

Pre-Employment Training and Employment Of Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Developmental Disabilities

Report Pursuant to Special Act 12-9

**Written by Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund
for the Office of Workforce Competitiveness**

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Background

Legislative Charge

In 2012, the Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation (Special Act No.12-9) that charged the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) with performing a study and producing a report on model programs concerning the pre-employment training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.

The Labor Commissioner, with assistance from the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), serves as the Governor's principal workforce development policy advisor. The goal is to ensure that Connecticut has the essential talent to support economic growth. OWC collaborates with multiple partners to align resources, coordinate employment, education and training programs and promote strategy to meet industry's projected job growth needs in Connecticut. OWC staffs and provides technical assistance to the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC). In its role as a workforce policy advisor, OWC is in a position to contribute to the understanding of how diverse populations, in this instance, youth with developmental disabilities can access the workforce development system and participate in the state's talent pipeline, as well as present recommendations to the CETC and its state agency partners for collaborative implementation.

OWC contracted with the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) to fulfill this obligation. CWEALF was chosen because of their knowledge of workforce development, education and higher education systems as well as extensive research experience. CWEALF conducted literature reviews and online searches and held interviews to gather information from a variety of sources and stakeholders.

The following report provides a brief overview of developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder, the impact of these conditions on employment, current employment and workforce development programs and services available to these populations in Connecticut and draft recommendations on what steps the state should take to better serve these individuals. This report is intended to compliment work being done by other state agencies to engage youth with developmental disabilities in secondary and post-secondary education, the workforce and in their communities.

What are Developmental Disabilities?

According to the Center for Disease Control, developmental disabilities are a group of conditions related to impairment in learning, language, behavior or physical abilities. Once

impairment occurs it may affect daily life and generally persists throughout the individual's lifespan. Approximately 15% of children in the United States, or one in six, experience a developmental disability or delay and instances of developmental disability occur across racial/ethnic and gender groups. Some factors effecting developmental disabilities include maternal health and habits during pregnancy, genetics, delivery complications, infections, and environmental toxins. Despite this knowledge, the exact cause of most developmental disabilities remains elusive. Some examples of developmental disabilities include: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy.

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurobiological disorder. It is a spectrum disorder, meaning that the symptoms associated with the disorder may present along a continuum of intensity and in many combinations. Thus the skill sets and difficulties of individuals with ASD are wide-ranging. Professionals are unsure what exactly causes autism spectrum disorder (ASCONN, 2009). However the previously held beliefs that ASD was cause by poor parenting or an emotionally distant mother have been disproven and current theories focus on a combination of environmental and genetic factors.

Despite the near endless permutations of skills and difficulties, individuals with ASD most often experience some level of difficulty in four main categories: physical, perceptual, reciprocal issues with communication, and challenging behaviors. Physical difficulty communicating with others is one of the main issues faced by many individuals with ASD. Some individuals may be non-verbal or may feel more comfortable communicating through pictures, text-to-speech devices, or using one or two word responses. However others may demonstrate no issue with verbal communication, or simply present as shy.

A related but distinct issue is difficulty with perception or understanding language. It is common for individuals with ASD to perceive language very literally. Therefore to some individuals with ASD simple questions such as "Can you find a pen?" or "Do you have the time?" can be confusing. Jokes and commonly used gestures may also present difficulties and may be misunderstood or dismissed completely. Some individuals with ASD may be comfortable communicating verbally but be limited to, or hyper-focused on, a few topics.

Another category for difficulty is socialization and making friends. Individuals with ASD often, though not always, have difficulty understanding the unwritten rules of society such as responding when someone greets you, or how close or far away to stand from someone when speaking with them. It is also sometimes challenging for an individual with ASD to grasp that other people do not necessarily share their viewpoint on, interest in, or deep understanding of a topic. Finally when frustrated by difficulties in the previous categories, an individual with ASD

may demonstrate some challenging or unusual behaviors: they may have a verbal outburst, engage in repetitive motions such as wringing or flapping their hands, or revert to a more comfortable topic of discussion (Alpine Learning Group, 2008).

Individuals with ASD are more likely to also suffer from an intellectual disability (ID) than the general population. However the majority (62%) of children with ASD identified by Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network did not have an ID (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Some individuals, particularly those with high-functioning ASD or Asperger's Syndrome, have above average IQs (ASCONN, 2009).

ASD Population

ASD affects individuals from all races, ethnicities and genders. It is more common in boys than girls however; approximately four times as many males will be affected as females. Approximately one in every 88 births experiences an ASD diagnosis (ASCONN, 2009), amounting to about one percent of the population in Asia, Europe, and North America (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Eighty-three percent (83%) of individuals diagnosed with ASD receive a co-diagnosis of another developmental disorder (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

Please note that information on disabilities tends to be collected and reported in terms of the whole population of individuals with any disability. This section is designed to give some context as to the current state of employment for individuals with disabilities; where possible specific information on developmental disabilities or ASD is used.

Nationally

Individuals with a disability are less likely than people without a reported disability to be employed. At the national level in 2010, 34% of individuals with some type of disability were employed, as opposed to 75% of individuals without disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are also more likely to be underemployed either through part-time work or unequal pay. In an effort to combat this problem, President Obama has issued Executive Order 13548 which requires 100,000 individuals with disabilities to be hired by the federal workforce by 2015.

In Connecticut

In 2010, the rate of employment for individuals with a disability in Connecticut was 38% for those ages 21-64. This is higher than the national average but still lower than 17 other states. Of the same demographic, 23% were engaged in full-time/full-year work in 2010. Those

individuals whose disability fell into the category of “independent living disability”, which indicates issues with the independent accomplishment of day-to-day tasks such as meal prep or navigating the transportation system, had the lowest rate of employment. Individuals with a disability working full-time in Connecticut made an average of \$7,000 less per year than individuals without a disability who also worked full-time. In addition to personal earnings, household earnings also show a discrepancy. The median household income for persons without a disability was \$76,600 in 2010 as opposed to the median household income for individuals with a disability which was \$48,900 (Erickson, Lee and von Schrader, 2012).

Implications for Employment

Skills and Abilities

Individuals with ASD bring some very valuable skills to a work environment. As with the general population, individual strengths and difficulties vary. On the whole, individuals with ASD tend to be very honest, have a high desire to please, and remember details extremely well. Additionally once a routine is developed they tend not to vary from it and therefore demonstrate strict punctuality and consistent performance. Individuals with ASD are unlikely to be distracted from their work by social interactions and possess abilities to recall and utilize visual information very well (Rosenwald, 2004).

