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LD 924 TASK FORCE REPORT 2022

Families, caregivers, and individuals share that life after high school feels like falling off a **cliff**. Young adults go from attending school every day with purpose and social interactions to being isolated and disconnected.

The LD 924 Task Force members shared vision for this work is **to create a bridge** of systemic person-centered integrated approaches to ensure that every individual with disabilities and their families/caregivers experience a smooth transition from school to an *engaging and meaningful adult life* with the necessary services, education, and employment opportunities to make that a reality.

Every young adult should have access to every opportunity available to all Mainers.

*We make the mistake of talking about the 16% of young adults with intellectual disabilities who successfully transition from school to adulthood. **We must explore what goes wrong for the other 84%.***

LD 924 Task Force Member

LD 924 Task Force Recommendations requiring legislative action

1. Develop and fund an **individual identifier number** to track individuals with disabilities who move from the children's services to adult services and a **data system** using this number that can follow students outside the education system and identify adult services and programs needed for full community inclusion.
2. Develop and fund the creation of an **online interagency information hub** for individuals, families/caregivers, and local, regional, and state support service collaboratives to streamline access to services and to provide collaboratives with data to guide and develop post-secondary and employment programming and services. Identification of, and funding for, staff who are responsible for maintenance of this website.
3. Develop and fund an **Independent fiscal & monitoring review** to examine state agency and provider practices in the field for alignment with Employment First, implementation of waiver services, and MaineCare Waiver Rules and Funding that create unintentional barriers to employment, including caps on unearned income within the MaineCare Working Disabled program. (Loss of MaineCare could also result in loss of Case manager, work support, housing, transportation, group homes, day programs, community supports, etc.)
4. Develop and fund a **state agency collaborative** including transition focused roles in each agency (DOE, DOL, DHHS (OADS, OCFS, MaineCare, etc.) that work together to foster cross agency collaboration and communication to develop cohesive and integrated services and supports for individuals and families/caregivers.
5. Develop and fund an **Office of Employment First** within Maine state government to provide dedicated staff to work across agencies (with the state agency collaborative) and assist with ongoing coordination between DOE, DHHS, and DOL to ensure that employment is the first and preferred outcome for people with disabilities accessing state services, consistent with the Employment First Maine Act.
6. Develop and fund a strategic plan by the cross-state agency collaborative to create a **comprehensive workforce development system** to attract, develop and retain professionals
7. Develop and fund cross agency and **collaborative professional learning** via in person and virtual opportunities housed in a learning management system (LMS) for educators and service providers
8. Develop and fund a **certification area** and a **transition specialist** to allow capacity in each district or school.
9. Develop and fund **statewide accessible post-secondary opportunities**, including attendance in community center programs, adult education, community colleges, four-year institutions, and technical training facilities, as well as remote and hybrid learning for individuals with disabilities.
10. Develop and fund the **Identification and mapping of all Maine post-secondary and employment programming** and services and review programs and research across the nation to create a Maine Model for Cross Agency Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment for individuals with disabilities to drive the development of opportunities for self-directed employment options.
11. Develop and fund **statewide transportation and housing networks** to make post-secondary opportunities and employment possible.

Date: January 16, 2023

Source of Report: [LD 924, PL 2021, Chapter 116](#), directing the Department of Education (DOE) to Establish a Task Force to Study the Coordination of Services and Expansion of Educational Programs and Vocational Opportunities for Young Adults with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities or Acquired Brain Injury

Topic: The LD 924 Task Force members have one goal in the recommendations laid out in this report - to create a bridge of systemic person-centered integrated approaches to ensure that individuals with disabilities and their families/caregivers experience a smooth transition from school to **an engaging and meaningful adult life with the necessary services, education, and employment opportunities to make that a reality.**

Context

The transition was to silence and separation away from peers and support. For most young adults, graduation from HS is the beginning of the future. For young adults with significant physical and/or intellectual disabilities, it is the end of meaningful inclusion. (23 Cumberland)

The LD 924 Task Force came into being as the result of a handful of parents working closely with their legislators for three consecutive years on a bill to address individuals “falling off the cliff” after High School. These parents had sons and daughters who experienced isolation without friends or purpose after high school, often accompanied by regression. As part of the LD 924 Taskforce, a Parent-to-Parent survey in January 2021 with over 200 responses showed that many other individuals also experienced this "falling off the cliff" and they neither went to work nor college after high school. Some parents reported having to stop working or having to give up careers because they needed to stay at home to be a full-time caregiver for their young adults.

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Parents also frequently reported that even services they are eligible for and funded for **are not obtainable because of short staffing and high staff turnover**, especially among case managers, VR counsellors, and direct service providers (DSP); parents attribute this to low pay. Other parents stated that they cannot access funded services because the **existing programs they have funding for do not match the needs of their family members**. Many of these programs were created when the Pineland institution closed in 1996 and have changed little since then, even though the population of individuals has changed and now includes increasing numbers of individuals with autism who often have challenging behaviors. Quotes from the parent survey are interspersed in this report and included in the appendices and will be shared when this report is presented. These voices are vital to understanding the need for this report.

This is not a new issue. It is important to note that the work of this task force has been done multiple times over the years. In 1986 report to the 112th Legislature,

“Making the Transition from School to Community Living: Preparing Handicapped Youth in Maine for Fully Integrated Lives highlights the very same issues we uncovered in the LD 924 Taskforce. The 1986 report states:

Every year approximately 1,000 special education students leave public school in Maine. Some do

graduate, although that graduation doesn't necessarily mean that the student is prepared for life as an adult in the community. Many simply reach the age of 20 and are, by law, no longer eligible for special education. These students have continuing needs for education and training and must cross an uncertain gap to obtain needed services from adult service agencies.

***In Maine there is currently no overall systematic plan that provides a bridge** linking the public school system with the system of adult service agencies. The planning and provision of services to handicapped youth by each system is now done quite independently, often with little or no communication or coordination between the separate systems.*

The report also cited a lack of early and consistent career planning and vocational preparation, lack of adequate coordination between education and adult service programs, lack of coordination among adult service agencies, and inadequate opportunities for suitable employment.

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Despite the intervening 36 years, the LD 924 Task Force uncovered that this 1986 report describes exactly what is **still happening** with the approximately 1,200 individuals with disabilities who leave high school every year. **Systemic change continues to be needed 36 years later.**

*These transition issues were prevalent 20 years ago when my 43-year-old son with IDD was transitioning from public school to the community. From what I can see, nothing has changed.
(Penobscot)*

Purpose Of Task Force

LD 924 directs the Department of Education (DOE) to establish a task force to study and report on the barriers inhibiting young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities or acquired brain injury, or similar conditions from accessing higher education and vocational opportunities. Section 2 of the directive identifies the constituency of the task force. See *Appendix A* for Task force members.

Section 3 directs the Commissioner of Education to appoint a task force chair and convene a minimum of 4 meetings. Section 4 outlines the duties of the task force, which shall include, but are not limited to:

1. The degree to which transition planning services identify educational and vocational opportunities and in preparing students to access these opportunities
2. The benefits, assessments, expansion, and availability of continuing educational opportunities
3. The vocational opportunities and work support services available
4. The degree to which case managers and education program teams engage with and connect students and their families with adult services that provide vocational services.

In executing the duties of Section 4, the task force shall focus on the population of young adults 18 and older who are eligible or likely eligible for several adult services provided through Maine Care home and community-based services waiver programs. The task force shall also develop recommendations based on an analysis of current data and retrospective data for the past 6 years to enhance the coordination of school districts, case managers, and adult services to ensure the most efficient and effective provision of educational and vocational services.

Section 5 of the directive allows the Department of Education to provide the task force with staff assistance from existing resources. Section 6 allows the task force to seek outside funding to support the work of the task force, subject to the approval of the Legislative Council. Section 7 directs the task force to submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, and the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.

After high school she went home and sat around while we waited to hear about access to programs - this was (is) the norm - we'd heard this from others before us - once we were home - we lost the team and friends and the sense of belonging. (23, Cumberland)

LD 924 Task Force Actions

The LD 924 Task Force held its initial meeting on November 9, 2021. Additional meetings were held with the entire task force virtually and in person. During the initial meetings, co-chairs were designated, and subcommittees were created. The four subcommittees focused on transition to post high school services, post-secondary opportunities, employment options, and community integration. Each of these subcommittees met weekly or biweekly from January to May of 2022 and drafted reports identifying gaps/barriers and recommendations related to their areas.

At the onset of the task force co-chair Linda Lee, and Maggie Hoffman, both parent advocates conducted an anonymous parent-to-parent survey to gather information about family and caregivers' insights on transition programming and what has occurred for their adult children after leaving K-12 settings. Additionally, co-chair Sarah Howorth conducted a survey of special educators and special education administrators to examine their understanding and practice related to transition planning for post high school services. The transition process during high school is critically important since it helps prepare students for adulthood and studies show that one of the strongest predictors of success in adulthood is if the student had paid employment during high school.

On July 11 & 12, 2022, the LD 924 Task Force held an in-person summit to examine the subcommittees' findings. The summit had an online option for members who were unable to attend in Augusta. Representatives from the National Technical Assistance on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT: C) were invited to facilitate the summit. Each day of the summit began with a presentation by a family member of an individual with an intellectual disability to frame the focus of the summit. During the summit, the task force reviewed the barriers and gaps identified by the subcommittees, conducted a root cause analysis of those barriers/gaps and created the four themes in the report that frame the recommendations of the task force.

