



**Connecticut Selected to Participate in the FY 2016
“Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program”**

Connecticut has been selected as one of four states in the country to participate in the fiscal year 2016 Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program offered through the National Office of Disability Employment Policy. Six of Connecticut’s state agencies will partner on coordinating and streamlining efforts in Employer Engagement to increase integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, with a focus on youth in transition. The six Connecticut State Government Agency partners include: Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Department of Labor (DOL); Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS); Department of Social Services (DDS); State Department of Education (SDE); and Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).

Morna A. Murray, J. D., Commissioner of DDS and Jonathan Slifka, Governor’s Liaison to the Disability Community, have accepted the role of Core State Sponsors in Connecticut for this nationally recognized award offering a substantial amount of technical assistance and travel funding.

State of Connecticut agency partnerships will collaborate on established goals, activities, and projected milestones through the creation of two Core State Implementation Team work groups and one “Vision Quest” group dedicated to policy development. These work groups have been assembled with guidance by Connecticut Commissioners, key decision makers and the Governor’s Commission for Employment of People with Disabilities.

As a requirement to accepting the many benefits of the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, Connecticut will also support the Office of Disability Employment Policy’s Employment First Community of Practice network. The national “Employment First Community of Practice (COP)” was designed to promote competitive and integrated employment for individuals with disabilities through a virtual workspace where participants can collaborate on related policy initiatives. The Employment First COP is open to all community stakeholders, and enrollment will provide valuable disability employment information, training opportunities, and monthly webinars to various internal and external stakeholders. To subscribe, please visit: <http://www.econsys.com/efslmp/?subscribe>.

For more information about the 2016 Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, please contact the Connecticut Core State Coordinator, Amy Blazawski at amy.blazawski@ct.gov.

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