



## COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

- Center for Workforce Development, the Institute for Educational Leadership
- Disability Studies & Services Center, the Academy for Educational Development
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Youth Employment Coalition
- National Association of Workforce Boards
- National Center on Secondary Education & Transition, the University of Minnesota
- TransGen, Inc.
- InfoUse

# National Collaborative on WORKFORCE and DISABILITY FOR YOUTH (NCWD/Youth)

The **National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth)** is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development policy and practice. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative, funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. NCWD/Youth recognizes that to achieve this, it needs to:

- 1) Improve State & Local Policy
- 2) Strengthen Workforce Development Service Delivery
- 3) Improve Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities of Direct Service Workers

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## NAVIGATING THE ROAD TO WORK:

Making the Connections  
Between Youth with  
Disabilities & Employment

# Change is a process. NCWD/Youth's work to integrate youth with disabilities into the workforce development system is described in these stages of change.

## **?** Understand the Basics

Why was NCWD/Youth created? Youth with disabilities, especially those with significant disabilities, deserve better education and employment outcomes.

- One-third of students with disabilities do not finish high school.
- Only one-third of young people with disabilities who need job training receive it.
- Only a quarter of young people who need life skills training, tutoring, interpreting, or personal counseling receive these services.
- More than half of all young people with emotional disabilities are arrested at least once within three to five years of exiting school.
- People with disabilities enroll in postsecondary education at half the rate of the general population.
- Only 26 percent of working age adults with disabilities have a job or their own business.

## **⚠** Navigate the System

NCWD/Youth is working to improve the workforce development system for all, while focusing on policies and practices that enhance services for youth with disabilities. Improving policies and practices for all youth helps youth with disabilities. Similarly lessons learned from transition programs serving youth with disabilities can inform the development of better programs and services for all youth. Certain challenges and supports must be addressed for youth with disabilities to succeed and for workforce development professionals to better understand how to serve them. All youth, including youth with disabilities, need:

- Access to high-quality standards-based education, regardless of setting;
- Information about career options;
- Exposure to the world of work;

- Opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills;
- Strong connections to caring adults;
- Access to safe places to interact with peers; and,
- Support services to become independent adults.

The following four design features are needed for effective transition programs:

- Preparatory experiences
- Connecting activities
- Work-based experiences
- Leadership development

Details on these design features and how to use them are available at [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info) and in Collaborative publications.

## **!** Discover Innovative Strategies

NCWD/Youth also seeks to improve services to youth with disabilities by identifying quality workforce development strategies from the field. In Pro-Bank, a feature of the NCWD/Youth web site ([www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)), effective practices have been collected from workforce development programs that have youth development principles at their core and an independently-validated record of program effectiveness. Pro-Bank and the other activities of NCWD/Youth are designed to share and spread effective research-based practices that improve workforce development systems for all youth.

### Understand the Basics



### Navigate the System



### Discover Innovative Strategies