In August, the task force reviewed a draft of an outline for the LD 924 report and provided feedback. In September, the task force reconvened virtually to review a draft of the report together and provided additional feedback. The task force then received a second draft of the report and feedback was invited through email and two sessions of open office hours for conversations.

Findings: Describing the Cliff

My son definitely had a sense of purpose and meaning in his life when he was in High school however since aging out, he has regressed badly. He has nothing now to replace High School, no friends, limited social contact, and he is isolated. He is cognitively still very young although I see him learning new things every day. It makes me very sad to write about this. (no age or county given)

Many individuals with disabilities, their families, and caregivers shared that after young adults with disabilities leave the K-12 setting they experience what feels like falling off a cliff. While in school, students have the right to a coordinated plan of services, a relatively consistent team of service providers, a place to go every day to study, learn, and grow. After leaving school, these same individuals and their families/caregivers see **a significant decrease in person-centered, integrated, formal systems of support**, as well as mentoring opportunities once their formal educational opportunities ended. In short, they have no path to “what’s next”.



Barriers in the Data

The task force identified a range of barriers to effective data analysis of existing programs and services, as well as gaps in existing data.

- Different state agencies categorize individuals with disabilities using varying definitions. For example, the definitions of disability found in IDEA and used by DOE differ from the definitions of disability used by VR and DOL. Similarly, the definitions again vary with DHHS and OADS. **This makes it difficult to map trends and outcomes, and to determine the right questions to ask of each agency.**
- There are limited methods to tracking individuals between the children’s service system and education system to various adult pathways. **This means that it is hard to use data to track what works effectively for individuals across systems as they age.** This issue has been noted historically in other systemic efforts to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

In the search for data for the LD 924 report, we were unable to find the whereabouts, never mind the wellbeing of these individuals.
LD 924 subcommittee member

- The DOE surveys individuals with disabilities in the year after exiting High School with what is known as IDEA Indicator B 14 questions. This includes those individuals who have exited through graduating, aging out, dropping out, or for other reasons. The survey responses are cumulative, and it is not possible to know the outcomes of individuals who may have higher support needs such as autism or brain injury, compared to individuals with say orthopedic or vision deficits. **The response rate to this Indicator 14 in 2020 was 21.49% which means we do not know the outcomes of the remaining almost 80%.**
- There is limited data to track individuals who do not enter state systems. Other questions are simply beyond the scope of the data tracked by each program. **For example, data is available for the number of individuals eligible for waivers and the numbers of individuals on the waitlist. But this does not provide information about individuals who with intellectual disabilities who need supports but do not qualify for waivers.**

During High School there was talk of my son getting a case manager and on the waitlist for service, but we were left alone with little in terms of choices when he graduated. (22, no county given)

**Developmental Disabilities and Brain Injury Program
Participants and Waitlists**

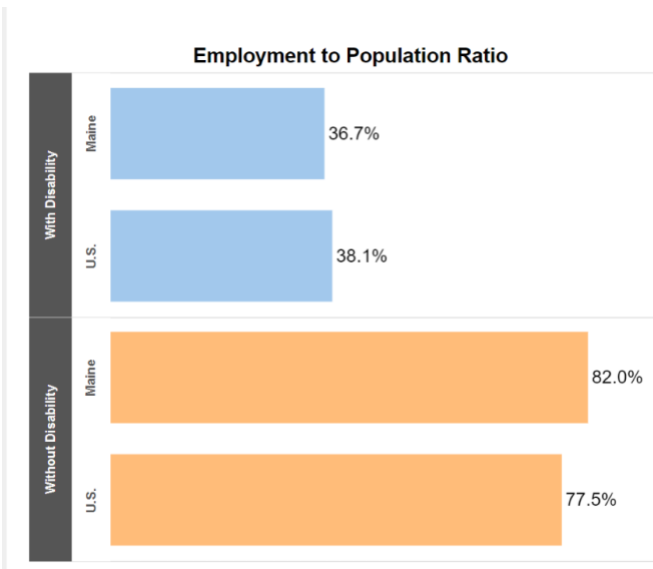
Source: OADS, 2022

WAIVER PROGRAM	PARTICIPANTS	WAITLIST	WITH OTHER COVERAGE	WITHOUT OTHER COVERAGE	PERCENT OF CURRENT PARTICIPANTS WITHOUT OTHER COVERAGE
Brain Injury (Section 18)	199	170	92	78	39%
Other related Conditions (Section 20)	41	18	6	12	29%
Comprehensive Services for IDD/ASD (Section 21)	3,259	2,027	1,588	439	13%
Support Services for IDD/ASD (Section 29)	2,575	247	117	130	5%
Unduplicated Member* Totals	6,074	2,355	1,724	631	10%

*Members can be on multiple waitlists simultaneously.

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/about-us/data-reports/participation-and-waitlist-data>

- Employment rates demonstrate that substantial gaps in employment outcomes exist in Maine for people with disabilities.



“Adults with disabilities are less likely to be employed than adults with no disability. Fewer than half work or seek work. From 2016 through 2020, almost 37 percent of working age Mainers with disabilities were employed compared to 82 percent of those without a disability.

Source: 2016 – 2022 ACS, Table C18120

Statistically unemployment rates for individuals with disabilities may be inaccurate since they do not include individuals who have never worked, or individuals who are not actively looking for work. Historically these individuals were not expected to work however if they could be included in the workforce, they would help solve the current crisis of the workforce shortage in Maine.

Uncertainty About Benefits & Availability of Services

We are not able to have services because we can't get MaineCare. My son is penalized and cannot access services because I work full time as a teacher and make too much money.
(Somerset)

Ongoing fears and sometimes actual loss of social security benefits, and often more importantly MaineCare, are barriers to employment and a full adult life. There are many individuals, particularly those receiving waiver services, who rely on MaineCare coverage for many facets of their lives. MaineCare coverage is often not just health insurance, but it also covers housing, transportation, long-term work supports, and elements of community integration. 76% of Mainers with a disability have public health coverage, compared to 29% of Mainers without a disability. There are several programs that exist that allow certain people to maintain their MaineCare coverage or Medicaid eligibility despite higher earnings. Those include MaineCare for Working People with Disabilities and 1619B Medicaid eligibility. **Some individuals may not be aware of the availability of these programs. Further, there are still income and asset limits associated with each respective program, however, other states have revised their Medicaid rules to allow for increased earnings that do not jeopardize their funding.**

Inconsistency of Programming & Lack of Inclusion

We have a transition plan but it does no good when services like voc rehab never actually start. We have been trying for 2 years and just keep getting to the "meet your worker" stage because of the turnover (17, Penobscot)

The parent members of the LD 924 task force conducted a survey of parents who have either youth or adults eligible for services by virtue of their disability. Their findings are very similar to those cited by the parents in 1986. In response to questions examining the effectiveness of transition plans 65 parents said the plans were effective and 137 said no, they were not effective. A question addressing whether individuals worked either as a volunteer or for pay during high school found the 134 did not have any work experience and 77 did have work experience. Another work-related question sought to learn if the individual was working at least 10 hours per week and earning minimum wage and responses were 155 individuals not working and 55 working.

We had a series of Case Managers because they keep quitting or being fired, none of them have been local in our area so they have no idea what is or is not available for my son.

Parents also shared that frequently due to workforce shortages there is no one to provide programming. Anecdotally it has also been made evident that in addition to workforce shortages there are high turnover rates for those providing case management and other services making the isolation for individuals even worse. Currently Maine lacks data sources to clearly identify the number of open positions in most of the care sectors, including education and vocational rehabilitation.

This is exasperated in Maine’s rural communities as they face an array of challenges in accessing programming and lack of inclusion. They experience higher unemployment rates, poverty, an aging workforce, population loss, and increasing demands for social services with fewer dollars to pay for them. In rural areas, adults with disabilities also experience a lack of adult education resources, and accessible recreational opportunities. For many rural areas, these are not new trends but generation-old issues. Additionally, rural communities often lack the capacity or financial resources to address these issues. These issues translate as access to fewer resources dedicated to comprehensive community planning, regional collaboration, and other efforts to identify shared community goals and visions that can help shape growth and development to support individuals with disabilities. Access to programming/services is limited in rural communities and that is compounded with lack of transportation options. Within Maine, counties with the highest shares of residents with disabilities are Piscataquis, Washington, Aroostook, and Somerset. Source: 2016-2020 ACS, Table S1810.