There are also unique needs and issues presented by individuals with ASD in the workplace. Co-workers may feel uncomfortable around an individual who has difficulty communicating or does not grasp unwritten social rules. A preference for routines and predictability could lead to an outburst if sudden changes occur. Outbursts may also occur when an individual is tired, confused, or frustrated by difficulties with communication. As mentioned above, outbursts can include challenging behaviors such as shouting, repetitive speech or motions and can be disruptive to the workplace. Individuals with ASD may also display issues with initiative particularly when it comes to undertaking activities outside of the normal routine (Rosenwald, 2004). Furthermore individuals within this population may suffer from anticipation anxiety (a condition in which the individual experiences considerably higher levels of anxiety leading up to an activity than they do while actually performing the task) and may be easily overwhelmed by environmental stimuli such as noises or bright lights (Rosenwald, 2004).

Employment Opportunities

As mentioned above, individuals with ASD and other developmental disabilities have unique skill sets. Some individuals with ASD excel at extremely detailed work and do not experience the fatigue or focus issues a neuro-typical individual would when working on something extremely detailed for a long period of time. This causes some individuals,

specifically those with high-functioning ASD or Asperger's Syndrome to in fact be very well suited for detailed complex work such as computer programming. Other types of jobs that may be good fits for individuals with ASD or developmental disabilities are jobs that require limited social interaction, repetitive tasks, and jobs that follow the same pattern every day. Supports such as illustrated task schedules or job coaching have proven helpful in many situations (Rosenwald, 2004). Tele-work or work done online limits the need for non-verbal cues and can be a good fit for individuals with ASD or other developmental disabilities.

Some companies such as Specialisterne have made accommodations in the work environment that are allowing them access to this valuable labor pool. Specialisterne is a Danish company that has begun to utilize the unique skill sets possessed by some individuals with ASD and has trained them to work in a consulting capacity in fields of software testing, product assembly, and data entry. Specialisterne has a strong desire to spread this method; already sites in other countries including the U.S. have been established.

Aspiritech is a non-profit organization based in Chicago that built on Specialisterne's model of cultivating a superlative workforce of software testers with ASD. Aspiritech trains individuals for software testing using test cases and then facilitates contract work with software companies. Aspiritech, like Specialisterne, also envisions expanding their program to other geographic locations.

In Connecticut, Walgreens has partnered with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness with the goal of having one-third of the workforce at their distribution center in Windsor hired from among the disability community. A training model was developed to ensure these individuals have the greatest opportunity for success. Walgreens is looking to hire individuals with disabilities to all positions available at the distribution center. However three positions have been targeted as most appropriate for individuals with disabilities those positions are: "Case Check-in" (scanning the barcodes of incoming deliveries in receiving), "De-trash" (removing items from their packing), and "Pick-To-Light" (sorting products into orders for shipment to retail locations). The training of individuals with disabilities will occur on-site in the training facility. When individuals can sustain an eight hour shift, understand work culture, and demonstrate job competency and the ability to follow all safety procedures, they will be transferred to a "real" work station where they will complete a transitional period lasting up to 45 days. At any point during the transitional phase, if an individual demonstrates an ability to meet production standards and engages in appropriate work behaviors then they will be hired as a regular employee. The two Walgreens centers that have taken on large numbers of employees with disabilities have reported a 40% lower rate of safety incidents, 67% lower medical treatment costs, and 78% lower accident costs overall.

Employment has been identified as integral to an individuals' self worth and success. Therefore efforts, such as the ones described above, are important resources for increasing the access of individual with disabilities to fulfilling employment. However, among the challenges for individuals obtaining and retaining employment are bias against individuals with disabilities, particularly with hidden disabilities, as well as system challenges meeting the diverse needs of this population. For example, the degree to which employers provide opportunities to individuals with disabilities varies. Employers such as Walgreens take on large initiatives like the one described above which sets goals for hiring people with disabilities. Other employers may make no mention of individuals with disabilities in their hiring practices. In between, there are employers who specify individuals with disabilities may apply for positions and affirm their commitment to employing individuals with disabilities by actively being included in promotional information and resources designed for this population. For example, in an effort to assist individuals in identifying companies who welcome individuals with disabilities to apply with them, Connect-Ability, a program managed by the Department of Social Services to identify and resolve employment barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities, has compiled and posted on their website a list of "Model Employers". Employers were required to sign a pledge agreeing that they are committed to following best practices to advance the employment of people with disabilities by creating a corporate environment that is disability friendly and through recruiting and hiring processes that encourage people with disabilities to apply for posted positions. Model employers include: Aetna, Comcast, Connecticare, Covenant Financial Services, Lego, Northeast Utilities, Whitford Lock among others. This full listing is included in this report as Appendix C.

Systemic issues in helping people get employed also remain. For example, in 2006, the National Governors' Association issued a report on transition services for youth with disabilities written by Public Consulting Group. While the bulk of this report is now outdated, the major barriers to the employment of individuals with disabilities identified by state agency staff still hold true today. The ten major barriers identified in the report include affordable housing, lack of employer confidence, low expectations, transportation, lack of transition counselors, agency lack of resources, dependence on benefits, lack of inter-agency coordination, and lack of uniform electronic tracking (Public Consulting Group, 2006). Some of these same issues, including transportation, low expectations, and lack of resources, were discussed by stakeholders and business leaders at a two-day employment think tank hosted by Autism Speaks in New York City in June 2012. Additionally stakeholders, including adults with ASD and their families, called for earlier transition services and the phasing out of job coaches, while business leaders expressed a need for solid, non-anecdotal data and shared their successes with traveling interviews and universal accommodations (Autism Speaks, Inc., 2012). Taken together personal and systemic challenges impact opportunities for youth with disabilities to find meaningful employment.

Twenty five states, including Connecticut, have chosen to participate in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). SELN brings together state developmental disability agencies for sharing, educating and providing guidance on policies and practices around employment. SELN further supports states in the improvement of integrated employment outcomes by providing opportunities to learn about reforms taking place in other states. For instance, in 2011 Iowa initiated a statewide repeal of their service system for individuals with disabilities and engaged in a comprehensive redesign of the entire system (Kennedy-Lizotte and Freeze, 2011).

