

Employment Summary Report

This report summarizes the key results for the employment priority (Goal 4) of Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan. Findings are based on data collected and compiled as part of the full evaluation. Those are summarized in Appendix A of the evaluation report.

Goal

- 4 Nebraskans with disabilities will have increased access to education and choice in competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

71% of other states’ Olmstead Plans that were reviewed included employment.

Vision for the Goal

Focus group and interview participants who discussed community supports would like to see:

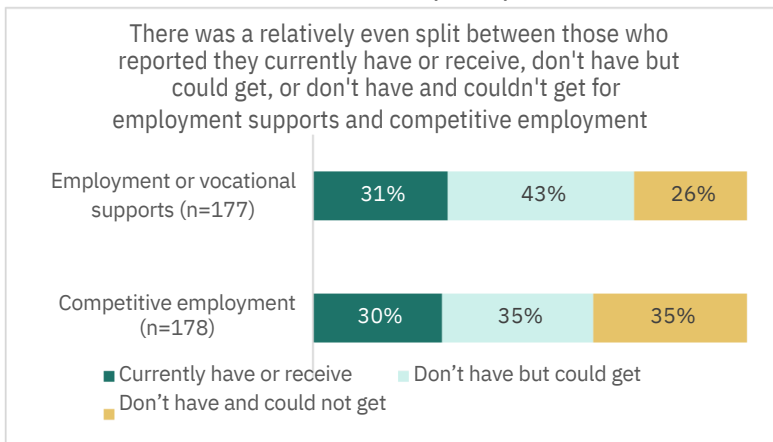
“We still have people with disabilities [experiencing a] high unemployment rate and also high underemployment rate. Those who are employed many times don't make enough and are not given the opportunity to be promoted or to have good healthcare”

- Shared data across partners to better understand what supports and services look like for consumers being served.
- Additional supports for consumers and their caregivers, including providing information to families and individuals, prior to their 18th birthday, so they can become independent and advocates in their own lives. Better integration into the community for consumers with a focus on pre-employment and ensuring people are fully integrated into their employment roles.

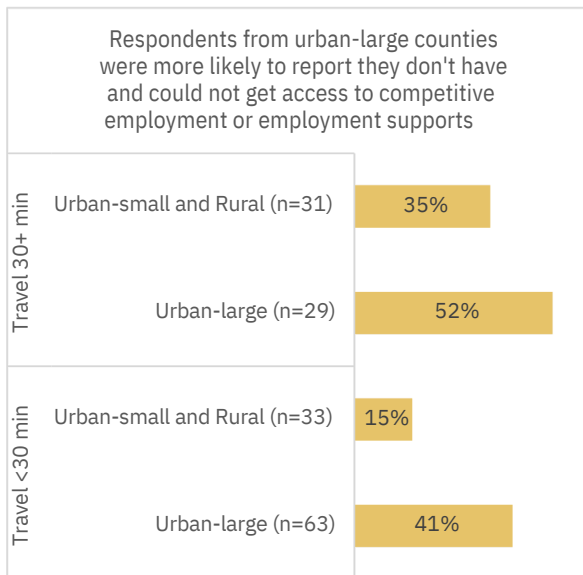
Public Experiences

From the survey of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers:

- Slightly over one-quarter (26%) of respondents reported they don’t have and could not get employment or vocational supports, while over one-third (35%) reported this for competitive employment.
- Significantly more (52%) living in urban-large counties who reported traveling more than 30 minutes to access disability related services noted they did not have and could not access competitive employment or employment supports compared to those living in urban-small and rural areas (15%).



Competitive employment was defined on the survey as opportunities for compensation, benefits and advancement that is comparable to employees without disabilities performing similar duties. Employment or vocational supports is help getting or keeping a job, supportive employment, job placement, etc.



