**Best Practices in 2021-2024 WOIA Local Plans**

As the California Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) Employment and Training and State Coordination subcommittees collaborate on workforce issues, it is important collaboration includes local areas identified as best practices. Following the review of the 2021-2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local plans, and discussions with CCEPD partners, initial best practices have been identified. These best practices will be used for work products with the goal for replication.

The below local areas were identified as having best practices. Although many strategies were located within Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) strategies of plans, these best practices also often included the most overarching strategies for inclusion of cross-disability regardless of CIE connections. There was an attempt made by CCEPD partners to identify local areas of differing sizes and state regions. As collaboration discussions progress, additional best practices may be added.

**Best Practices**

[Humboldt’s](https://www.gohumco.com/DocumentCenter/View/409/2021-2024-Humboldt-Local-Plan) local plan highlights a Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) partnership and was raised as a best practice for behavioral health by a CCEPD partner. DOR’s Student Services Team works in collaboration with the Transition Partnership Program (TPP) at the Humboldt County of Education. The team also works to provide services to students that are not involved with the TPP contract. They attempt co-enrollment for people with disabilities whenever possible. (The plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans but was raised briefly by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions.)

[Madera’s](https://www.maderaworkforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LocalPlan_Py21-24_MaderaCounty_4.15.21-WDB-CEO-signed_FINAL.pdf) local plan utilizes numerous different programs to address the needs of people with disabilities. Madera County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has received funding and staff training through the Disability Program Navigator, Disability Employment Initiative, and Disability Employment Accelerator grant programs. The America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) houses an Employment Network through Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work program and ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to the services and information needed to successfully transition back into the workforce. There is a current Partnership Plus agreement with the DOR to provide long-term services and supports to individuals who have exited the public Vocational Rehabilitation system. In addition, two staff are trained Community Partner Work Incentive Counselors and can provide individuals with disabilities who receive SSI and/or SSDI benefits counseling about the impacts on earnings when returning to work. Community Partner Work Incentive Counselors are required to renew their certification annually by completing 18 continuing education credits. When a young person with a disability seeks services through the Workforce Assistance Center, assessments are administered and an Individual Service Strategy is developed to identify past educational attainment, skills levels, interests, barriers, and unique or specialized needs. Depending on the results of the assessment and service planning process, WIOA Youth Program staff may engage colleagues from the DOR, special education or other partners to assist in securing services and, as necessary accommodations, to facilitate the youth/young adult’s participation in the program. Merced’s local plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans (the plan was not made available by the CWDB) but was raised by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions due to their work and ongoing commitment human centered design.

The [Orange, Santa Ana, and Anaheim workforce development boards](https://www.anaheim.net/DocumentCenter/View/37111/Unified-Local-Plan-21-24-2) are combined into a single local plan for Orange County. Board staff participate in the Orange County Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) meetings that include the education providers, Regional Center of Orange County, DOR regions, and other community-based organizations. The latest employment and training programs include Addressing Barriers to Employment (ABE) for adults and the STEPS program for youth. The Orange board and Goodwill Industries of Orange County are lead program partners. The program gives Orange County region students and adults facing challenges more opportunities to achieve their greatest levels of personal and economic independence. Program participants are provided opportunities to participate in soft skills training, vocational preparation and social adjustment training, work experience, and permanent placement into CIE. DOR collaboration includes student services to the AJCCs for eligible youth program participants and cross-training and professional development to ensure local board front-line staff understands DOR’s vast offerings. (This was also highlighted by CCEPD partners.)

The [Pacific Gateway](https://www.pacific-gateway.org/localplan2021#:~:text=Local%20Plan%202021%20%2D%202024&text=Attached%20are%20the%20Local%20Workforce,the%20Los%20Angeles%20County%20Area.) local plan includes many references addressing trauma and homelessness. They have an equity toolkit from the City of Long Beach’s Office of Equity. DOR leadership is on both the workforce development board and youth committee. Additionally, they exhibit extensive work and an ongoing commitment to human centered design. (The plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans but was raised briefly by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions.)

The [Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA)](https://www.seta.net/app/uploads/2012/07/Complete-Draft-Sacramento-Workforce-Development-Plan-PY-2021-24-final-3-26-21-..._.pdf) Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) grant initiatives have allowed SETA to build the capacity of AJCC staff to serve individuals with disabilities through specialized training opportunities for staff and reviews of physical and programmatic access. The program and system staff formed a Disability Services Workgroup, whose participants are known as disability services navigators, and is led by a disability resource coordinator. SETA works with the Alta Regional Center on eligibility and enrollment, and disability etiquette. SETA and DOR staff have collaborated for cross-training in eligibility, enrollment, and service delivery. SETA and DOR collaboration has included employer outreach and engagement. SETA participates on the Northern California Business Advisory Council, which was developed in 2015 to promote partnership between local employers and employment/training programs to promote employment of people with disabilities. At the release of the new local plan, SETA had not yet utilized the LPA template developed by DOR, DDS and the California Department of Education (CDE). However, SETA included extensive information on WIOA Section 188 and ADA compliance, including disability etiquette and reasonable accommodation trainings for staff. They also take a no wrong door approach for all service locations, with memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in place for many service partners.