Pre-Employment and Employment Services and Supports

Identifying Best Practices

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy did a review in 2009 of the research evidence surrounding services for individuals with developmental disabilities. They summarized studies that looked at community residential services vs. institutionalization, supported living vs. group homes, and supported employment vs. transitional employment services, among other issues. Their review of the research evidence indicates that while individuals in community residential settings have larger social networks, more family contact, and more consumer choice they are no more likely to be employed than individuals in institutions and when employed earn lower wages. Supported living as opposed to group homes cost more annually and resulted in better adaptive behavior scores. Two different studies found that individuals given transitional employment services including training, placement, and follow-up support for at least one year were more likely to maintain competitive employment, work more hours, earn higher wages, and generate lower public costs (social security insurance payments, etc.). However transitional employment services cost more than supported employment programs. It should be noted that while this review was compiled fairly recently the studies it analyzes are dated, some more than two decades old. This should be considered both when weighing the information provided and underline the fact that research on services for adults with ASD and DD is severely lacking.

A report by the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (Ferguson and Blumberg, 2006) points out the importance of classroom inclusion and access to “community experiences”. Career awareness activities such as career exploration and counseling services are also discussed as an important component to success. This report also mentions the fact that individuals with disabilities who are also minority students are even less likely to succeed than other individuals with disabilities and that more resources should be focused on them.

The majority of research regarding effective practices and treatments for individuals with developmental disabilities has been focused on working with children. Applied Behavioral

Analysis is gaining increased acceptance among professionals and families as an effective practice for working with developmentally disabled and autistic children. Five main schools of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) exist. Of these only one considers the entire lifespan of the individual.

Eden Autism Spectrum Disorder Services, a not-for-profit program with locations in Florida and New Jersey uses their own model of ABA, the Eden Model, to support and educate individuals with ASD across the lifespan. Their schools are for children ages 3-21 and operate year round. Eden also offers Adult Services, both residential and employment. The employment services range from center-based to fully competitive work, for which they offer both training and placement. The Eden employment program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation and Rehabilitation Facilities. Eden also provides outreach services in Connecticut which offers evaluation and assessments as well as professional development workshops and webinars.

Despite extensive research sufficient evidence as to the success of any given program or service has not been found and the writers of this report are not prepared to hold up any of the current practices as “Model Programs”. In spite of the lack of research on the most effective programs and procedures for assisting individuals with DD or ASD, this report in the pages to follow highlights the promising efforts of Connecticut’s state agencies, private programs, secondary education transition services, and community based transition programs. In addition, there are a large number of tool kits and handbooks such as a *Guide for Vocational Rehabilitation* (Sandifer, 2009) and *Working in the Community: A Guide for Employers of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Alpine Learning Group, 2008) available for employers, families, school staff, and the individual. These give advice on a range of topics from disclosing your disability, to understanding the role of a job coach. Most of these manuals can be found online and many are included in the reference section in Appendix D of this report.

Connecticut State Agencies

A number of State agencies deal directly with individuals who have disabilities. This section gives a brief outline of those agencies, focusing on their work as it pertains to pre-employment and employment services for individuals with developmental disabilities. The agencies discussed perform functions beyond those that are applicable to these populations. This report also discusses agencies indirectly involved in the service of this population. Information on these agencies has been gathered through a combination of interviews, electronic communications, and when possible an extensive review of agency literature and websites.

The **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)** operates under the Department of Social Services and is designed to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for, entering, or maintaining employment. BRS's mission focuses on creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities to work competitively and live independent lives. BRS serves a wide range of consumers and is designed specifically to assist individuals for whom the end goal is unsupported employment in an integrated setting, making equal to or above minimum wage. BRS is not designed to serve individuals with vision impairments; they may inquire for services at the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.

At the time of this writing, BRS is currently able to serve all eligible requests for services and in the past year closed 199 cases on which the primary or secondary disability was autism spectrum disorder. BRS cases are closed based on the occurrence of one of three things: the individual is no longer available for services (moved, etc), the individual has maintained employment for ninety days, or the individual and their BRS counselor agree that the individual's personal matters or disability prevent employment. Currently, BRS is serving 544 open client cases in which ASD is the primary or secondary disability. An open case could be at any stage from first contact through the employment application/ hiring process.

BRS has specific services geared toward youth. For example, BRS has liaisons working with every public school system in the state. BRS liaisons are responsible for working with the school, student, and family on the transition process. To help the student prepare for their future, BRS provides career counseling, assessments, job-search assistance, and access to assistive technology, among other services. If the cost of these services goes beyond that which is required to be covered by the school district, BRS may be able to cover the expenses. If not, they will work with the family to find funding for services possibly through medical coverage or grants.

It is the preference of BRS to begin transition work with a student in their junior or second to last year of secondary education. However, sometimes their caseload requires that

they work with final year students first and then progress to younger students. Even when the case load is high, students are invited to contact their liaison as early as 14 years of age and the BRS website provides materials on how to prepare for transition services while you wait to be served. There are directories of liaison contact information available on the BRS website, divided by North, South and Western Regions.

When it is time for the student to find employment, BRS can assist them with job placement, additional training, job coaching, transportation assistance, and assessing a worksite for accessibility. These services are sometimes referred to as Vocational Rehabilitation. BRS may even be able to help a young adult who wants to live independently get needed modifications for their new home or apartment. It should be noted that BRS is required to give preference to the individual with the most significant disability first. BRS's clinical team for ASD meets with a multi-agency panel monthly to review three cases per meeting. The participants include BRS, DDS, the Autism Spectrum Resource Center, and community members. They are also partnered with the Connect-ability program which functions as an information exchange connecting employers with potential employees and providing information regarding hiring individuals with disabilities. Connect-ability is funded by a Medicaid grant that ended December 2012, and it is unclear to what extent Connect-ability will continue to operate after the grant has expired.

The **Department of Developmental Services (DDS)** has been charged by the State of Connecticut with the responsibility of running a complete and integrated system of statewide services for individuals with intellectual disability and Prader-Willi Syndrome. In addition, DDS operates a Division of Autism Spectrum Services, established in 2007, which offers a wide range of services including assistive technology, job coaching and social skills training to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who do not have intellectual disability. These services are made available through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver system, which allows the state to be reimbursed approximately 50% by the federal government for services. Eligible individuals with intellectual disability (who may or may not have ASD) may receive services through three other HCBS waivers. Approximately 15% of the general DDS population is listed as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder on their most recent Level of Need (LON) assessment. This designation of autism is not necessarily based on a clinical diagnosis and so the numbers may represent a slight over estimate. As of April 2013, there were 2550 individuals age 3 and over with intellectual disability that have Autism Spectrum Disorder according to their LON.

DDS requires that all upcoming high school graduates and every individual with a low level of need score (one, two or three) have an employment goal in their Individual Plan. In fiscal year 2012, Employment and Day Services accounted for 21% of DDS's budget. Federal

Medicaid reimbursement helped to offset more than half of the state's total DDS expenditures. Supportive employment or non-employment day programs were provided to 9,482 individuals. However, only 15% of DDS's consumers work in jobs that pay minimum wage or better, including 371 individuals who are competitively employed without supports.

