be assigned to those people rather than agencies. Individuals and their families can then purchase needed services wherever they choose, making it more likely that agencies will want to make their services attractive to their consumers.”

Most Popular Ideas Related to Legislative and Regulatory Barriers, and Solutions – Social Security Campaign:

- **Top Idea #1: Ability to Save for a Child**

57 Votes, 56 up and 1 down, 4 Comments

“As a parent, the responsible thing to do for my daughter is to save money in a college fund for her. However, because she is a minor, the account should legally be in my name. According to current SSI and Medicaid guidelines, I cannot have more than \$1,500 between my checking and savings account so it is impossible for me to save money for her. Of course, I know there are ways around this but it should not be difficult for me to do the same thing an able-bodied parent can do at the drop of a hat.”

- **Top Idea #2: Support the Family Caregivers**

59 Votes, 56 up and 3 down, 5 Comments

“It is not an uncommon situation for a parent of a child with a serious and debilitating disability to leave their job to take care of their child in the home. Families in this situation should receive some type of benefit or deduction and receive financial credit for the lost income.”

- **Top Idea #3: Partnership between SSA, VR, Schools, etc.**

42 Votes, 41 up and 1 down vote, 2 Comments

“There has to be a better way to partner between schools, VR, SSA, Workforce, etc. School staff are not all knowledgeable about SSA benefits and the benefit to going to work, how living on SSA benefits is essentially living in poverty, and how to move toward going off SSA benefits.

There needs to be cross training between staff, early education and mandatory planning meetings with families, and a focus on Employment First. SSA benefits are helpful and safe during school age years; however, as students begin reaching high school completion, it becomes increasingly more difficult to convince families of the benefits of going to work.”

- **Top Idea #4: Drop the Age of Ticket Eligibility to 16**

44 Votes, 41 up and 3 down vote, 3 Comments

“Consider dropping the age of ticket-to-work eligibility to age 16, and adjust the milestones so that schools can receive ticket payments when students work. That will provide an outcomes-based revenue stream, building capacity while advancing an evidence-based practice: <http://ilr-edir1.ilr.cornell.edu/nymakesworkpay/rpm-transition.cfm>.”

- **Top Idea #5: Raising Expectations**

40 Votes, 38 up and 2 down vote, 5 Comments

“How can we raise expectations about the level of work and earnings that is possible for youth with disabilities, and how can we raise those for ALL stakeholders, not just youth and families, but schools, VR agencies, and others?”

Most Popular Ideas Overall-All Campaigns:

- **Top Idea #1: No Waiting for Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

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“Individual's with disabilities should not be on waiting lists for 8 years before they receive assistance. There should be a NO WAIT IN ANY STATE POLICY for services for individuals with disabilities.”

- **Top Idea #2: Community College Post-Secondary Programs**

111 Votes, 109 up and 2 down, 19 Comments (Education Campaign)

“Community Colleges need to expand and developed two year programs for students with disabilities that focus on a skill based curriculum: life skills for independent living, job preparation, and include options for training for specific types of jobs. Many post-secondary programs are expensive. Community colleges allow for affordable programs and greater accessibility. It also provides youth with a college experience.”

- **Top Idea #3: Lower Age for Starting Transition**

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“The age to begin transition service planning should be lowered back to 14, or sooner. Waiting to age 16 to initiate planning is too late.”

- **Top Idea #4: Schools, Adult Services, Voc Rehab Working Together**

95 Votes, 95 up and 0 down, 9 comments (Education Campaign)

“My son recently transitioned out of high school and into adult services and I also work in Employment Services for a adult agency. I feel there is a disconnect between all agencies involved in the transition process. I also feel everyone plays a part in transition NOT working. Schools-no

communication with adult agencies, put students with cognitive disabilities into "slot" jobs for 1 hour a week, don't understand adult services, little education for parents, and much more. Adult agencies-don't understand school system, place people in sub minimum wage jobs, staff shortage due to cuts, need to change how staff view people with disabilities, change on how they operate to accommodate people who want to live, work and be a part of their community, etc. Parents-need to teach their child how to "Dream", advocate for their child, start future planning at grade school level, etc. State agencies-money needs to be shared between school and adult agencies to assist with transition earlier, voc rehab, adult agencies, and schools need to work together to create/find jobs for people instead of each having contracts to make and flooding community employers with three of the same programs. It all basically comes down to funding and everyone wants to keep the money, but it needs to be about what is best for the person and everyone should work together. I really think if everyone knew what each other did it would open up doors of communication and hopefully change. I have worked in adult services for a long time and been the mother to my son even longer and it has been a slow process of change in the last 20 years. Hopefully we actually see the change this time and not just policies being made that only help a select few. Everyone has different needs/wants and we have individual meetings from school-age into adult services, so things should be in place for each individual and changed if needed along the way. I feel people from person, school, and adult services feel their hands are tied by regulation and rules that they can't try anything out of the box to help support people with disabilities that have been taught to "dream" for more than institutional living."