Our Case Manager could not even point us in the right direction for adult services. This caused severe regression in her behavior and social skills. (27, York)

Lack of Transportation

Our son currently has a job one hour a week with a support worker. However, the worker isn't always able to make it every week ... our son doesn't always get to go to his job. (Penobscot)

Most people with developmental disabilities do not drive. In a state that is largely rural with little public transit infrastructure, this severely limits the ability to travel. People with developmental disabilities rely on a patchwork of service providers, family and friends, public transit, taxis, and volunteer drivers. Individuals with developmental disabilities report that obtaining transportation to social and recreational opportunities, particularly individual activities, is especially difficult. Community transportation (public/regional and volunteer) is limited geographically, making

short trips complicated and limiting vocational and social opportunities and is essentially non-existent in the evening or on weekends. People with physical disabilities have additional difficulties with transportation in that taxis and private vehicles of family, friends, and volunteer drivers may not be accessible, public transit has limited accessible seating, and in the winter, people may have difficulty negotiating icy conditions. Concerns about the access and safety challenges of persons with developmental disabilities utilizing Non-Emergency Medical Transportation have been noted. More online access to social groups, adult education, as well as community services would help to alleviate access for many.

https://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/docs/lcp/2019/Final9_16_19_LCP.pdf

Poverty

There is a direct relationship between employment rates and situations of poverty for people with disabilities. Of the working age population, 32% of Mainers with disabilities live below 100% of the federal poverty threshold (FPT). This compares with 27% nationally. But what is important to note is when someone is employed and has a disability, the percentages of individuals living below 100% of the FPT drops to 12%. **Failure to address these barriers to disability for youth will push another generation of individuals with disability into poverty.**

Inconsistent Communication & Messaging

In my search for information, I would often hear different things from credible sources. For example, a regional level government contact might say something totally different on the same question than a state level government contact. It was utterly confusing to figure out how to navigate the system. (no age or county given)

In the parent survey, conversations with families on the task force and in the task force's work with the public, it became evident that there is inconsistent communication and messaging about state agencies, services, eligibility, paperwork, etc. For example, one parent shared that the school staff did not refer their student to VR because they hear that the student could not be served if they needed job supports for longer than 6 months. Another family member shared that they were told their child was "too high" to receive services so they waited to access care until learning that was not the complete truth. Family members shared that they would hear one thing from one agency and something different from another one, making accessing overly complicated and confusing.

Summary of Barriers

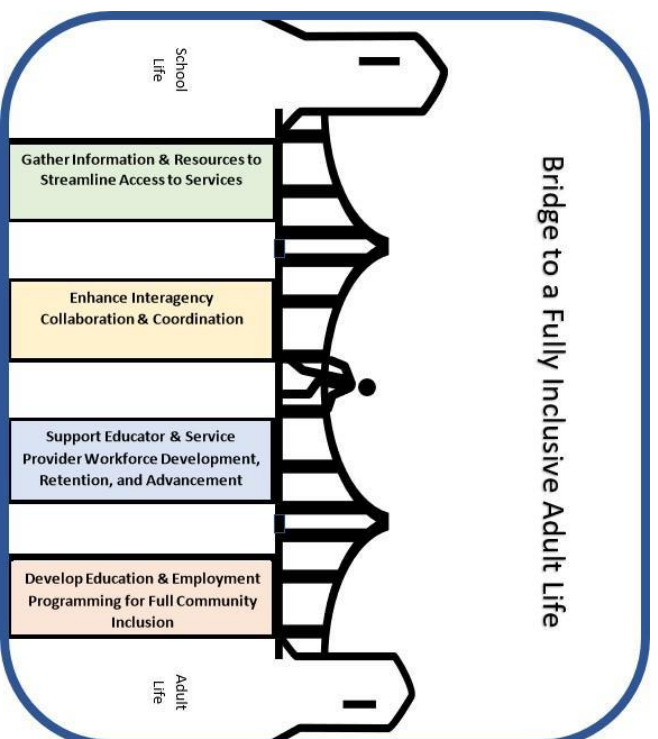
Although both state and federal laws require coordinated planning between the education system and services for adults, this transition time, when a student with disabilities is graduating from high school, is often very confusing and nonproductive for the student and family. While services for adults with disabilities exist in Maine (financial supports through waiver funds, case management, employment services, housing, transportation and more) it requires skill and patience to access these services and often the various services do not coordinate well with each other. Thus, a recent high school graduate might be ready to work but lacks transportation or job coaching support and will not be able to maintain a job on their own. In addition, many individuals end up on long waiting lists for services and often regress and lose skills and/or have

behavioral challenges related to boredom. Aging parents frequently continue to be the caregivers of these young adults and often a mom or dad must drop out of the workforce to assume fulltime caregiving when their child graduates.

LD 924 Recommendations

Creating Bridges of Support for a Fully Inclusive Adult Life

The work of the LD 924 task force included small subcommittees focusing on school-age transition, post-secondary opportunities, employment options and adult living/community inclusion. During the LD 924 Summer Summit held in July, the task force reviewed the gaps and barriers identified by the subcommittees and their recommendations and synthesized them into four major themes of recommendations.



Theme 1: Gather Information & Resources to Streamline Access to Services

Prioritize and coordinate funding, data collection, and evaluation of effective practices and procedures to build capacity and sustain equitable access to programming, workforce development, and infrastructure at the state and local levels.

- **Create an individual identifier number so individuals with disabilities who move from the children’s services to adult services can be tracked for progress** and develop a data system using this number that can follow students outside the education system and identify adult services and programs needed for full community inclusion

When students are in school, they have a school identification number that follows their progress. Once they leave school, there is no way to track their progress. The number would be associated with an individual and this would permit the state agencies to gather information after leaving school to learn if additional services are needed, assist with making connections for the young adult. This benefits not only the young adult as they work through the system of supports, but it also permits state agencies to monitor the progress of state systems so that necessary adaptations and changes may be made.

- **Fund the creation of an online interagency information hub** for individuals, families/caregivers, and local, regional, and state support service collaboratives to streamline access to services and to provide collaboratives with data to guide and develop post-secondary and employment programming and services. Identification of, and funding for, staff who are responsible for maintenance of this website.

Individuals with disabilities and their families/caregivers have a multitude of sources of information, paperwork, etc. that they must navigate frequently. This resource information hub would be a one stop site for them to find resources, save and access their own information like transition assessments, portfolios, etc. Individuals could allow support providers to access their individual site in the hub to share resources, review applications, identify what is available, etc.

- **Independent fiscal & monitoring review** to examine state agency and provider practices in the field for alignment with Employment First, implementation of waiver services, and **MaineCare Waiver Rules & Funding** that create unintentional barriers to employment, including caps on unearned income within the MaineCare Working Disabled program. (Loss of MaineCare could also result in loss of Case manager, work support, housing, transportation, group homes, day programs, community supports, etc.)

Young adults and families/caregivers who are using cross-silo services, should be part of the team developing the quality measures for monitoring reviews

Family members and young adults on the task force and those interviewed in the parent-to-parent survey shared experiences of inconsistent programming and service delivery for individuals who were eligible for waivers, those on waitlists and those who had

significant needs but did not qualify for waivers. It is of utmost importance that the state of Maine has a comprehensive understanding of the type and quality of services which are being provided for some of Maine's most vulnerable population. This includes a deep dive into MaineCare waiver rules and funding to examine how these programs inadvertently limit an individual's employment opportunities.

Theme 2: Enhance Interagency Collaboration & Coordination

Create an infrastructure that supports Maine's interagency collaboration and coordination at the state, regional, and local levels to meet the needs of individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions including autism with

associated intellectual disability for effective case management, post-secondary participation, employment supports and service provider workforce.

- **Create a state agency collaborative** including transition focused roles in each agency (DOE, DOL, DHHS (OADS, OCFS, MaineCare, etc.) that work together to foster cross agency collaboration and communication to develop cohesive and integrated services and supports for individuals and families/caregivers.

State agencies are large organizations that engage in supporting Mainers in a multitude of ways. Even in supporting young adults with transition, each agency has information, resources, funding, etc. for their constituents. To be focused and most efficient, state agencies need staff who focus solely on transition services (education, employment, etc.), alignment with other state agencies, and collaboration to develop and provide streamlined services for Mainers with disabilities. This creates a stronger connection among the state agencies, makes it easier for individuals and families/caregivers to access care, and strengthens the state of Maine with individuals entering the workforce.



- **Designate an Office of Employment First within Maine state government** to provide dedicated staff to work across agencies (with the state agency collaborative) and assist with ongoing coordination between DOE, DHHS, and DOL to ensure that employment is the first and preferred outcome for people with disabilities accessing state services, consistent with the Employment First Maine Act.

The vision for this office is to have **dedicated staff** who can work across agencies and assist with ongoing coordination between DOE, DHHS, and DOL to ensure compliance consistent with the Employment First Maine Act. Staff would be responsible for regular reporting on outcomes of Employment First, would work on rule and policy changes to reduce barriers to employment for people with disabilities collaborative on enhancing employment opportunities with all state agencies and other organizations including universities, etc. example:

<https://employmentfirstcolorado.org/>

A staff and office of individuals working on Employment First daily, would allow the spirit this statute to thrive. Individuals with disabilities would have a solely focused champion in the state.

[Employment First](#) became statute in Maine in 2013

The numbers of individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism who are employed **has NOT increased significantly** since the 2013 Employment First Act was passed in

Maine which requires employment to be **the first and preferred outcome for people with disabilities, who access DHHS, DOL and DOE services.**

In SFY 2020 OADS spent \$3.3 million supporting ID/DD individuals to work compared to \$76. million spent on individuals attending day services. Most young people transitioning into adult waiver services do not have employment when graduating from High School.