A key goal discussed in DDS's recent Five Year Plan is a focus on reducing participation in sheltered workshops (segregated work environments authorized to pay less than minimum wage) and non-work day habilitation programs (day support options) in favor of increasing participation in gainful employment and doubling the number of individuals who are competitively employed. Day support options were originally designed for individuals over age 64 that were leaving employment; however, only 11% of the current participants are over 64 years old. DDS plans to specifically target 2011-2016 high school graduates and promote their smooth transition to the workforce and require real employment outcomes.

The Connecticut **Department of Labor** is an agency devoted to the assistance and protection of all Connecticut workers. They offer both web-based and office-based services including resources connecting individuals looking for work with employers, labor market data, and information on training centers. Specifically pertaining to individuals with disabilities, CTDOL's website features a section of resources for both job-seekers and perspective employers including resources related to education, job placement, assistive technology, tax credits, and more.

The **State Department of Education (SDE)** does not provide direct services for individuals with disabilities but rather they facilitate services through the local school districts and the State Education Resource Center (SERC). Through SERC they provide training for district transition staff, the employment of whom is optional. SERC provides directories of transition programs, private support programs, and offers a soft skills curriculum suited for a variety of individuals. SDE and SERC function as supportive entities for the local districts which are directly responsible for the creation of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and provide students with needed accommodations and instruction. Also under the operation of SDE is the Bureau of Special Education Resources, which provides information about alternative programs, grants, the IEP process and other information useful to families and educators. In addition, the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) offer a wide range of transition services.

The **Department of Children and Families (DCF)** collaborates with DDS to identify youth with emotional or developmental disabilities that will need continued services from DDS after discharge from DCF. They also refer individuals with emotional/physical disabilities to vocational rehabilitation with BRS. In their Community Health Services Block Grant Plan, DCF discusses the continuing need for transitional services for youth with developmental needs that are aging out of the child welfare system. As of September 2011 there were 131 youth ages 17

and up who had been identified for DDS services following DCF age out at 21. The Block Grant Plan also discusses the lack of specialized residential services for youth with pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) and ASD—60% (12) of individuals with PDD or intellectual disabilities had to be sent out of state.

The **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)** does not handle cases of developmental disabilities specifically. Individuals with a developmental disability may be serviced by DMHAS if they present with a co-occurring addiction or mental health issue. DMHAS does operate a young adult services program, which includes a supportive educational/employment component, for individuals 18-25 who are being transferred from DCF and require assistance transitioning to adult life.

Private Programs

There are a small number of private non-profit programs providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities including ASD in Connecticut. Appendix B's listing of programs, though not exhaustive, provides further detail about the programs highlighted below. The eight programs that have been summarized demonstrate the variety of types of services and supports available to this population. Frequently an individual will utilize multiple types of support in combination to meet their needs. The selected programs also demonstrate the variety of funding sources being used by programs that serve this population.

Asperger's Association of New England, Inc. (AANE) is a non-profit advocacy organization. They operate a variety of support groups across New England including a group in Connecticut for young adults with ASD that provides support for increasing social skills, self advocacy, work readiness, hygiene, and healthy relationships. Online support groups are also available. AANE hosts a variety of educational events, conferences and seminars. They produce a resource handbook that includes a letter to give to prospective employers explaining autism spectrum disorder. AANE also runs a program called LifeMAP which could potentially be accessed by Connecticut residents along the Massachusetts border but is not currently being run in Connecticut. LifeMAP is a fee-for-service program for post-high school adults and provides one-on-one supports in all areas of life including employment skills and college support. That program can serve approximately 100 individuals at a time.

Ability Beyond Disability, Inc. is a non-profit, multi-service agency serving adults with moderate to severe neurological and intellectual disabilities. They provide in-home services, group and independent residential supports and job training. Two separate job training programs are offered to young adults. *Discover, Learn, Work* is an internship program for young adults in the residential program that focuses on developing soft skills for employment. *Roses for Autism Spectrum Disorder* is a fully operational rose farm in Guilford, CT at which individuals

with and without ASD work together to grow, harvest, and sell roses. In 2011 Ability Beyond Disability served around 1,000 individuals at a total cost of approximately \$34,980,000 and generating \$38,317,000 in revenues. This program regularly coordinates with DDS, DSS, DCF, DMHAS, and individual school districts.

Asperger's College Bound is a private fee-for-service organization that offers parent seminars, student seminars and professional development programs. The parent seminars focus on supporting independence and the college process. The student seminars discuss disclosing your disability at school, accessing accommodations, college social skills, and academic expectations. The professional development programs focus on recognizing students with disabilities, the impact of disabilities on school and life, and applicable laws.

Community Systems Inc. (CSI) is a multi-service non-profit organization serving adults with ASD and other disabilities. CSI-Connecticut offers three types of supported residential living: small group, shared living, and supported independent living. They assist clients in engaging in supported, competitive, or enclave employment. Supported employment refers to either competitive work or work in an "enclave". Enclave work is done in small groups doing janitorial or seasonal tasks with at least one full-time support staff member. Competitive work takes place in a factory or restaurant/retail establishment with gradually decreasing amounts of on-the-job coaching. Persons do not have to be involved with CSI's residential programs to receive employment support. Day activities involving supported recreational, volunteer, and community experiences are available to individuals for whom employment is too demanding. CSI is able to support around 200 individuals; these services cost approximately \$15,513,000 and generate \$16,875,756 in revenue annually. This organization operates on behalf of DDS and coordinates with individual school districts.

CT- Autism Spectrum Resource Center functions as a clearinghouse providing resource listings on their website, as well as operating a referral line and maintaining a library of printed materials. They offer workshops and conferences to train families, professionals, agencies, and school staff. They also host support groups for teens and adults 15 years of age or older, providing recreational, social, and mentoring opportunities. A resource guidebook can be purchased from ASRC in English or Spanish through their website.

Easter Seals is a non-profit organization that provides diagnostic services, evaluations, treatment and support for individuals with disabilities and their families. In 2011 Easter Seals Fairfield County opened a Autism and Developmental Disability Center that focuses specifically on the needs of children and adolescents living with these disabilities. For adults with disabilities, Easter Seals also provides diagnosis, treatment, evaluation, medication management, & psychiatric services. Additionally they provide community and home supports,

job coaching, and support teams to assist individuals who are entering college. Easter Seals Fairfield County also provides individuals and families access to Camp Hemlock a fully accessible summer camp.

