



**SEED**

*State Exchange on Employment & Disability  
Advancing Policy for a More Inclusive Workforce*

# Engaging with State and Local Governments to Promote and Sustain RETAIN

September 20, 2023

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# Introducing SEED

- ✓ Initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy
- ✓ Goal: Foster a nationwide workforce more inclusive of people with disabilities
- ✓ Readies organizations that represent state and local policymakers to respond to disability employment and workforce development requests and inquiries

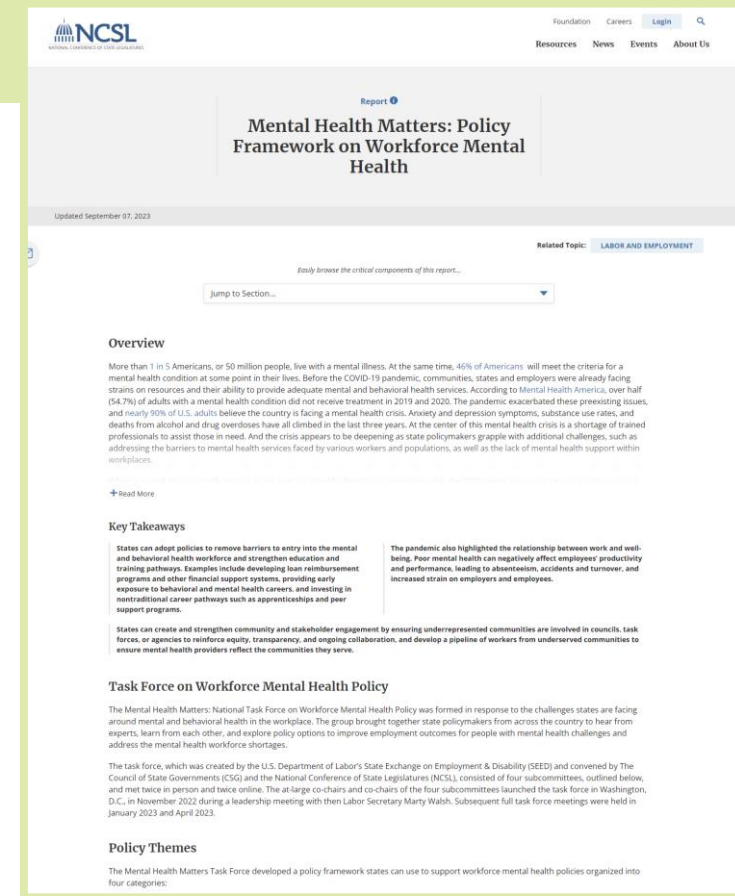


# SEED as a Resource

- ✓ Disability employment policy and subject-matter expertise
- ✓ Targeted policy analysis and assistance to state and local policymakers (research, state gap analyses, draft legislation)
- ✓ Tools and resources designed to assist state policymakers in crafting and sponsoring effective policies
- ✓ Sample policy options that states can customize and advance within their own legislatures
- ✓ Access to meaningful data on disability employment and related issues
- ✓ Connections to federal agencies, as well as national community, advocacy and business organizations

# Mental Health Matters: Framework on Workforce Mental Health Policy

- ✓ Outlines policy options to address workforce mental health, including ways to enhance mental health parity, increase access to workplace care and supports, address the unique needs of underserved communities, and recruit and retain qualified mental health providers
- ✓ A culmination of intensive deliberation and research conducted by the *Mental Health Matters National Task Force*, a bipartisan group of policymakers and experts convened by SEED in collaboration National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and The Council of State Governments (CSG)
- ✓ Includes the preliminary findings of the task force; suite of resources set to be published in fall 2023



[NCSL.org/labor-and-employment/mental-health-matters-policy-framework-on-workforce-mental-health](https://www.ncsl.org/labor-and-employment/mental-health-matters-policy-framework-on-workforce-mental-health)