Theme 3: Support Educator & Service Provider Workforce Development, Retention, and Advancement

Support a comprehensive workforce development system to attract, develop, and retain professionals who support individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions with associated intellectual disability.

- **Develop a strategic plan by the cross-state agency collaborative to create a comprehensive workforce development system** to attract, develop and retain professionals, who support individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions, including Autism with associated intellectual disability including but not limited to Case managers, Direct Service Providers (DSPs), Vocational Rehab counselors, teachers, education technicians, behavioral health providers, board-certified behavior analysts (BCBAs), and transition/work-based learning coordinators). Align with the Teach Maine plan with the DOE.

Business leaders and employers must also be provided with training and supports so that they can create welcoming cultures with appropriate accommodations to support their

One of the many barriers that Mainers with disabilities face is the lack of service providers to provide education and employment opportunities. By developing an aligned strategic plan for workforce development, the recruitment, training/development, and retention may be streamlined permitting state and local agencies to share and collaboratively develop approaches. With a robust workforce with highly qualified and prepared professionals, individuals with disabilities will have greater opportunities to engage in meaningful [self-directed services](#). This robust workforce benefits individuals with disabilities and they in turn benefit the state with their employable skills and community engagement.

- **Create cross agency and collaborative professional learning** via in person and virtual opportunities housed in a learning management system (LMS) for educators and service providers on evidence-based practices to promote postsecondary success for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions, including Autism with associated intellectual disability.

With a centralized warehouse of professional learning opportunities, state and local agencies may share resources, programming, and professional learning. Most importantly, this will also provide an opportunity to easily cross train professionals, have a shared approach, and

messaging for consistent understanding and professional practices across Maine. This is especially true for the most rural areas of the state.

- **Designate a certification area for a transition specialist** to allow capacity in each district or school. Funding for transition specialists in high schools and incentives for school districts to pay for transition assessment and planning for coursework and practicum across all grades to promote college and career-ready skill development for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions, including Autism with associated intellectual disability.

Transition specialists in each high school in Maine could coordinate with local service providers, employers, career technical education programs, and post-secondary opportunities including community center programs, adult education, and higher education to provide learning and work experiences for adult life.

Theme 4: Develop Education & Employment Programming for Full Community Inclusion

Develop programming, services, and supports for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions with associated intellectual disability at the state, regional, and local levels to ensure that each student/young adult has opportunities for a fully integrated adult life, beginning with inclusion in school and including post-secondary education, employment, and meaningful community participation after completing high school.

- **Develop and fund statewide accessible post-secondary opportunities**, including attendance in community center programs, adult education, community colleges, four-year institutions, and technical training facilities, as well as remote and hybrid learning for individuals with disabilities. Maine should also require and fund public college campuses to offer accommodations to young people whose severe disabilities prevent them from earning a standard high school diploma, allowing them to take classes as nondegree-seeking students and join extracurricular activities alongside their peers.

In August 2022, Massachusetts signed Creating Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism, and other Developmental Disabilities into law. The benefits of programming for individuals with disabilities provides them with opportunities for full inclusion, education, and employment. It also shows positive impacts on other students in the universities and colleges as demonstrated in the following Boston Globe article.

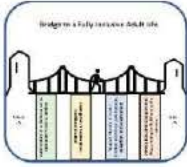
<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/08/07/metro/first-of-its-kind-new-law-improves-college-access-students-with-autism-intellectual-disabilities/>

- **Identify and map** all Maine post-secondary and employment programming and services and

review programs and research across the nation to **create a Maine Model for Cross Agency Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment** for individuals with disabilities to drive the development of opportunities for self-directed employment options.

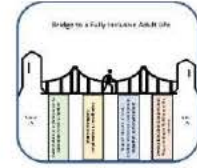
One of the first steps to strengthening and developing additional programming is to first know what the landscape of programming looks like in Maine. Through this exploration of programs across the state, researchers will be able to identify what is working and describe what is not working and why. This study along with highlighting what is working in other states will allow the interagency collaborative team members along with stakeholders to create a model for the state that can be implemented in local counties and towns.

- **Develop statewide transportation and housing networks** to make post-secondary opportunities and employment possible. If individuals cannot get to post-secondary classes, technical training and/or their jobs, then they cannot flourish. Accessible transportation and housing benefits individuals with disabilities, their families, employers, and the economy of Maine.



SUMMARY CHART

LD 924 Recommendations



Theme 1: Gather Information & Resources to Streamline Access to Services

Prioritize and coordinate funding, data collection, and evaluation of effective practices and procedures to build capacity and sustain equitable access to programming, workforce development, and infrastructure at the state and local levels.

1. **Create an Individual Identifier Number to track** individuals with disabilities who move from the education system to adult services. And the development of a data system using this number that can follow our students outside the education system and identify adult services and programs needed for full community inclusion.
2. Fund the **creation of an online interagency information hub** for individuals, families/caregivers, and local, regional, and state support service collaboratives to streamline access to services and to provide collaboratives with data to guide and develop post-secondary and employment programming and services. Identification of, and funding for, staff who are responsible for maintenance of this website.
3. **Independent fiscal & monitoring review to examine the quality of state agency and provider practices in the field.** This should additionally include an examination for alignment with Employment First, implementation of waiver services, and **MaineCare Waiver Rules & Funding** that create unintentional barriers to employment, including caps on unearned income within the MaineCare Working Disabled program. (Loss of MaineCare could also result in loss of Case manager, work support, housing, transportation, group homes, day programs, community supports, etc.)

Theme 2: Enhance Interagency Collaboration & Coordination

Create an infrastructure that supports Maine’s interagency collaboration and coordination at the state, regional, and local levels to meet the needs of individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions including autism with associated intellectual disability for effective case management, post-secondary participation, employment supports and service provider workforce.

1. **Creation of state agency collaborative** including transition focused roles in each agency (DOE, DOL, DHHS (OADS, OCFS, MaineCare, etc.) that work together to foster cross agency collaboration and communication to develop cohesive and integrated services and supports for individuals and families/caregivers.
2. Designate an **Office of Employment First within Maine state government** to provide dedicated staff to work across agencies (with the state agency collaborative) and assist with ongoing coordination between DOE, DHHS, and DOL to ensure that employment is the first and preferred outcome for people with disabilities accessing state services, consistent with the Employment First Maine Act. Additionally, this office would be responsible for regular reporting on outcomes of Employment First and for working on rule and policy changes to reduce barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

Theme 3: Support Educator & Service Provider Workforce Development, Retention, and Advancement

Support a comprehensive workforce development system to attract, develop, and retain professionals who support individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions with associated intellectual disability.

1. Develop a **strategic plan by the cross-state agency collaborative to create a comprehensive workforce development system** to attract, develop and retain professionals, who support individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions, including Autism with associated intellectual disability including but not limited to Case managers, Direct Service Providers (DSPs), Vocational Rehab counselors, teachers, education technicians, behavioral health providers, board-certified

behavior analysts (BCBAs), and transition/work-based learning coordinators). Align with the Teach Maine plan with the DOE.

2. Create of **cross agency and collaborative professional learning** via in person and virtual opportunities housed in a learning management system (LMS) for educators and service providers on evidence-based practices to promote postsecondary success for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions, including Autism with associated intellectual disability.

3. Designate a **teaching certification area for a transition specialist** to allow capacity in each district or school. Funding for transition specialists in high schools and incentives for school districts to pay for transition assessment and planning for coursework and practicum across all grades to promote college and career-ready skill development for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions, including Autism with associated intellectual disability.

Theme 4: Develop Education & Employment Programming for Full Community Inclusion

Develop programming, services, and supports for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Delays, Acquired Brain Injury, and similar conditions with associated intellectual disability at the state, regional, and local levels to ensure that each student/young adult has opportunities for a fully integrated adult life, beginning with *school inclusion* and including post-secondary education, employment, and meaningful community participation after high school.

1. Develop and fund of **statewide accessible post-secondary opportunities**, including attendance at community colleges, four-year institutions, and technical training facilities, as well as distance and hybrid learning for individuals with disabilities. Requiring Maine public college campuses to offer accommodations to young people whose severe disabilities prevent them from earning a standard high school diploma, allowing them to take classes as nondegree-seeking students and join extracurricular activities alongside their peers.

2. Identify and map all Maine post-secondary and employment programming and services and review programs and research across the nation to create a Maine Model for Cross Agency Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment for individuals with disabilities to drive the development of opportunities for self-directed employment options.

3. Develop **statewide transportation and housing networks** to make post-secondary opportunities and employment possible.

