

# **Lobbying, Educating, Advocating: What to do, Where You Are, to Educate People Around You**

Thursday October 19, 2017



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES  
RESEARCH, EDUCATION, SERVICE

# Let's Get Acquainted!

- I'm Denise!
  - Director of Policy Innovation at Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
  - Formerly State Government Relations at EasterSeals
  - "Policy geek" – federal and state
  - Disability community advocate, educator, lobbyist
  
- WHO ARE YOU????
  - Let's find out.

# Lobbying, Educating and Advocacy: Know the differences...

- **Lobbying:** to specifically ask for an action related to a piece of legislation or regulation;
  - To support or oppose a specific piece of legislation
- **Educating:** providing unbiased, evidence based data about a specific topic or policy
- **Advocacy:** to share information and experiences related to an issue
  - To identify a need or solution to a problem
  - To share data!

# For Lobbying, Ask these Questions...

- Is your program federally funded? **No lobbying.**
  - Is your position federally funded? **No lobbying.**
- Are you employed by a nonprofit? **Maybe lobbying.**
  - What are their requirements? (Nonprofits CAN lobby according to the IRS, but must follow specific guidelines...)
- Are you employed by a university? What do they say? **Maybe lobbying**
- Are you acting on your own time and on your own behalf?  
**Lobbying, educating and advocating...**

**Check before you act;  
but there is ALWAYS  
something you can do!!**



# Are there Opportunities in the States?

- Flexibility from the federal government means opportunities for the states
- States are the catalyst for change and innovation
- States are looking for solutions and partners
- Innovation is easier and cheaper to achieve in states
- Systems change doesn't "just" happen through legislation!**

# How Do We Start?

- Build relationships
- Address their “pain points”
- Prepare yourself. David Letterman’s Top 10 List.
- YOU HAVE DATA. Share it.
- YOU HAVE BEST PRACTICES. Share them.
- YOU HAVE CREDIBILITY. Use it.
- Keep the conversation going; insert yourself!



# Build a Relationship

- Tell YOUR story!
- YOU are the Expert!
- You want to make them look good.
- Find a champion –
  - Someone with a sibling, a son or daughter or someone they know with ID
  - Someone who is interested in higher education
  - Someone you know personally (or tangentially)
  - Find YOUR members – you are a constituent
- Make yourself available





# What are State “Pain Points”?

- Budgets
  - Medicaid
  - Health care
- Services to transition age youth (WIOA)
- Employment First – competitive integrated employment
- Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!



# Top 10 Things You Need to Know When You Start Your Advocating for IPSE (with apologies to David Letterman)

10. Do you have inclusive post secondary education programs in your state?
9. Where are they located?
8. Which ones are TPSIDs? Which ones are not?
7. How many students attend each program? (data over time if you have it)
6. Which ones are CTPs? (e.g., they offer Financial Aid)

# Top 10 Things You Need to Know... (cont.)

5. How many of the students are or have been employed during the program
4. How many students had a job upon exiting the program? What is their average wage and what are their hours worked? (if you have them)
3. How many students are or have been in competitive integrated employment?
2. How many transition age youth with intellectual disabilities are in your state?
1. Gather pictures, stories, videos of your students.

**Now go educate your policymakers about what you do!**

# The Importance of Inclusive Higher Education in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

**1.** Put your success story about a student here

**2.** Put your picture here

**3.** Put 3 important statistics from your state here

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

Inclusive post-secondary education provides opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to access higher education. This education prepares them to live increasingly independent lives and pursue careers of their choice. Individuals with intellectual disabilities who receive post-secondary education are more likely to find paid employment than those who don't and their earnings are 73% higher than peers who do not receive post-secondary education. All individuals have the capacity to do great things, and to continue learning, to work and to contribute to their communities. Higher education helps everyone realize their potential. (Migliore, Butterworth, & Hart (2009); Think College Fast Facts No. 1 [www.thinkcollege.net/publications/fast-facts](http://www.thinkcollege.net/publications/fast-facts)).

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# State Level Talking Points

- **Postsecondary education (PSE) programs provide opportunities for youth with intellectual disability to develop employment skills and become less dependent on family and public supports.**
  - Youth with intellectual disability who participate in PSE and vocational rehabilitation are 26% more likely to exit with paid jobs than those who don't pursue PSE.
- **PSE programs are effective at helping students with intellectual disability find meaningful, competitive employment.**
  - 76% of students who completed a Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) in 2015 had a paid job, had participated in career development, or had done both by the time they graduated.
  - 40% of students exiting TPSID programs in 2015 had a paid job with 90 days of completion.

- **PSE programs increase people's wages and help them achieve financial stability.**
  - Youth with intellectual disability who complete PSE programs earn 73% more income than those who do not.
  - 78% of youth with intellectual disability who have completed PSE programs and found employment are paid at or above the minimum wage.
- **PSE programs offer a path to productivity and self-sufficiency for many people who've never had opportunities for employment before.**
  - 56% of employed TPSID graduates never had a paid job before enrolling in their program.
- **PSE programs promote inclusion of people with intellectual disability in society.**
  - 90% of TPSID students who are employed upon graduation enter jobs that are fully integrated and in the competitive labor market.
  - PSE programs with residential campuses expose students with intellectual disability and individuals without intellectual disability to each other, helping to build personal and professional connections.



# What can you DO?

- Invite them to visit your program
  - Graduation? Shadow a student? Special event? Speaker?
- You visit them in their office
  - DC? State?
- Get to know their staff
- Introduce them to a student
- Tell them YOUR story and why YOU are engaged
- Provide them with information, research, OUTCOMES
- Make yourself available for questions or problems
  - Introduce them to others if you don't have the answer
- Follow them on social media
- Thank them for their work

# What are States Doing?

## Task Forces/Commissions

- California, Rhode Island, Washington

## Reports & recommendations

- California, Georgia,
- North Carolina, Maryland

## Funding – budget or not?

- Georgia, Colorado, Maryland

## Inventory

- Texas





# What are States Doing? (cont.)

## Competitive Grants

- Maryland, Massachusetts, Kentucky

## Pilots

- Colorado, Minnesota, Oklahoma

## Scholarships

- Tennessee, Maryland

## FLORIDA!



# Public Policy Affinity Group



- Peer to Peer problem solving and celebrating
- Share resources – no need to “reinvent the wheel”
- Share legislative ideas and models – already proven success
- Go to Think College web site – online form to sign up, check in on what is happening, connect to others, find and share resources; links to existing sources
- Brainstorm issues, particularly during session

# What comes next?

- Look for resources on the Think College web site – comment, improve upon, contribute
- Join Public Policy Affinity Group – next call November 30, 2:00 Eastern – invite others!
- What is YOUR vision??
  - How can we help??



# Questions and Discussion