MARC: Community Resources is a multi-service non-profit organization serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. MARC offers residential services, transition support, and day programs. MARC utilizes person-centered planning to construct individualized day programs that incorporate various combinations of volunteer opportunities, recreational activities, living skills instruction, and supported employment. Example employers include Kmart, Shop-Rite, Big Y, and Chili's. Group or individual vocational opportunities are available. Group work involves small crews supervised by a job coach with transportation assistance and skills assessments provided. Individual work is also supported, by pre-employment training in skills such as interviewing and job searching. Individuals may begin utilizing MARC's transition support services in a consultative capacity at age 14. At age 16 individuals may begin to participate in adult transition programs which include community experiences, supported employment, and evaluations. Annual expenses and revenues for MARC total approximately \$4,289,000 and \$1,433,385 respectively.

Vista Vocational and Life Skills Center, Inc. is a private non-profit educational program designed for individuals with neurologically-related disabilities such as ASD who are over the age of 18 and do not require 24 hour supervision. Approximately 40% of Vista's students are from Connecticut. Vista's Entrance Program is a three year post-secondary program which includes two years in a dorm-like residential setting and a third year in the "Transition Apartments". Following completion of the Entrance Program individuals enter the Outreach Program which allows them to receive support services from Vista while living independently in the community. Vista Vocational has a business arm, Vista Ventures, the purpose of which is to engage in business endeavors that create jobs for Vista students. Two of Vista Ventures current endeavors are the assembly and packaging of materials used on medical carts and the production and sale of Vista Vittles, a peanut butter dog treat. Vista also offers job coaching and works with independent companies to supply job placements to their students. In 2011, 165 individuals were served by Vista at a cost of \$4,929,819 and generating \$5,829,744 in revenue.

Secondary Education Transition Services

The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that transition planning be part of the discussion at the planning and placement meeting, also called an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting, following the student's 15th birthday. Transition planning involves the consideration of the individual's skills and

preferences in planning future instruction, support services, community experiences, and vocational and daily living skills training (The ARC of the United States, Inc., 2012). Additionally, it is required that the IEP developed at this time include appropriate post-secondary goals regarding higher education, employment, or independent living skills and list needed transition services.

In 2008 the UCONN Health Center did a survey of 128 CT school districts regarding their transition services. This study found that the services available varied widely from district to district; whether they were offered for credit/pay or not, whether they were open to both regular and special education students and whether the district or a contractor supplied the services. The survey found that employment services were widely offered for credit by the district. Assistive technology and some forms of transition planning are more likely to be provided by contractors and are often not for credit. Certain academic services including study skills and self-advocacy training are much more likely to be offered to special education students and are commonly taught by special education teachers; whereas honors, advanced placement, and college credit courses are considerably less available to special education students. Many districts reported cooperation with adult service agencies however this study was unable to define the extent of such cooperation.

According to the survey, transition services are provided or overseen by a range of professionals; guidance counselors are most common and most likely to be employed full-time, life coaches are rare, and job coaches/job developers tend to be employed part-time or do that work as only one part of their job. Some districts provided examples of services they offered that they felt were exemplary. One district provides “extensive supported employment program that provides experiences in a desired field for pay”. Another district offers in-house work experience through kitchen and building maintenance programs. Still another offers career field trips and fairs, job shadowing, and guest speakers.

A 2009 report from the U.S. Department of Labor noted a need for schools to increase their focus on students who are planning to directly enter the workforce following graduation. This report also emphasized the need for increased communication between parents and schools and schools and adult service providers. It is critical to connect students to an adult service agency before they leave school—funding per individual drops 75% when the switch is made from secondary education to adult services.

School districts can allow students who have enough credits to graduate from high school to refuse their diploma, do a PPT and then continue to receive transition services through the district. When students aren't quite ready to move on, they can participate in these transition services including work experience, college readiness courses or college courses. However, districts often push to maintain high four-year graduation rates because

every additional year a child remains in the public school system costs money and poor four-year graduation rates result in the loss of incentives provided by the No-Child-Left-Behind Act. There is little knowledge among parents about this 5th year bridge option. Only 20-25% of special education students remain in high school for an additional year.

Other states across the nation are improving both transition services and the funding for their DDS equivalents. For example, Massachusetts has instituted a law, Chapter 688, more commonly referred to as the “Turning 22 Law” which requires that individuals with severe disabilities be engaged in a two year planning and referral process prior to the loss of their special education entitlement at age 22 or upon graduation from high school whichever comes first. A key feature of this planning and referral process is that it identifies which state agency is best suited to provide future support for this individual based on their abilities, needs, I.Q., and official diagnosis. The 688 forms and referral then act as a point of entry into the adult human service system. This process aids in a smooth transition and gives service agencies an idea in advance of how many individuals will be requiring their services in coming years so they may more effectively petition for funding (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

Community-Based Transition Programs

In some cases remaining in the high school setting after age eighteen is not the best fit for a student with disabilities even though they are not fully prepared to move to the workforce or higher education. The high school setting after age eighteen does not offer age-appropriate peer interaction or real life experiences and often individuals do not wish to stay. In response to this issue, transition programs have been created. Transition programs are designed to assist youth and young adults with disabilities in taking on more control and independence in their lives. The Connecticut State Department of Education produced a directory of these programs, “Connecticut Transition Services in College, University, and Community-based Settings”, in 2010 which includes 19 programs coordinated by local education agencies, three private programs, and two programs provided by “other” organizations. In order to be included in the directory, programs had to be available to students ages 18-21, be provided entirely in the community not on a high school campus, and be reserved for students who had completed all the necessary credits for completion of their high school diploma and are working solely on transition goals from their IEPs.

Many of the programs included are operated in partnership with a university. Students are commonly provided with functional academics (not for credit), employment services such as job shadowing, and life skills training. Some programs offered paid job experience or stipends and most are available to individuals with a wide-range of disabilities including ASD. A link to this directory is provided in the reference section in Appendix D of this report. The

specific programs from the directory highlighted below demonstrate the definition of a transition program and the variety of services they offer.

The Western Connections program is operated at Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) and offers access to WCSU student life, clubs, job exploration, assessments, time management skills, study skills, and class auditing among other services. Western Connections is open to students from all districts on a space available basis; however students from Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Haven, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, and Wilton are given preference. The program serves 12 students annually and lasts for 10 months. This program is not designed to support individuals with behavioral issues. Paid employment and stipends are available.

The New Haven Public School Off Campus Classroom Program hosts transition and employment training at a number of off-campus sites including Gateway Community College and St. Raphael's Hospital. Services offered include transportation, skills training, mentors, job coaching, and leisure programs. This program lasts 10 months, takes 32 students annually, and is only open to students in the New Haven Public School District.