References

1986: Making the Transition from School to Community Living. Preparing Handicapped Youth in Maine for Fully Integrated Lives. Final Transition Report to 112th Legislature

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1puLSn3pETzAvII37BqBGtZ_4vF3Rv0eh/view?usp=sharing

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C)

<https://transitionta.org/>

OADS Biennial Plan

https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/reports/2017/Adults_with_Intellectual_Disabilities_Biennial_Plan.pdf

Maine Workers with Disabilities <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/disabilities/index.html>

Return on Investment of Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Transition Age Youth With Disabilities in Maine <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/ROI-Vocational-Rehabilitation-Maine-September-2021.pdf>

Secondary Transition Predictors of Postschool Success: An Update to the Research Base

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2165143420959793>

WIOA Annual Performance Report 2021

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/eta/performance/pdfs/PY2020/ME_PY20%20WIOA%20Annual%20Report%20Narrative.pdf

Participation and Waitlist Data for OADS Programs <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/about-us/data-reports/participation-and-waitlist-data>

DHHS By the Numbers

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/waynecarino/viz/DHHSbytheNumbers/DHHSbytheNumbers>

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7288070300010101

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Richter, S. M., & Mazzotti, V. L. (2011). A comprehensive review of the literature on summary of performance. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 34, 176–186. doi:10.1177/0885728811399089

Contact:

LD 924 Co-chairs

Linda Lee, Parent Advocate, lindalee012@gmail.com

Dr. Sarah Howorth, University of Maine, sarah.howorth@maine.edu

Appendix A: LD 924 Resources

[Link to LD 924 Bill](#)

[Link to LD924 Data Sources](#)

PARENT TO PARENT LIVED EXPERIENCE SURVEY: ADULT AND YOUTH 14-18 (or aging out of High School)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O31an0d2K7VBIChwgn62OezNsKmFG_wG/view?usp=sharing

Appendix B: Task Force Membership

LD 924 Task Force Member	Name
One member of the Senate who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, appointed by the President of the Senate	Senator Craig Hickman
One member of the House of Representatives who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, appointed by the Speaker of the House	Rep. Rebecca Millett
One member of the House of Representatives who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, appointed by the Speaker of the House	Rep. Sam Zager
One member of the Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee	Erin Frazier
The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's designee	Dean Bugaj, OMS
The Commissioner of Labor or the commissioner's designee	LibbyStone-Sterling, VR
One member from the office of aging and disability services within the Department of Health and Human Services	Betsy Hopkins, OADS
One representative from the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services	Teresa Burrows, Dulcey Laberge OCFS
The Commissioner of Transportation or the commissioner's designee	Meghan Russo
The director of the Maine State Housing Authority or the director's designee	Joe Locke
Seventeen members appointed by the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner of Labor, as follows:	
One member who represents an advocacy organization for young adults with disabilities	Dylan Campbell, MPF Connor Archer, Courageous Steps

One member who represents a statewide organization of parents of young adults with disabilities	Julia Endicott, DRM
One member who represents a statewide association for adult education	Amy Poland, DOE
One member who represents a statewide association for career and technical education	Danielle Despins, DOE
One member who represents the University of Maine System	Sarah Howarth, UM & Janet May, CCIDS
One member who represents a statewide association of administrators of services for children with disabilities	Gay MacDonald
One member who represents the Maine Community College System	Megan London & Jane Loxterkamp, EMCC
One member who represents community-based providers of services for young adults with disabilities	Betsy Morrison, STRIVE U
One member who represents a statewide organization that provides information and resources for parents and professionals who work with families that have a family member who has a disability	Carrie Woodcock, Executive Director Maine ParentFederation
Five members who are parents or guardians or direct care providers of a young adult with a disability	Courtney Angelosante, Jody Hall, Greg Bush, Linda Lee & Maggie Hoffman
Three members who are each a young adult with a disability who is eligible to receive services from the State	Tucker Conley, Charlie Saffian, & Bridget Parker

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Adult Education: education programs primarily operated for individuals beyond the compulsory school ages and administered by school administrative units (SAUs).

CTE Career and Technical Education

IEP Individualized Education Program for eligible students in educational settings.

Inclusion involves supporting students with disabilities through individual learning goals, accommodations, and modifications so that they are able to access the general education curriculum (in the general education classroom) and be held to the same high expectations as their peers.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more

than 7.5 million (as of school year 2018-19) eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) is a Technical Assistance Center co-funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

Transition: Local educational agencies (LEAs) and State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies participate in planning meetings to assist students and family members to make critical decisions about this stage of the student's life and his or her future post-school goals. During the planning process, schools and VR agencies work together to identify the transition needs of students with disabilities, such as the need for assistive or rehabilitation technology, orientation and mobility services or travel training, and career exploration through vocational assessments or work experience opportunities.

The Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) supports Maine's older and disabled adults by providing Adult Protective, Brain Injury, Other Related Conditions, Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Long Term Care, and Aging and Community services to the people of Maine.

The Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) is dedicated to helping create a future where all Maine children and families are safe, stable, happy, and healthy.

The Office of Mainecare Services (OMS) MaineCare provides health care coverage for Maine's children and adults who are elderly, disabled, or with low incomes.

The Office of Family Independence (OFI) We help connect Maine families to benefits and services that foster health, safety, resilience, and opportunity and help them to meet a wide variety of needs. Our office is comprised of three divisions: Eligibility Services, Child Support Services and Disability Determination Services.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a Department of Labor program that helps people who have disabilities to find and keep a job. VR helps people who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act with a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system since 1998.

Appendix D: Family Stories & Experiences

LD 924 TASKFORCE MEMBERS: SELF ADVOCATES, PARENT ADVOCATES, SIBLING ADVOCATE

Letter from Bridget Parker: Self Advocate https://docs.google.com/document/d/1piS-2I8hPIA6ai7BKbYYeKJX8_RPRm_EmjVbwtdPdXQ/edit?usp=sharing

Letter from Charlie Saffian: Self Advocate
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZEUYcNjBxuY0zWrBwM1Fmv3xO_XjYBgb/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103573050277243101772&rtpof=true&sd=true

Letter from Tucker Conley: Self Advocate
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LTEWgbRMFad4ZwktS4IQBOuq8eJAeB5O/view?usp=sharing>

Letter from Dylan Campbell: Sibling Advocate
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gyAdqguke_ro-H4PRRb_5bCH6UrA_Jlk/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103573050277243101772&rtpof=true&sd=true

Letter from Stacy Giberson: Parent Advocate
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15IU-bhKRcaSvm7XwB6-F-rtArUiwMARP/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103573050277243101772&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Letter from Jodie Hall: Parent Advocate
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EFpwhSxvhUQDz5quPg1Mu7jrF0kxROgm/view?usp=sharing>

Appendix E: Video Stories, Self-Advocate and Parent Advocate

Rock Life A short video story about a young man's journey
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE9ZScWYJbM>

[Lydia's Story](#)

[Snapshots from Marty's Adult Life](#)

Community Connect Maine: Video stories about Mainers with I/DD
<https://communityconnectme.org/digital-stories>

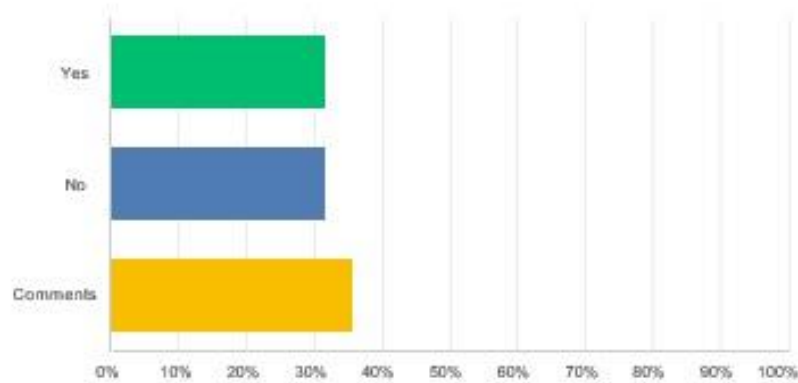
Appendix F: Parent to Parent Survey Results and Graphs

LD 924 Parent-To-Parent Survey: Adult and Youth 14-18 (or aging out of High School)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O31an0d2K7VBIChwgn62OezNsKmFG_wG/view?usp=sharing

Parent to Parent Adult Lived Experience Graphs

Q1 Do you feel the needs of your adult-son or daughter are currently being met by Government Funded services (examples: Case Management, Community Programs, Direct Supports, Employment Services, Behavioral Support)

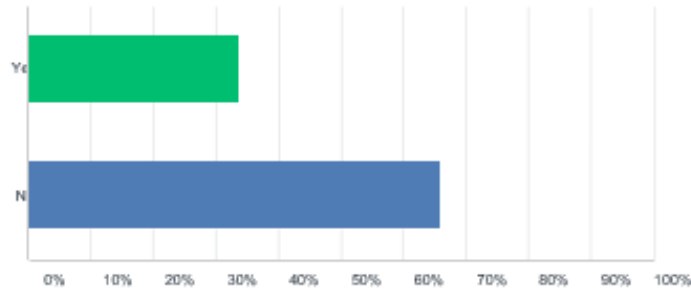
Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	32.06%	42
No	32.06%	42
Comments	35.88%	47
TOTAL		131

Q2 During High School do you feel the Transition Plan and process for preparing your adult-son or daughter to transition from High School to adulthood was effective?

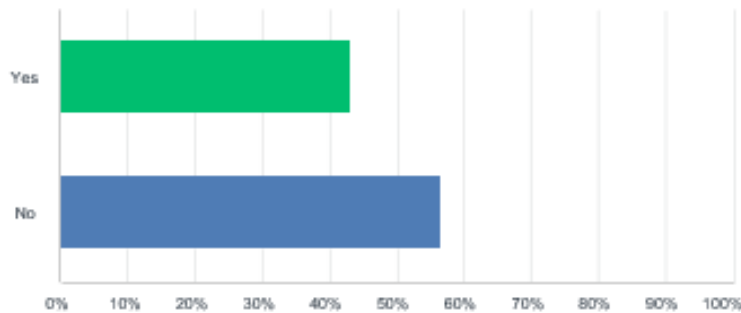
Answered: 118 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33.90%	40
No	66.10%	78
TOTAL		118

Q3 Did your daughter or son work during High School (paid employment or volunteer work)?