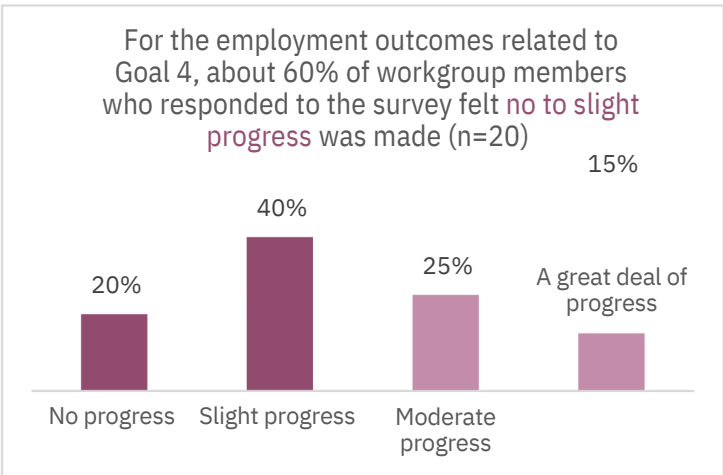
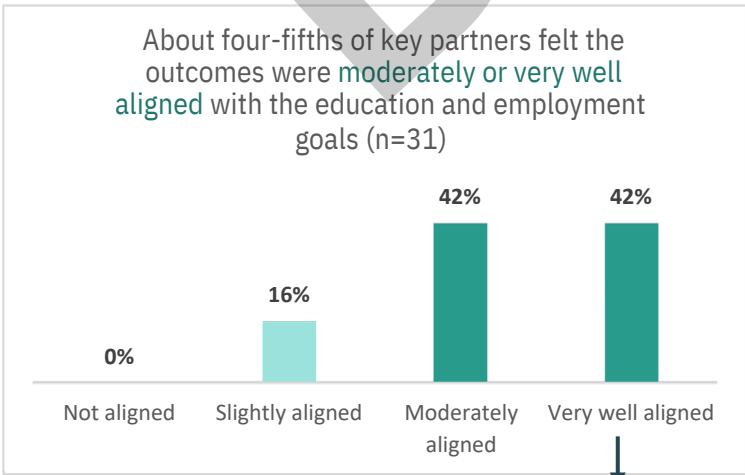
Progress Toward & Perception of Outcomes

Symbol	Description
✓	Benchmark met
➡	Benchmark in progress
▲	Progress is delayed or pending
■	Benchmark not met
No Report	Data was not available

Progress toward the education and employment benchmarks for FY23 (July 2022 – June 2023) are mostly unknown due to limited reporting.

Benchmarks for Goal 4

		FY23 Status	FY24 Status
1	The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will support the development of improved processes to offer education, advocacy, and support to all parents of children eligible for special education services.	No Report	No Report
2	Increase the percentage of children ages 3-5 and 5-21 with Individual Education Plans (IEP)s who receive their special education and related services inside the regular class 80% of the day.	No Report	No Report
3	Increase the number of clients served by the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visual Impaired (NCBVI).	✓	✓
4	Increase the number of credentials received by clients who are assisted by the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visual Impaired (NCBVI).	✓	▲
5	Increase the 4-year and 5-year graduation/completion rate for students identified as Special Education statewide.	No Report	No Report
6	Increase the number of individuals supported by the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI) or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services who exit with and maintain competitive employment.	■	■
7	Increase the number of students who participate in Project SEARCH and are employed.	■	No Report (data not available)



This is the goal area that had the highest percentage of people reporting “very well aligned”.

Facilitators & Barriers

Factors that aid the workgroup and partners with making progress on the data goal as well as the challenges to progress were identified through focus groups, surveys, and interviews.

Facilitators to Progress

- ✓ Having a shared commitment across agencies. *"I think our dedication to working across agencies is very powerful... we're all committed to working together. We're not about finger pointing. We're not about leaving anyone out. I think we truly see that we're stronger when we work together, so that, I think, has been really important."*
- ✓ The work of Dr. Lisa Mills on supported employment was incredibly beneficial for setting a larger vision for employment over the next several years.
- ✓ Workforce board quarterly meetings provided another opportunity for entities to connect and share information.

Barriers to Progress

- Some respondents expressed that there are not a lot of job options for people with mental illnesses that allow them to keep their jobs if they are having difficulties on certain days. Often employment options for people with disabilities are separate from those who are not disabled. *"We need to allow people that can work to be able to work in a safe environment that is not separated."*
- Not everyone knows or uses best practices when working with people with disabilities to be employed. The lack of knowledge and systemic structures sometimes prevent people from being part of a seamless process to get the support they need to succeed in their employment.

Noted Successes

Partners reported specific wins that occurred within these Olmstead Plan goal areas.

- Increasing collaboration between behavioral health and developmental disabilities around supported employment. They are working together to make their services as seamless as possible, including looking at funding models so that their systems can coordinate more effectively.
- Increasing open-mindedness around hiring people with disabilities. More entities are willing to work with people with disabilities, but preconceptions are still a concern and are being worked on with employers.

Recommendations

- 1 Clarify each of the outcomes to be distinctly linked to the "increased access to education" portion of the goal statement or the "choice of competitive, integrated employment opportunities" portion.** This would minimize confusion about how each of the outcomes are connected to the larger goal.
--- Another option would be to **make education and employment separate goals in the Olmstead Plan.** While many other states address these topic areas, they are more often treated as separate priorities or goals. Separating the goals may also help align with the new workgroup structure.
- 2 Review and incorporate the recommendations from Dr. Lisa Mills.** This was noted by many respondents as an influential report that can help with setting a vision for employment in the coming years.
- 3 Consider adding an objective related to collaboration.** Although there were many successes related to collaboration, a handful of respondents noted additional collaborations would create a more unified approach to the work.