ACHIEVE serves five students annually in a 10 month program with preference given to Wethersfield and West Hartford students. This program offers vocational experiences including job coaching and paid employment. Community-based assessments, social skills training, and leisure activities are also provided.

Recommendations

This report offers an initial survey of current state and private programs and services aimed at meeting the employment needs of young adults with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. The following draft recommendations outline possible next steps that can be taken by the Office of Workforce Competitiveness and its state agency partners in the CT Employment and Training Commission, to ensure that workforce development needs are included in future initiatives to serve this important population of current and future workers.

1. Increase Available Programs and Services and Evaluate their Impact

Over the course of writing this report, the lack of empirical evidence related to programs serving this population has become evident. However, what is also evident is the need for more services for young adults transitioning from school to work. Currently, most of the programs supported by the state of Connecticut can only serve a small number of clients. In order to bring services to more individuals, these programs need to be expanded or replicated. Increased funding directly to programs will certainly aid in this endeavor.

However, a more in depth analysis is needed to determine which program components and/or entire programs are successful for which types of individuals, to what extent agencies are able to scale up these models to reach greater numbers of individuals, what the costs of such expansion would be to the state and participants, and what outcomes should be expected from these efforts. Other initiatives underway such as the needs assessment being conducted with state agencies should be integrated with this effort to provide a fuller picture not only of the services offered but the actual demand for these services and the costs associated. This work should be integrated with other initiatives underway by key state agencies to provide a fuller picture not only of the services offered but the actual demand for these services and the costs associated. OWC, in partnership with these state agency partners is prepared to support this analysis and planning.

2. Increase Availability of Early Transition Planning Services

Transition planning offers students and their families the opportunity to begin a process for preparing for the future. This can often be difficult for the student who is struggling to stay engaged in classes and has had limited work-related experiences during school. If the transition process began earlier, individuals could build their job readiness experiences in more manageable pieces over a longer period of time. These job readiness experiences should be

coordinated with the workforce development system's efforts to provide work opportunities and education and job training opportunities for young adults.

The CETC's Youth Employment Committee will help to identify ways in which these youth can be supported in the state's career development system with a report to the legislature and Governor by October 1, 2013. In addition, the state should reconsider the optional district transition staff. If districts can't afford the necessary staff, SDE could facilitate/support cooperative arrangements with other agencies to ensure students can begin the transition process within the schools earlier and make a more seamless transition to employment and/or post-secondary education.

3. Ensure an Adequate Professional Workforce

As we work to expand opportunities for young people to receive transition, employment, and wrap-around services, we must ensure we have the trained workforce to support their development. Universities in Connecticut are offering more options for training and degrees for students desiring to work directly with individuals with ASD or other developmental disabilities. The University of Saint Joseph recently established Connecticut's first Masters Degree in Autism and Applied Behavioral Analysis. They also offer an undergraduate certificate in Autism Studies suitable for increasing the general knowledge and the ability to care for or support both children and adults with ASD. Their Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support offers a unique opportunity for "hands on learning" by providing student observation of individuals with ASD.

The University of Connecticut's Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education Research and Service conducts research, interdisciplinary trainings, and community services with the goal of improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities through capacity building, advocacy and systems change. Their interdisciplinary training and certification programs are designed for individuals going into the K-12 field but can be adjusted to help deepen the understanding of ASD for any group of professionals.

In addition, Southern Connecticut State University hosts The Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders which has been designed to study, develop and teach evidence-based curriculum and services for K-12 and higher education. Programs such as these will be critical to ensure that graduates match the need not just for teachers but for transition staff, job coaches, counselors, etc.

OWC and CETC will work with the CT Department of Labor, Office of Higher Education and the Board of Regents for Higher Education and their constituent units to develop a workforce plan to address supply and demand projections. They will also develop recommendations on ways to incentivize the pursuit of these degrees and employment in the state through internship and loan forgiveness programs.

4. Support and Educate Employers and Co-workers

Familiarizing employers and co-workers with the skills and limitations of individuals with developmental disabilities would help to create work environments more manageable for this population. Employers should also be further familiarized with the supports utilized by this population so they can better understand the function of a job coach or illustrated task schedules and utilize these tools in the workplace. Co-workers will particularly benefit with increased knowledge of these disabilities so that they can be supportive and understanding of their colleagues in the workplace. Efforts should be made by employers and co-workers to learn the unique language of an individual with ASD. An increased understanding of their individual communication style will help put both the individual and his co-workers at ease. The CTDOL can contribute to employer knowledge of how to successfully integrate individuals with disabilities into their workforce by developing materials and disseminating information through their offices.

For individuals who have Asperger's Syndrome or other high functioning disabilities it is frustrating to have their employment possibilities limited despite a high level of education and capability. For these individuals, programs and companies such as Aspiritech could prove useful. DECD should encourage such businesses to open offices here where our residents can access them. In addition, efforts should be made to connect current economic development initiatives and incentives to the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DECD also should work with employers identified in Connect-ability to provide incentives to expand their hiring and support of young people with developmental disabilities.

OWC will work with DECD and DOL to develop a plan for supporting the hiring of individuals with developmental disabilities that leverages employer engagement through economic development and disability advocacy efforts.

Conclusion

This report is a first step in a much needed conversation about the pre-employment and employment services needed by Connecticut's youth as they transition from school to the workforce. OWC proposes a number of future planning activities that build upon current

education, workforce and economic development efforts. Armed with more information, the state can set a course for sustained expansion of model programs to support the employment of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Appendices

Appendix A

Special Act No. 12-9



Substitute Senate Bill No. 41

Special Act No. 12-9

AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (*Effective July 1, 2012*) The Office of Workforce Competitiveness, in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Board of Regents for Higher Education, shall study model programs concerning the preemployment training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Not later than January 1, 2013, the Office of Workforce Competitiveness shall, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, report on such study to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement.

Approved June 15, 2012

Appendix B

Sample Programs

Asperger Association of New England, Inc. (AANE)

Program Type: Non-Profit Advocacy Organization

Target population: Individuals with Asperger or other autism spectrum disorders

Funding Sources:

- Insurance
- Fee for Service
- Grants

Financial information: The cost of AANE's information phone line is \$277,785 and generates \$113,144 in revenues. The expenses related to workshops, speaking engagements, and small conferences are \$189,203, and these endeavors generate \$94,038 in revenue. Large conferences and the running of in person and online support groups generate expenses of \$279,766 and revenues of \$153,174. Additional programs and services cost \$224,490, including \$27,812 in grant monies and produces \$178,498 in revenue.