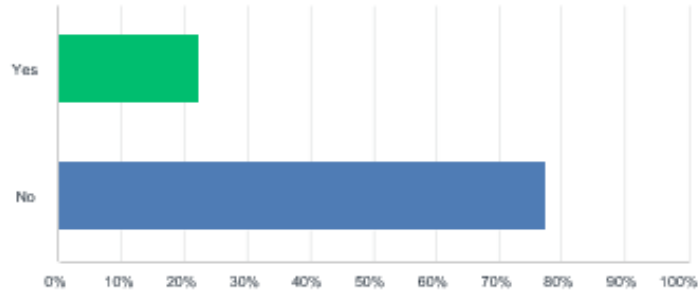
Answered: 127 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	43.31%	55
No	56.69%	72
TOTAL		127

Q4 During High School do you feel that your son or daughter's involvement with Vocational -Rehab was effective?

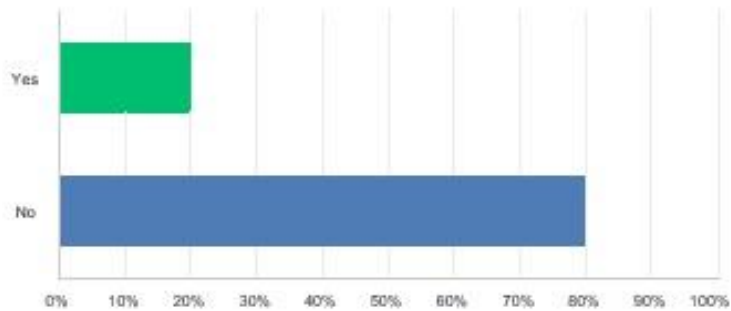
Answered: 116 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.41%	28
No	77.59%	90
TOTAL		118

Q5 After High School do you feel your adult-daughter or son's involvement with Vocational-Rehab has been effective?

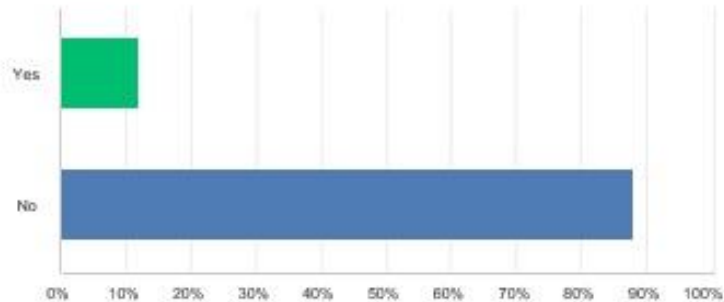
Answered: 103 Skipped: 28



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.39%	21
No	79.61%	82
TOTAL		103

Q6 Is your adult-son or daughter employed in an integrated setting for more than 10 hours per week, earning at least minimum wage?

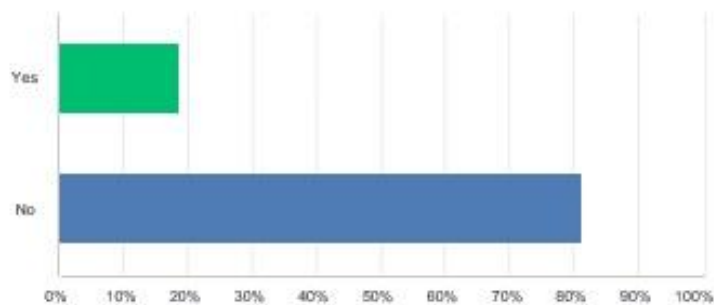
Answered: 124 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12.10%	15
No	87.90%	109
TOTAL		124

Q7 After High School has your adult-daughter or son continued on to Higher Education, (Community College or University) or participated in Adult Education?

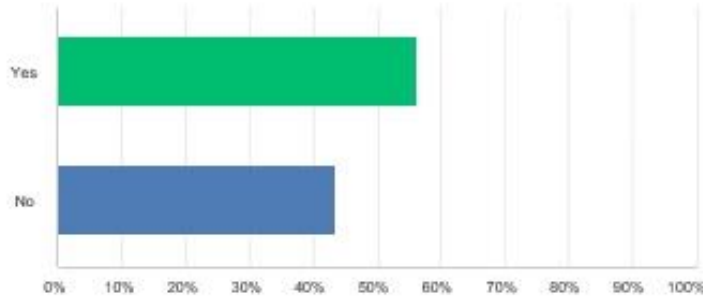
Answered: 122 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18.85%	23
No	81.15%	99
TOTAL		122

Q8 Does your son or daughter demonstrate a sense of purpose, meaning, and belonging in their life and in their community?

Answered: 121 Skipped: 10

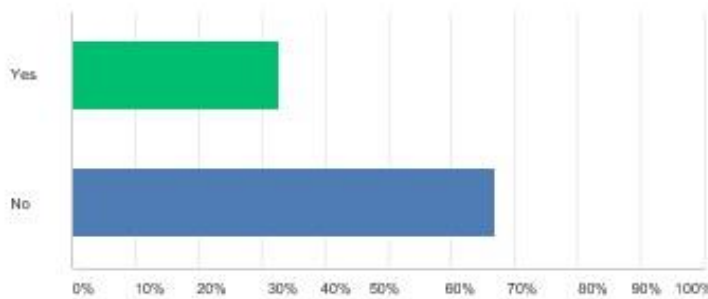


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	56.20%	68
No	43.80%	53
TOTAL		121

PARENT TO PARENT YOUTH 14-18+ LIVED EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Q1 Do you feel the needs of your son or daughter are currently being met by Government funded Services (examples: case management, community programs, direct supports, Employment Services, Behavioral Support)?

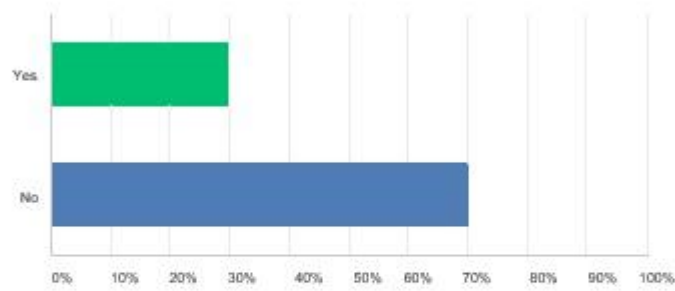
Answered: 85 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	32.94%	28
No	67.06%	57
TOTAL		85

Q2 Does your son or daughter have a Transition Plan in High School?

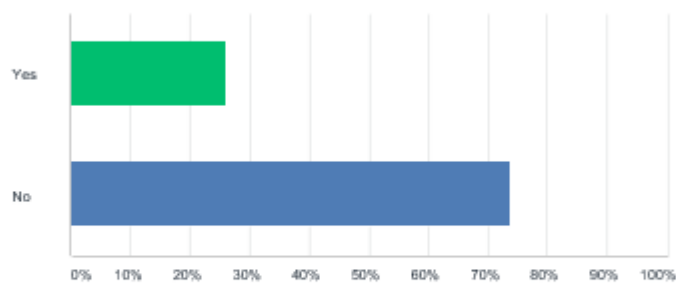
Answered: 84 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.76%	25
No	70.24%	59
TOTAL		84

Q3 Is your daughter or son working during High School (paid employment or volunteer work)?

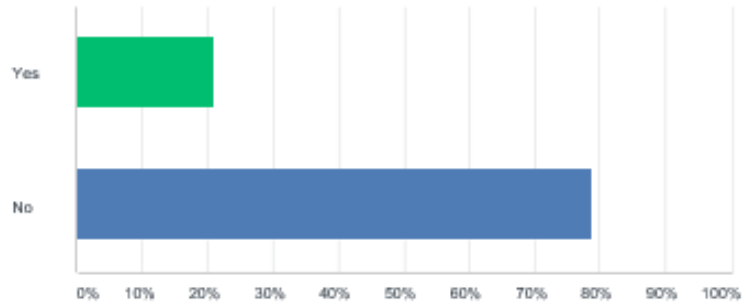
Answered: 84 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	26.19%	22
No	73.81%	62
TOTAL		84

Q4 Is your son or daughter involved with Vocational Rehab? If so, please share your experience.

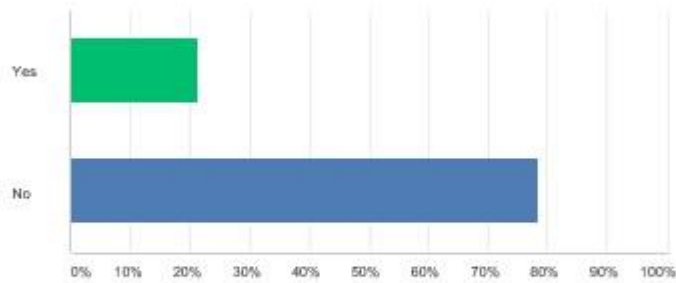
Answered: 85 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.18%	18
No	78.82%	67
TOTAL		85

Q5 Has your child chosen a job or career that your child and their Transition Team are working towards?