# COVID-19 Policy Collaborative for an Inclusive Recovery



- ✓ SEED COVID-19 Policy Collaborative: Frameworks for a Disability-Inclusive Recovery, Policy Checklist and Convenings Report
  - ❖ [DOL.gov/agencies/odep/state-policy/reports-and-policy-briefs/covid-19-resources-policymakers](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/state-policy/reports-and-policy-briefs/covid-19-resources-policymakers)
- ✓ COVID-19 Federal Disability-Specific and Other Related Guidance
  - ❖ [SEED.csg.org/covid-19-federal-disability-specific-and-other-related-guidance/](https://seed.csg.org/covid-19-federal-disability-specific-and-other-related-guidance/)
- ✓ COVID-19 and Employment for People With Disabilities Report Series
  - ❖ [NCSL.org/research/labor-and-employment/covid-19-and-employment-for-people-with-disabilities.aspx](https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/covid-19-and-employment-for-people-with-disabilities.aspx)

# Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) Toolkit



- ✓ Developed in collaboration with CSG
- ✓ Provides states with policy options, best practices and implementation strategies to increase the retention (SAW/RTW) of employees who become ill or injured while in the workforce

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/state-policy/reports-and-policy-briefs>



# SEED State Exchange on SAW/RTW

- ✓ Hosted on June 13 and 14, 2023 in Minneapolis, MN
- ✓ Brought together five state teams of policymakers from **Alaska, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts** and **Minnesota**
- ✓ The exchange provided a forum for policymakers to:
  - ❖ Learn more about the benefits of SAW/RTW policies and programs
  - ❖ Connect with subject-matter experts to learn strategies for better designing, implementing and evaluating SAW/RTW policies and programs
  - ❖ Hear from state policymakers regarding their successes and challenges around SAW/RTW, including experiences with RETAIN
  - ❖ Hear from individuals who have participated in and benefitted from SAW/RTW initiatives to gain a deeper understanding of their challenges and experiences
  - ❖ Strengthen relationships and identify opportunities for future collaboration within their state teams
  - ❖ Craft an action plan with their team for improving SAW/RTW policies and programs in their state
  - ❖ Receive policy assistance and policy support through SEED

# Key Takeaways on States' Needs

## ✓ Resources

- ❖ Data on tax incentives and procurement advantages
- ❖ Assistance identifying and utilizing federal and state funding resources, including strategies for blending and braiding federal and state initiatives, and innovative ways to propose agency budget and funding requests
- ❖ Guidance on how state agencies and legislators can work together to support an overall SAW/RTW effort
- ❖ Education and guidance around RTW Coordinators (i.e., their role; how they can be established, funded and leveraged; how a RTW Coordinator certification might work; how to use Coordinators to identify what is and isn't working in their state's SAW/RTW process)
- ❖ Information about defining disability under WIOA

## ✓ Targeted outreach and training materials

- ❖ Success stories via articles, webinars and other outreach materials
- ❖ High level resources for agency secretaries and executives (i.e., messaging, talking points, "elevator pitches")
- ❖ Templates for state-specific RTW guides
- ❖ Webinars and informational sessions on SAW/RTW

## ✓ Centralized information/resource hub

- ❖ A central location to house SAW/RTW/disability-related resources, accommodation information and best practices
- ❖ Guidance for creating a state level SAW/RTW resource hub for employers, providers and employees in their state

# Key Takeaways on States' Needs (cont.)

## ✓ Policy assistance

- ❖ Legislative briefings and testimonies for relevant public committees on the importance and impact of SAW/RTW programming
- ❖ Successful examples of policy in action and sample model policy
- ❖ Assistance with developing customized SAW/RTW policy options

## ✓ Convenings & peer learning opportunities

- ❖ In-state stakeholder coordination support to facilitate cross-agency collaboration
- ❖ Convenings of RETAIN states to facilitate peer-to-peer learning
- ❖ Regional state exchanges or communities of practice
- ❖ Education and training programs with employers, medical groups, state and federal partners and subject matter experts

## Contact SEED

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# Business Engagement: An Interactive Discussion on Planning and Positioning to Advance RETAIN Outcomes

Presenter: Derek Shields