Summary of Services: AANE responds to information requests received by phone and email. They operate a wide variety of support groups in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine as well as a group in Connecticut for young adults that provide support for increasing social skills, self advocacy, work readiness, hygiene, and healthy relationships. Online support groups are also available. The cost per session is \$20 and can be billed to insurance. AANE hosts a variety of educational events, conferences and seminars. They produce a resource handbook that includes a letter to give to prospective employers explaining autism spectrum disorders. State and local advocacy and Latino outreach are among AANE's other projects. AANE also runs a program called LifeMAP which could potentially be accessed by Connecticut residents along the Massachusetts border but is not currently being run in Connecticut. LifeMAP is a program for "post high school adults" and provides one on one support in all areas of life including employment skills and college support. LifeMAP currently serves about 100 individuals and is a fee-for-service program. While AANE is engaged in many ventures, only three support groups-- two for children and one for adults-- are specifically linked to the Connecticut Chapter.

Cooperating Agencies or Programs: Massachusetts Autism Spectrum Disorder Commission, New Hampshire Vocational Services, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, MGH YouthCare, UMass Medical Center

More information: <http://www.aane.org/>, <http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/04-3376227/AspergerAsperger-association-new-england.aspx>

Ability Beyond Disability, Inc.

Program Type: Non-Profit, multi-service agency

Target population: Adults with moderate to severe neurological and intellectual disabilities

Funding Sources:

- State and Federal Funding
- Donations
- School districts and private fee-for-service

Financial information: Residential services produced expenses of \$27,989,500 and revenues of \$31,226,893. Employment and community involvement activities generated \$6,990,544 in expenses and \$7,090,269 in revenues. This information is taken from the 2011 990 tax form submitted by Ability Beyond Disability, Inc.

Summary of Services: In 2011 Ability Beyond Disability provided in-home services to 26 families. In-home services include behavioral services, life skills training and personalized goals to help individuals at any life stage reach their maximum level of independence. Ability Beyond Disability also offers both group and independent residential supports. Group homes provide 24 hour supports, whereas in independent homes/apartments the amount of support provided is decided by the needs of the individual. Approximately 410 people accessed these supports in 2011. Two separate job training programs are offered to young adults: Roses for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Discover, Learn, Work. Discover, Learn, Work is an internship program for young adults in the residential program that focuses on developing soft skills for employment, graphic design and simple printing. Roses for Autism Spectrum Disorder is a fully operational rose farm in Guilford, CT where individuals with and without ASD work together to grow, cut and sell roses. The proceeds from sales provide training in job and social skills, at the farm, for individuals with autism spectrum disorder so they can take those skills out into the community. Employment services are also offered; in 2011 close to 900 people received support through these services and nearly 150 new job placements were obtained. While it appears the majority of jobs secured through Ability Beyond Disability are in the food retailers and office support fields they are able to boast the highly skilled placements of a math teacher and an accountant in 2011.

Cooperating Agencies or Programs: CT Dept of Social Services, Dept of Children and Families, Dept of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Dept of Developmental Services, School Districts, United Way

More information: <http://ability.c24design.com/files/pdf/FY%2011%20Annual%20Report.pdf>,
<http://www.abilitybeyonddisability.org/>,

<http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2011/060/776/2011-060776594-083873cb-9.pdf>

Asperger's College Bound

Program Type: Private Service

Target population: Individuals transitioning from high school to college who have a “cognitive-social” disability i.e. non-verbal learning disability, Asperger, etc.

Funding Sources:

- Fee for Service

Financial information: Parent seminars are \$250 per family for two 2-hour sessions. Student seminars are \$350 for three 2-hour sessions.

Summary of Services: Asperger's College Bound offers parent seminars, student seminars and professional development programs. The parent seminars focus on supporting independence and social skills, the college process, expectations, and setting realistic goals. The student seminars discuss disclosing your disability to disability services at school, accessing accommodations, learning styles, communication, dorm living, time management, college social skills, and academic expectations. The professional development programs focus on recognizing students with disabilities, understanding the characteristics of these disabilities, their impact on school and life, working with families, IEPs, applicable laws, engaging school members as a team, and identifying factors that might interfere with college success.

More information: <http://aspergerscollegebound.com/>

Community Systems Inc.

Program Type: Multiservice Non-Profit

Target population: Adult individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities

Funding Sources:

- Medicaid Waiver Program
- State/local general funds
- SSI or SSDI income
- A portion of the individual's employment income

Financial information: The following financial information is taken from the 2011-2012 990 filed by Community Services Inc. in Torrington CT. Sixteen individuals are in supported living arrangements to the expense of \$1,539,358 with revenue of \$1,638,165. They also support 100+ individuals in 26 communities with expenses equaling \$12,228,139 and revenues equaling \$13,303,095. Sixty-eight (68) individuals are supported in employment, community experiences, or day activities; expenses and revenues for these services equal \$1,745,772 and \$1,934,496 respectively.

Summary of Services: The Connecticut Chapter of CSI works on behalf of the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services to provide employment, residential, and social supports. CSI-Connecticut offers three types of supported residential living: small group, shared living, and supported independent living. In all residential formats, CSI is responsible for case management, healthcare supervision, problem solving help and respite staffing. Supported employment refers to either competitive work or to work in an "enclave". Competitive work takes place in a factory/restaurant/retail establishment with gradually decreasing amounts of on-the-job coaching. Enclave work is done in small groups (six or less) doing janitorial or seasonal tasks (shoveling or mowing) with at least one full-time support staff member. Persons do not have to be involved with CSI's residential programs to receive employment support. Day activities involving supported recreational, volunteer, and community experiences are available to individuals for whom employment is too demanding.

Cooperating Agencies or Programs: Connecticut Department of Developmental Services, Connecticut Public School System

More information: www.communitysystems.org, <http://www.guidestar.org/Home.aspx>

CT Autism Spectrum Resource Center (ASRC)

Program Type: Private Non-Profit

Target population: Individuals with ASD, their families, coworkers, employers, teachers, friends, etc.

Funding Sources:

- Donations
- Fee for Service
- Grants

Financial information: In 2011 conferences and workshops cost ASRC \$265,239 and generated \$341,951 in revenues. Expenses and revenues for other specific undertakings are not detailed. The overall expenses and revenues totaled \$285,294 and \$311,596 respectively. This information is taken from the 990 tax forms submitted by CT Autism Spectrum Resource Center for 2011.