- **Top Idea #5: Health as Transition Topic on IEP**

90 Votes, 90 up and 0 down, 6 comments (Education Campaign)

"Many youth with disabilities also face health issues/chronic health conditions. Health care transition from the pediatric to the adult health care system is often not addressed with youth and their families. Addressing health, health care transition and health care self-management as part of the transition IEP would be very helpful for youth with health issues. Only someone who is healthy/can manage his/her health condition can participate in the workforce, post-secondary education and recreational activities; therefore, health is a very important topic to discuss as part of school transition to successful adult life."

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Most Popular Ideas Overall – Employment Campaign:

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87 Votes, 86 up and 1 down vote, 9 Comments

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- **Top Idea #2: Transportation**

82 Votes, 82 up and 0 down, 19 Comments

“Transportation, transportation, transportation...need I say more? If a community does not offer adequate public wheelchair transportation options serving individuals with disabilities and their families, then there should be some sort of assistance program to help individuals and their families acquire a wheelchair accessible vehicle!”

- **Top Idea #3: Flexible Community Supports**

69 Votes, 68 up and 1 down, 1 Comment

“There needs to be more support for providers that are wanting to provide more community based employment supports for people with disabilities. It is difficult to transition from a traditional, facility-based model under current funding structures. Transportation and support needs to be flexible and responsive to people's real needs and real outcomes.”

- **Top Idea #4: Incentives for Businesses to Employ Individuals with Disabilities**

69 Votes, 65 up and 4 down, 6 Comments

“There are tremendous programs and ideas out there to help serve the special needs community. Companies who employ individuals with special needs should be rewarded for their mission. Employment rates amongst youth with ASD are low and opportunities are minimal.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/05/09/peds.2011-2864>

If companies and programs had tax and monetary incentives to employ those in need, it could help boost those rates and provide a much needed outlet for the large number of students who will be aging out of school.

Those programs should be both educational and developmental, helping those employees to continue their education in the workforce, the same way others do.”

▪ **Top Idea #5: Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) (HR 647/S 313)**

59 Votes, 57 up and 2 down, 4 comments

“The ABLE Act has earned 35 cosponsors in the US Senate and 150 co-sponsors in the US House and is being led by a bipartisan, bicameral set of Congressional champions, including: Senator Robert Casey, Jr., (D-PA) and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) and Congressman Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX).

Under current law, people with disabilities receiving federal benefits cannot have more than \$2,000 in assets and must have a very low monthly income. The ABLE Act will give individuals with disabilities and their families the ability to save just like every other American family. The ABLE Act will help people with disabilities live full, productive lives in their communities without losing benefits provided through private insurances, the Medicaid program, the supplemental security income program, the beneficiary’s employment, and other sources. The ABLE Act will allow individuals with disabilities more options for employment rather than being constrained by the number of hours they can work, how much they can earn, and save. Individuals with disabilities can deposit their own paychecks into ABLE accounts.

The account could fund a variety of essential expenses for individuals, including:

- medical and dental care
- education
- community based supports
- employment training
- assistive technology
- housing
- transportation

The ABLE Act will utilize the 529 college education saving account program, in which thousands of Americans are already familiar. As with existing 529 accounts, contributions to ABLE accounts would grow tax free and would be easy and inexpensive to create. The ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities the same types of flexible savings tools that all other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts, and individual retirement accounts.

The legislation also contains Medicaid fraud protection against abuse and a Medicaid pay-back provision when the beneficiary passes away. It will eliminate barriers to work and saving by

preventing dollars saved through ABLE accounts from counting against an individual's eligibility for any federal benefits program."

Most Popular Ideas Overall – Health and Human Services Campaign:

- **Top Idea #1: No Waiting for Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

123 Votes, 120 up and 3 down, 13 Comments

"Individuals with disabilities should not be on waiting lists for 8 years before they receive assistance. There should be a NO WAIT IN ANY STATE POLICY for services for individuals with disabilities."