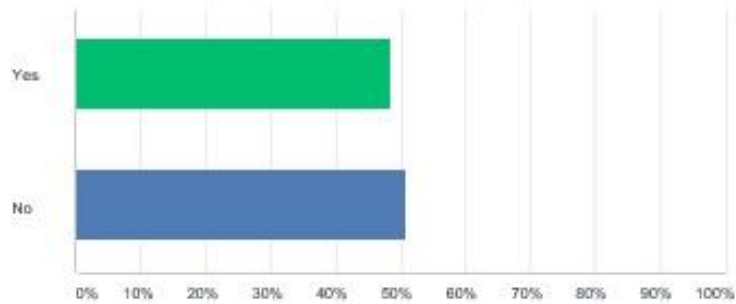
Answered: 84 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.43%	18
No	78.57%	66
TOTAL		84

Q6 After High School does your daughter or son plan to attend Community College or University or enroll in Adult Education?

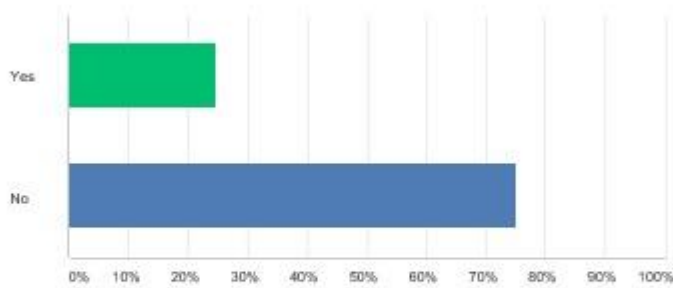
Answered: 82 Skipped: 3



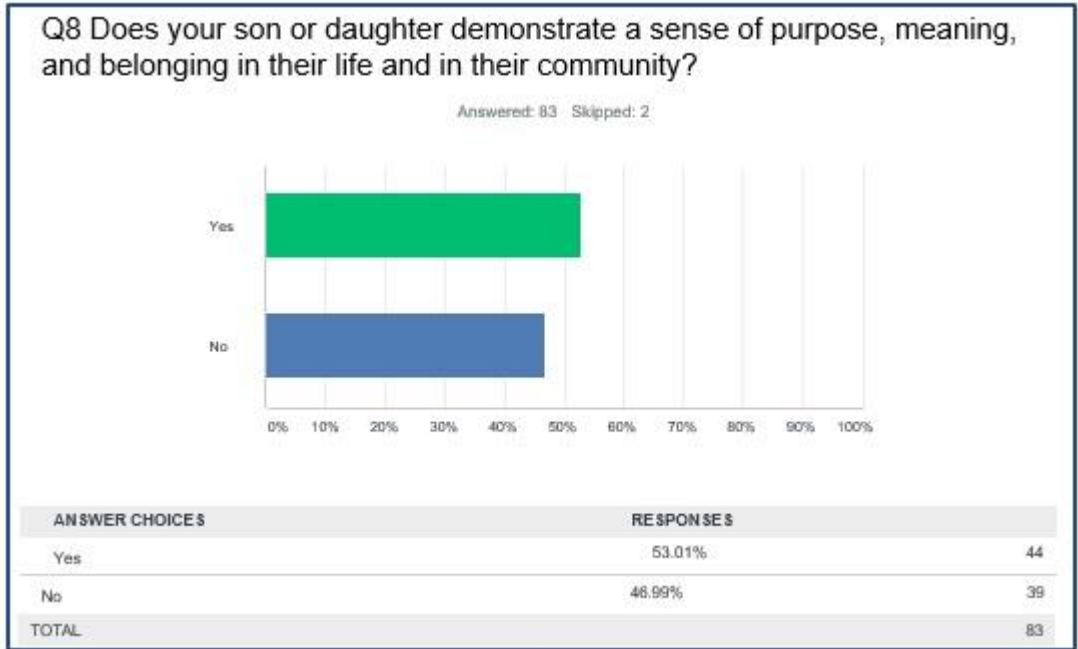
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.78%	40
No	51.22%	42
TOTAL		82

Q7 Does your child receive services through Section 28 or another waiver section?

Answered: 84 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	25.00%	21
No	75.00%	63
TOTAL		84



Appendix G: Comments from Parent to Parent Surveys (unedited)

PARENT TO PARENT LIVED EXPERIENCE SURVEY: ADULT AND YOUTH 14-18 (or aging out of High School)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O31an0d2K7VBIChwgn62OezNsKmFG_wG/view?usp=sharing

PARENT COMMENTS TO QUESTIONS IN PARENT TO PARENT SURVEY:

SATISFACTION WITH STATE SERVICES:

“Yes. However, it is under constant threat due to workforce shortage that keeps getting worse. My son is in a well-run group home under section 21. He does not fit into community programs due to needing a higher staff ratio than can be provided currently. He therefore has had the opportunity to create activities in the community that are specifically tailored for him. This is all at risk if resources do not keep up with the need. How carefully are the unmet needs tracked on a systemic level and what is done to alleviate it? He has made gains in this setting. His gains in independence are limited not by who he is but by services he has difficulty accessing. If he could access OT and if he could access speech consistently and not be confined by issues of short staffing, we would have seen far greater gains. The service system is not very flexible so it take enormous work to secure what is needed. He has had considerable turn over in case

management. He currently has someone great but I had to make a number of phone when his last case manager left and many already had full caseloads.”

HAVING A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN THEIR LIFE

This is an important question, and I am thrilled that I can say "yes" to it. The providers of his group home have cultivated a life for him that includes access to integrated community activities such as volunteer work where he contributes weekly. He treats his volunteer work as a priority. He has been happy with his adult life. I am relieved and grateful for all involved that have supported this situation, including his house manager, the providers, direct care workers, case managers and our state for having this resource available to him. It has been the most successful stretch of his life. But I am constantly worried that the support for him will not be sustained due to things like workforce shortages, homes closing and consolidating, people unable to find placements. The vigilant advocacy needed to obtain even resources on a systemic level and the growing waitlist is evidence of where the I/DD service system fits as a priority in Maine. I hope this changes. Fitting people into resources that don't fit them because that is all that is available isn't the solution. The wait time between getting the right fitting resources (if it is obtained at all) often sends people backwards. It causes the costs of long-term care to increase, diminishes individual potential and impedes the ability of people to live full lives. I have seen it happen to others and is painful. But fitting the right resource choices to the need will work. We could do that. It would be great to see people within this population have the opportunities that others have because their basic needs are met.

TRANSITION

Question: Does your son or daughter have a Transition Plan in High School?

This is the plan. Student will live with Mom and Dad. No joke. That's the plan the school wrote. (20, Kennebec).

Not yet. She is autistic (18, Sagadahoc)

Not yet. Too young - 10th grade. (16, York)

Not yet. (16, Androscoggin)

Transition is currently being discussed. (18, Oxford).

Not that I know yet my child is a sophomore (15, Cumberland)

We are working on one now. (16, Androscoggin)

There is no transition plan, a plan is being made for a potential 5th year (18, Aroostook).

We have a transition plan, but it does no good when services like voc rehab never actually start. We have been trying for 2 years and just keep getting to the "meet your worker" stage because of the turnover (17, Penobscot)

MAINECARE/ PRIVATE INSURANCE

My son has autism and intellectual disability. I work full time as a teacher, and we have private insurance and have applied for MaineCare several times and been denied. I am not sure how to navigate this system, and it has been very frustrating trying to provide services for my son. Because I work and am a responsible adult, my son is unable to access services. A very disappointing outlook for a kid who tries hard but needs access to services in order to be successful as an adult. (17, Somerset)

*We continue to **need Maine Care services** because of the cost of her regular therapy would crush us with out-of-pocket expenses. We are stuck in a catch 22, where **we are forced to limit our income** and she is still not able to get all the services she needs to be her best self. (16, Waldo)*

*I am having a great deal of difficulty completing the Katie Beckett Disabilities application for my daughter. She does not qualify for Section 65 in home services without it. **We have private insurance which does not cover these services.** (That is a problem in and of itself.) There are also no available therapists in the area who provide Exposure and Response Therapy to help my daughter, who has anxiety, and other disabilities to reintegrate into the high school. (She is currently tutored.) There needs to be seamless services between community and school, instead of parsed out by location. (15, Franklin).*

We are not able to have services because we can't get MaineCare. My son is penalized and cannot access services because I work full time as a teacher and make too much money. (17, Somerset)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The transition was to silence and separation away from peers and support. For most young adults' graduation from HS is the beginning of the future. For young adults with significant physical and /or intellectual disabilities, It is the end of meaningful inclusion. (23 Cumberland)

During High School there was talk of my son getting a case manager and on the waitlist for service, but we were left alone with little in terms of choices when he graduated. (22, no county given)

After HS she went home and sat around while we waited to hear about access to programs - this was (is) the norm - we'd heard this from others before us - once we were home - we lost the team and friends and the sense of belonging. (23, Cumberland)

The case manager left it all up to me (parent), so now three years later, she is still living at home and has no direction. (No age or county given)