Summary of Services: ASRC functions as a clearinghouse providing resource listing on their website, as well as operating a referral line and maintaining a library of printed materials. They offer workshops and conferences to train families, professionals, agencies, and school staff. They also host support groups for teens and adults fifteen years of age or older, providing recreational, social, and mentoring opportunities. A resource guidebook can be purchased from ASRC in English or Spanish through the ASRC website.

More information: <http://www.ct-asrc.org/>, <http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/06-1494475/connecticut-autism-spectrum-resource-center.aspx>

Easter Seals Coastal Fairfield County, Inc.

Program Type: Non-profit

Target population: Children and adults with disabilities

Funding Sources:

- Fundraising Events and Donations
- Fees
- Grants

Financial information: Camp Hemlock generated \$1,387,076 in expenses and \$287,079 in revenues. The finances of other programs are not detailed for 2011. Overall revenues of \$1,637,934 and expenditures of \$1,778,692 were reported. This information is taken from the 990 tax form submitted by Easter Seals Coastal Fairfield County, Inc. for the 2011 tax year.

Summary of Services: Easter Seals is a non-profit organization that provides diagnostic services, evaluations, treatment and support for individuals with disabilities and their families. In 2011 Easter Seals Fairfield County opened a Autism and Developmental Disability Center that focuses specifically on the needs of children and adolescents living with these disabilities. For adults with disabilities, Easter Seals also provides diagnosis, treatment, evaluation, medication management, & psychiatric services. Additionally they provide community and home supports, job coaching, and support teams to assist individuals who are entering college. Easter Seals Fairfield County also provides individuals and families access to Camp Hemlock a fully accessible summer camp.

More information: For more information visit

<http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2011/060/653/2011-060653197-086a1827-9.pdf>

http://ct.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=CTDR_homepage

MARC: Community Resources

Program Type: Multi-Service Non-profit

Target population: Children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Funding Sources:

- Fundraising Events and Donations
- State contracts
- Grants

Financial information: Community living arrangements account for \$1,821,384 in expenses and \$523,919 in revenues. Day programs create revenues of \$447,816 and expenditures of \$1,898,377. Supported living arrangements generate \$345,862 worth of expenses and \$230,825 in revenues, while “other services” generate \$223,736 in expenses and \$230,825 in revenues. No specific financial information is listed for vocational services, nor are vocational services specifically listed under any category for which financial information is provided. This information is taken from the 990 tax form submitted by MARC: Community Resources for the 2011 tax year.

Summary of Services: MARC offers residential services, transition support, and day programs. The supported living program provides support for individuals in their private residences. Support is given with tasks such as bill paying, scheduling appointments, errands, and meal planning. MARC also maintains group homes in which residents contribute to the upkeep of the property, have opportunities to participate in their communities and twenty-four hour staff support is in place. MARC utilizes person-centered planning to construct individualized day programs that incorporate various combinations of volunteer opportunities, recreational activities, living skills instruction, and supported employment. Example employers include Kmart, Shop-Rite, Big Y, and Chili’s. Group or individual vocational opportunities are available. Group work involves small crews supervised by a job coach, transportation assistance and skills assessments are provided. Individual work is also supported, by pre-employment training in skills such as interviewing and job searching. Individuals may begin utilizing MARC’s transition support services in a consultative capacity at age 14. At age 16 individuals may begin to participate in adult transition programs which include community experiences, supported employment, and evaluations.

More information: For more information visit <http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/06-6011968/marc-community-resources-ltd.aspx>, <http://www.marcweb.org/>, <http://www.marccommunityresources.org/app/download/6869254604/Sample+Month.pdf>

Vista Vocational and Life Skills Center, Inc.

Program Type: Private Non-Profit Educational Program

Target population: Individuals having a neurologically-related disability such as autism spectrum disorder who are over the age of 18 and do not require 24 hour supervision

Funding Sources:

- Fees for Services
- Individual Donors
- Fundraising Events
- Vista Endowment Fund, Inc.

Financial information: The following financial information is taken from the 990 filed by Vista Vocational and Life Skills Center, Inc. for the 2011 tax year. Providing group and individual counseling as well as service coordination related to independent living skills, self-esteem, social skills, community involvement, and vocational skills generated expenses of \$1,702,227 and revenues of \$1,888,621. Daily life skills training and support for independent living cost \$1,203,228 and generated \$1,617,640. Provision of housing to students cost \$513,921 and generated \$636,798. Additionally “other program services” generated expenses of \$1,510,443 and revenues totaling \$1,686,685.

Summary of Services: Entrance to Vista’s programming is conditional based on applications as well as a five day evaluation visit. Vista’s Entrance Program is a three year post-secondary program which includes two years in a dorm-like residential setting and a third year in the “Transition Apartments”. Following completion of the Entrance Program, individuals enter the Outreach Program which allows them to receive support services from Vista while living independently in the community. Approximately 40% of Vista’s students are from Connecticut. Another aspect of this program is their business arm, Vista Ventures, which engages business to create jobs for Vista students. Two of Vista Ventures current endeavors are the assembly and packaging of materials used on medical carts and the production and sale of Vista Vittles, a peanut butter dog treat. Vista also offers job coaching and works with independent companies to supply job placements to their students. In 2011 Vista served 165 individuals: 29 in their Entrance Program, 113 in Outreach and 23 living independently with community supports.

Cooperating Agencies or Programs: Vista is sometimes contracted by schools to do required transition planning. The Hospital of Saint Raphael and Yale New Haven Hospital both work with Vista Ventures.

More information: <http://www.vistavocational.org/>,
<http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2011/223/106/2011-223106714-07acfe7a-9.pdf>

Appendix C

Connect-Ability Model Employers

In order to be listed as a model employer businesses were required to sign a pledge agreeing that they are committed to following employment best practices to advance the employment of people with disabilities by creating a corporate environment that is disability friendly and through recruiting and hiring processes that encourage people with disabilities to apply for posted positions.

State of CT	Goodwin College	Saint Mary's Hospital
Aetna	Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce	Target
apt foundation	Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce	The Hartford
Bob's	Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce	Mass Mutual
Bristol Community Organization	HARCO	The Metropolitan District
Butler Business School	Home Goods	Walgreens
Capitol Region Educational Council	Lego	The WorkPlace
Career Resources	Mass Mutual	Ticketnetwork
Career Team	Mercy Housing and Shelter Corp	TJ Maxx
CBIA	Met Life	Tower Laboratories
Chrysalis Center	Mohegan Sun	Travelers
Comcast	Northeast Utilities	Whitford Lock
Community Solutions, Inc.	NuFern	
Connecticare	Optimus Management Group	
CORE Bodycentered Psychotherapy	Pegasus	
Covenant Financial Services	People's United Bank	
	Prudential	

Appendix D

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