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# RETAIN REPORT

Retaining Employment  
and Talent After  
Injury/Illness Network



## The RETAIN Report

October 2021

Welcome to the October 2021 issue of The RETAIN Report – the internal e-newsletter for awardees of the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Initiative. Please feel free to share this subscription link with other RETAIN team members as appropriate.

*Please Note: Several of the links in this newsletter take you to resources housed in the RETAIN Online Community (ROC). If you do not have access to the ROC and are a member of a state grantee team, please visit [RETAINTA.org](https://www.retainta.org) and click “Request an Account” in the right-hand sidebar.*



## Registration Open!

### RETAIN 2021 Annual Awardee Convening

Tues. November 2 - Thurs. November 4th, 2021

Location: Virtual

Time: Noon - 4:30 pm ET/11 am - 3:30 pm CT

[Register](#) by Monday, October 25, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

The first Annual Convening is for RETAIN Phase 2 states to come together and share information about their programs and projects, enhance state knowledge around stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW), and learn from each other’s experiences through peer-to-peer exchanges.

Each state should plan for its project director, technical assistance liaison, evaluation liaison, health care practitioner representative, workforce system representative, and a RTW Coordinator representative to participate. In addition, states may include three formal members of their state team as participants. It is recommended that at least one of these additional participants be another RTW coordinator or hold a similar state team position.

During the three-day virtual event, states will have the opportunity to engage with subject matter experts (SMEs), other Phase 2 states, the RETAIN Technical Assistance (TA) team, and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) through plenary sessions and small group breakouts.

Additional details are forthcoming.

### Themes

The Annual Convening is designed to highlight ways states can expand their knowledge in key areas, such as business and health partner engagement and communications needs. The Convening allows states to engage in peer-to-peer exchanges and thought partnership around challenges, best practices, and other key issues. This is also an opportunity for states to develop or enhance their peer-to-peer and state

team networks by engaging with key stakeholders, such as employers, through panel discussions; asking each other questions; and speed networking. The intent of the Annual Convening is for states to leave with actionable information and skills in key areas of interest, such as COVID-19-related issues and stakeholder engagement, in support of RETAIN program efforts and sustainability.

Among the sessions, participants can expect to:

- Engage with peers in idea generation and thought partnership around their RETAIN programs in the *Peer-to-Peer Round Robin*;
- Develop or enhance peer-to-peer and state team networks in *The Business Perspective: Engaging and Sustaining Business/Employer Partnerships for Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work, and*;
- Acquire actionable information on skills to support their RETAIN efforts in *COVID-19 and Long Haulers: Techniques to Address Brain Fog and Promote Return-to-Work*.

And much more!

### Registration & Logistics

State teams were sent a registration link on October 7. If you have not already done so, [please register](#) by the deadline, **Monday, October 25, at 11:59 p.m. ET**. Following registration, you will receive a confirmation email with information on how to join the event virtually. The login link will be sent to all registrants one week prior to the Annual Convening.

For registration questions or additional information, contact Pam Williamson or Zipporah Sanders at [registration-RTAC2021@air.org](mailto:registration-RTAC2021@air.org).



## Recent Resources

### RETAIN Strategic Communications Plan Guide for States

[The RETAIN Strategic Communications Plan Guide](#)

is designed to assist state staff as they develop or enhance their state's communications plan for Phase 2 activities. This guide describes:

- How to define goals and objectives;
- How best to target your audience;
- How to customize strategies and tactics; and
- Elements that go into an effective communications plan.

The guide reintroduces methods and best practices that will enable you to create or enhance your state's existing communications plan. In addition, we created a complementary RETAIN Strategic Communications Plan Template that states can use to build their own communications plans.

### Video Blog Coming Soon!

We are developing a RETAIN Communications Plan video blog to highlight the key aspects of an effective communications plan and why it is important to RETAIN messaging. This video blog will introduce methods and best practices that should enhance each state's existing communications efforts throughout Phase 2. This resource and content will be available on the [ROC](#) in the coming weeks.

### RETAIN FYI: Research and Practice from the Field

These bi-monthly resources highlight relevant research for RETAIN states and summarize key takeaways that may benefit program

implementation. Each summary includes a link to an article, resource, or formal abstract covering topics including interventions to facilitate SAW/RTW, development and validation of competencies for RTW coordinators, and the impact of RTW coordinators on RTW outcomes. The [September 2021 FYI](#) covers disability prevention and communication among stakeholders and the physician's role in helping patients SAW/RTW.

Have a research article, brief, or report on promising or evidence-based SAW/RTW practices we should highlight in an upcoming FYI? [Email us!](#)



## ICYMI : Event Recap

The RETAIN State-to-State Exchanges, a two-session series, created a collaborative forum to provide states the opportunity to share their unique approaches to Phase 2, along with best practices and early success stories. Throughout the series, states shared information on topics such as:

- Scaling up for Phase 2 based on lessons learned from Phase 1;
- Improving engagement and establishing a foundation for collaboration with all stakeholders;
- Leveraging partnerships to plan for expansion and sustainability, and adding partnerships with healthcare providers and employers to increase hire and retention rates; and
- Identifying outcomes to appropriately measure the success of RETAIN for stakeholders.

Following the events, states shared their needs for future programmatic TA in Phase 2. The RETAIN TA team is planning TA activities based on this feedback. Future TA themes will include:

- Best practices for recruiting and working with businesses/employers;
- Providing services and guidance to businesses to implement SAW/RTW best practices in the workplace;
- Developing sustainability plans;
- Learning how to speak the same language as your stakeholders;
- Best practices for health care provider recruitment, education, and follow-up; and
- Considerations for workflow and case management for service delivery.

You can access the materials, recordings and transcripts from [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of the Exchanges.



## Success Stories Coming Soon!

The RETAIN TA team is gearing up to work with state teams to develop the next round of **RETAIN at Work** Success Stories. We will be in contact soon to brainstorm ideas with states, and share more about the process for developing stories in Phase 2.

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