[San Bernardino](https://wp.sbcounty.gov/workforce/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/08/SB-Local-Plan-FINAL.pdf) engages with local partners to promote CIE by assigning staff to attend LPA meetings, cross training, and identifying resources and partners for business engagement for a paid work experience program. Staff of the San Bernardino DOR office are co-located at the three AJCCs to help better serve the disability community by linking to available resources. They have developed paid work experiences and internships through DOR, such as WIOA out-of-school youth programs. DOR and the Inland Regional Center support the job coaching function as part of this collaboration to serve job seekers. They are part of the DOR CIE Business Services team which is responsible for recruiting, referral, and employment engagement strategies to serve the ID/DD population. Additionally, AJCC staff members are trained to meet the needs of people with disabilities, including on the use of assistive technologies, and virtual services through their Virtual OneStop (VOS) system. They have recently upgraded their assistive technology equipment.

[Santa Barbara’s plan](http://www.sbcwdb.org/uploadedFiles/sbcwdb/content-2020/reports/2021-2025%20Santa%20Barbara%20County%20Local%20Plan%20Draft%202021-03-19.pdf) included extensive references to partnerships with DOR. Through an agreement with DOR, DOR staff co-locate in AJCC eight hours monthly. During that time, trainings are held to ensure that partner staff gain the knowledge necessary to assist in serving people with disabilities. DOR is working actively to set up on-the-job trainings for individuals with ID/DD and look forward to working with the AJCC and community partners to assist these individuals to succeed in a competitive, integrated environment. The plan included an extensive list of partners for addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Santa Barbara as raised as a best practice for behavioral health by a CCEPD partner. (The plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans but was raised briefly by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions.)

The [Solano local board](https://www.solanoemployment.org/sites/default/files/Solano%20Local%20Workforce%20Plan%20PY2021-2024%20DRAFT.pdf), through increased coordination with the North Bay Regional Center DOR, has built partnerships with contractors that serve individuals with disabilities to improve access and utilization of the AJCC system and WIOA services. Through this work, they are a community partner with the Solano LPA. Partners have come together as part of a DEA grant for customized work and learn strategies for individuals with disabilities. The board’s work has increased on-the-job training reimbursements to employers for hiring individuals with disabilities from 50% to 75%. This has allowed businesses to take on the additional training needed to bring an individual with a disability up to speed on the job. The board also added transitional jobs as a work and learn service offering. Solano and its disability partners continue to develop strategies around employer engagement, earn and learn strategies, educational transition services, disability benefits counseling, and improved service coordination. Solano plans to develop strategies in partnership with the Napa-Solano Building Trades Council to improve access to apprenticeship programs for individuals with disabilities as part of its DEA grant. They are currently piloting common case management approaches as part of the AB1111 grant with a local community-based organization’s employment services for individuals with mental health conditions. Partners leverage and collaborate on services such as disability advocacy, benefits counseling, job coaching, transportation assistance, and other supportive services provided by DOR and community-based organizations in the area.

The [Southeast Los Angeles (SELACO)](https://www.selacowdb.com/wp-content/uploads/SELACO-WDB-Local-Plan-DRAFT-PY-2021-2024.pdf) plan included a good breakdown of partner responsibilities and a focus on employer outreach for opportunities. In 2019-20 in partnership with Long Beach Community College (LBCC), SELACO WDB piloted a project designed to support young adults (18-24 years of age) with autism to train and prepare to receive on-the-job training as CNC Machinists. The project demonstrated exciting potential for successful completion however, due to COVID, was placed on hold until LBCC could reopen their courses that required hands on training. (The plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans but was raised briefly by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions.)

The [Tulare](https://d5e979eb-4b53-4726-836d-3aa319354959.filesusr.com/ugd/58cba3_3274a1f1196349558fb5867d62aca1af.pdf) plan was raised as a best practice by a CCEPD partner for its strong use or leveraging and braiding resources. The board has developed detailed guidelines for oversight and monitoring of contractors to ensure compliance with the requirements of applicable federal disability nondiscrimination law and includes a Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure Guide. It has two programs with shared consumers between DOR and the WIOA Title I Adult and Youth Programs: Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS), which serves youth and provides students with disabilities job readiness training and work experience in a career pathway matching their interests and career goals; and the DEA program, which focuses on providing competitive integrated employment positions for adults. (The plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans but was raised briefly by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions.)

The [Verdugo local plan](http://verdugoworkforce.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Verdugo-Local-Plan-Draft_Comp.pdf) (link not currently working) has noticeably more references to disabilities than any other local plan. While Verdugo has served people with disabilities for many years, the strategic focus on ID/DD began six years ago with the examination of the demographic data, the increasing rates of autism spectrum disorder, and their partners’ commitment to develop career pathways for this underserved population. Through the Verdugo Computer Numerical Control Machinist Academy for students with intellectual disabilities, founded in Glendale in 2015, Verdugo has a proven co-enrollment strategy. This model was shared with the other six local boards and used as the foundation for developing a strategic co-enrollment process for the region. Another innovative program they utilize is their work experience (WEX) program through STEPS. The STEPS project provides job preparation training, including job exploration, workplace readiness skills training, and work-based learning experiences through summer work experience, to students with disabilities.