*Our Case Manager could not even point us in the right direction for adult services. This caused severe regression in her behavior and social skills. (27, York)
Our son currently has a job one hour a week with a support worker. However, the*

worker isn't always able to make it every week (for whatever reason) and with the lack of people in this field and in our location, our son doesn't always get to go to his job. (22, Penobscot)

Because of his age (19), he is still in school and still home with us. We know we qualify for Case Management but navigating that process and the selection of someone has been a challenge for us. (19, Penobscot)

Not enough care providers out there. Case managers have never been that knowledgeable on needed subjects. Always nice, but not knowledgeable. (20, York)

We have had a series of Case Managers because they keep quitting or being fired, none of them have been local in our area so they have no idea what is or is not available for my son. They have not returned phone calls, have rarely had any suggestions, never have forwarded any information about classes/ trainings, etc. and I do not feel in any way like they are "there for us". (No age or county given)

The SUN program at MDI High School took the lead to find employment at a local cafe and bakery where he could put to use the skills, he had learned at the 2-year Culinary Arts program at the Hancock County Technical Center from which he graduated the same year he graduated from MDI High School (24, Hancock)

In my search for information, I would often hear different things from credible sources. For example, a regional level government contact might say something totally different on the same question than a state level government contact. It was utterly confusing to figure out how to navigate the system. (No age or county given)

We were told by his teacher that Voc Rehab would not be appropriate for our child because he wouldn't be able to be independent in a job within 6 months. (28, Penobscot)

The staff who worked with my son at High School were excellent caring people but there was no workable transition plan. Even the 2 additional years he spent at High School after 18 were just "more of the same". In other states there is an actual formal Transition Program after 18 where they take them on actual work experiences, teach them how to use transportation, etc.

Only able to get 4 hours per week due to needing job coach supervision. He is very proud of his work and enjoys his time at work. (44, York)

Appendix H: Special Educator Survey Results

Results of Transition Survey of Maine Special Educators

(130 responses)

Note: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

All students with disabilities who have an IEP, in our district who are aged 16 years or older have a formal transition plan.	4.17 (5.0)
My school district has a person designated as a transition coordinator that does not also have teaching duties.	1.85 (1.0)
Students' strengths, preferences, interests and needs drive out transition planning conversations.	4.14 (5.0)
Parents/ Guardians are involved in the transition planning process.	4.02 (4.0)
The students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other disabilities in our district who are aged 14 years or older have a formal transition plan.	3.68 (5.0)
The students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury in our district who are aged 14 years or older have a formal transition plan.	3.67 (3.0)
Agency Engagement Questions	
One or more of my students receive Home & Community-based Waiver services or other State funding.	3.07 (3.0)
Some students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury in our district attend Career & Technical Center while in HS.	3.58 (4.0)
Some students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other disabilities in our district attend Career & Technical Center while in HS.	4.02 (4.0)
I know who my students' Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) case managers are.	3.32 (4.0)
My students' vocational rehabilitation counselors are involved in transition planning.	3.20 (4.0)
My students' DHHS case managers are involved in transitioning planning.	4.16 (4.0)
One or more of my students receive Home & Community-based Waiver services or other State funding.	4.05 (4.0)

Student Involvement Questions	
We have asked the students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury in our district if they want to go to college or university	4.06 (4.0)
We have asked the students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury in our district what types of future jobs they may be interested in.	4.30 (5.0)
We have asked the students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other disabilities in our district if they want to go to college or university.	4.36 (5.0)
We have asked the students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other disabilities in our district what types of future jobs they may be interested in.	4.40 (5.0)
We have asked all of the students with disabilities in our district if they want to go to trade school, college or university.	4.05 (4.0)

Family Involvement Questions	
We provide the families of students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury with information regarding post-school and adult programs and benefits while their child is in high school.	3.93 (4.0)
We provide the families of students with disabilities with information regarding post-school and adult programs and benefits while their child is in high school	4.02 (4.0)
Student Work Experiences	

My school district has a person designated as a work-based learning coordinator.	2.22 (1.0)
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We have students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury who are currently participating in work experiences.	3.35 (4.0)
We have students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and or traumatic brain injury who are currently participating in paid work experiences.	3.02 (3.0)
We have students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other disabilities in our district who are currently participating in work experiences.	3.38 (4.0)
We have students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other disabilities in our district who are currently participating in paid work experiences	3.31 (3.0)

Appendix I: OADS Quarterly Update:

Supporting Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Brain Injury in their Homes & Communities [Link to OADS Quarterly Update](#)

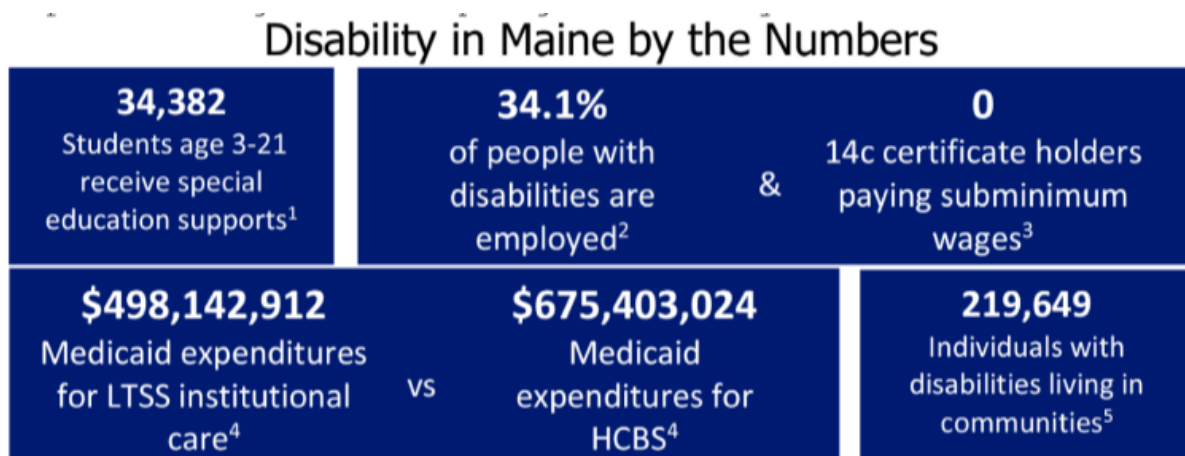
Appendix J: Vocational Rehabilitation Data Collection

[Vocational Rehabilitation Initiatives](#)

[Division of VR Five Year Snapshot on Service Delivery Trends](#)

[Extended Learning Opportunities \(ELO\) and VR](#)

Appendix K: Disability in Maine by the Numbers



Source: The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Annual disability statistics compendium, 2020 (Table 1.3).

Prevalence of People with and without Disabilities for Maine, by County: 2018

County	Total	Disability		No Disability	
		Count	%	Count	%
Maine	1,317,634	209,891	15.9	1,107,743	84.1
Androscoggin	106,307	17,430	16.4	88,877	83.6
Armscootook	67,065	15,125	22.6	51,940	77.4
Cumberland	207,698	32,679	11.4	255,019	88.6
Franklin	29,852	4,813	16.1	25,039	83.9
Hancock	54,047	8,238	15.2	45,809	84.8
Kennebec	119,993	19,813	16.5	100,180	83.5
Knox	38,499	5,863	15.2	32,636	84.8
Lincoln	33,004	5,654	16.8	27,350	83.2
Oxford	56,987	10,515	18.5	46,472	81.5
Penobscot	150,120	27,898	18.6	122,222	81.4
Piscataquis	16,739	4,507	26.9	12,232	73.1
Sagadahoc	35,159	4,201	11.9	30,958	88.1
Somerset	50,196	10,485	20.9	39,711	79.1
Waldo	39,220	6,644	16.9	32,576	83.1
Washington	31,091	6,719	21.6	24,372	78.4
York	201,057	29,307	14.6	171,750	85.4

Citation: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. <https://data.census.gov>. Based on a sample and subject to sampling variability.

Appendix L: Executive Student Transition (EST) Committee

[Link to promising practices](#)

Appendix M: One Page Action Steps for Each Recommendation Theme

[Theme 1](#) Gather Information & Resources to Streamline Access to Services

[Theme 2](#) Enhance Interagency Collaboration & Coordination

[Theme 3](#) Support Educator & Service Provider Workforce Development, Retention, and Advancement

[Theme 4](#) Develop Education & Employment Programming for Full Community Inclusion

Appendix N: Additional Resources & Information

<https://kesslerfoundation.org/press-release/nTIDE-January-2022-Jobs-Report>

Maine Developmental Disabilities Council [Annual Report January 15, 2021](#)

https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline_files/Supports%20for%20Adults%20with%20Intellectual%20Disabilities%20or%20Autism%20in%20Crisis%20%28LD%201486%29%20Report%20%209-2020.pdf

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/data-reports>

[https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/reports/2017/Adults with Intellectual Disabilities Biennial Plan.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/reports/2017/Adults%20with%20Intellectual%20Disabilities%20Biennial%20Plan.pdf)

Appendix O: Demonstrated Need for Additional Resources & Information

[CTE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES DURING HIGH SCHOOL](#) [Maine Workers with Disabilities Summary 2020 Data](#)