- **Top Idea #2: Mandate Recreational Therapy in All Schools**

80 Votes, 79 up and 1 down, 3 Comments

"Recreational Therapy (RT), although a cost-effective covered service in IEPs, is under utilized in the school system due to ignorance of its scope of practice. RTs are nationally certified/licensed health professionals who provide services aimed at the successful integration of individuals into the community. Because of this ignorance, RT is under prescribed within the school system, schools do not regularly employ RTs, and parents of children with disabilities don't know to ask for this service. This needs to change. Mandate that RT be a regularly "considered" therapy in the development of all IEPs to increase access to this vital service. For more information about the value of RT in the school system, please contact Dr. Heather R. Porter at hporter@temple.edu."

- **Top Idea #3: Personal Care Services**

62 Votes, 62 up and 0 down, 10 Comments

"Currently, millions of people with disabilities need personal care services to live independently. Unfortunately, most of the PCA services are linked to Medicaid, and once people with disabilities become employed, they lose access to the assistance that makes it possible for them to dress, bathe, eat, and be part of the community. I propose a personal care assistant program based on physical needs, not income, because even those with jobs often cannot afford personal care assistance and other life essentials. Changing these programs presents an opportunity to get people with disabilities into the workforce without losing the assistance they need. People with disabilities should not have to choose between meeting basic care needs and a job. Affordable personal care assistance now!"

- **Top Idea #4: Soft Skills Necessary for Jobs, Relationships**

50 Votes, 50 up and 0 down, 8 Comments

"We need resources--e.g., social skills training and support groups-- to help young adults with ASD gain the soft skills that are necessary to getting and keeping jobs, and to developing and maintaining adult relationships outside of work."

- **Top Idea #5: Housing Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities**

47 Votes, 47 up and 0 down, 2 Comments

“There are too few options for housing for students with intellectual disabilities. Having access to a variety of options for housing with assistance from government agencies is needed to provide safe and secure housing for our growing population of students graduating from high school with a variety of medical and intellectual disability.”

Most Popular Ideas Overall– Social Security Campaign:

- **Top Idea #1: Ability to Save for a Child**

58 Votes, 57 up and 1 down, 4 Comments

“As a parent, the responsible thing to do for my daughter is to save money in a college fund for her. However, because she is a minor, the account should legally be in my name. According to current SSI and Medicaid guidelines, I cannot have more than \$1,500 between my checking and savings account so it is impossible for me to save money for her. Of course, I know there are ways around this but it should not be difficult for me to do the same thing an able-bodied parent can do at the drop of a hat.”

- **Top Idea #2: Support the Family Caregivers**

59 Votes, 56 up and 3 down, 5 Comments

“It is not an uncommon situation for a parent of a child with a serious and debilitating disability to leave their job to take care of their child in the home. Families in this situation should receive some type of benefit or deduction and receive financial credit for the lost income.”

- **Top Idea #3: Partnership between SSA, VR, Schools, etc.**

42 Votes, 41 up and 1 down, 2 Comments

“There has to be a better way to partner between schools, VR, SSA, Workforce, etc. School staff are not all knowledgeable about SSA benefits and the benefit to going to work, how living on SSA benefits is essentially living in poverty, and how to move toward going off SSA benefits.

There needs to be cross training between staff, early education and mandatory planning meetings with families, and a focus on Employment First. SSA benefits are helpful and safe during school age years; however, as students begin reaching high school completion, it becomes increasingly more difficult to convince families of the benefits of going to work.”

- **Top Idea #4: Drop the Age of Ticket Eligibility to 16**

44 Votes, 41 up and 3 down, 3 Comments

“Consider dropping the age of ticket-to-work eligibility to age 16, and adjust the milestones so that schools can receive ticket payments when students work. That will provide an outcomes-based

revenue stream, building capacity while advancing an evidence-based practice: <http://ilr-edir1.ilr.cornell.edu/nymakesworkpay/rpm-transition.cfm>.”

- **Top Idea #5: Raising Expectations**

40 Votes, 38 up and 2 down, 5 Comments

“How can we raise expectations about the level of work and earnings that is possible for youth with disabilities, and how can we raise those for ALL stakeholders, not just youth and families, but schools, VR agencies, and others?”