



# State Exchange on Employment and Disability (SEED) Formative Evaluation

## SUMMARY

In 2015, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with [Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#) to fund contractors Coffey Consulting, LLC and American Institutes for Research to conduct the *State Exchange on Employment and Disability (SEED) Evaluation*. The formative evaluation aims to better understand the efficiency and practicality of [SEED](#), a program that supports state and local governments in implementing inclusive policies and best practices to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. SEED engages policymaker organizations (such as the Council of State Governments) as intermediaries to help ODEP understand the needs and perspectives of state/local policymakers and, to meet identified needs, offers research support and technical assistance.

The formative evaluation covered the first three years of program operation (2015-2018) and relied on data from four main sources: interviews with the eight intermediaries conducted prior to and during SEED implementation; a survey fielded after the initial implementation of in-state programs; an intermediary's online database for state-level policy tracking; and observations of SEED conferences and partner meetings.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [worker protection](#) and [disability and employment](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Intermediaries could play a central role in encouraging policy change at the state level.** The interviews and surveys found that in case of SEED initiative, intermediary organizations have the capacity to work with federal agencies to raise policy awareness, share information, provide technical assistance to state legislators, and provide resources for state legislators. Without SEED resources, intermediaries said they would maintain what they had built, but not convene meetings, conduct in-depth technical assistance, etc.
- **In the SEED model, multiple intermediaries worked together to create the national task force, which increased visibility of a topic.** One of SEED's most notable accomplishments has been the National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities, a SEED collaboration convened by two different intermediaries. The National Task Force developed "Work Matters," a culmination of intensive deliberation and research by various member task forces and offers states broad policy options and strategies, which survey and interview respondents have found to be helpful.





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- This report may be of broad interest to U.S. Department of Labor, as well as other federal and state governments that are interested in how to ensure that state policymakers have the tools and resources they need to develop and disseminate meaningful federal policies.

[SEE THE FULL STUDY](#)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2015-2019

**PARTNER AGENCIES:** Office of Disability Employment Policy

**SUBMITTED BY:** Coffey Consulting, LLC and American Institutes for Research

**SPONSOR:** Chief Evaluation Office

**DATE PREPARED:** June 2021

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*The Department of Labor's (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) sponsors independent evaluations and research, primarily conducted by external, third-party contractors in accordance with the [Department of Labor Evaluation Policy](#). CEO's research development process includes extensive technical review at the design, data collection and analysis stage, including: external contractor review and OMB review and approval of data collection methods and instruments per the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), Institutional Review Board (IRB) review to ensure studies adhere to the highest ethical standards, review by academic peers (e.g., Technical Working Groups), and inputs from relevant DOL agency and program officials and CEO technical staff. Final reports undergo an additional independent expert technical review and a review for Section 508 compliance prior to publication. The resulting reports represent findings from this independent research and do not represent DOL positions or policies.*

