

Reframing the Disability Lens to Increase the Economic Stability Of Youth and Families

Webinar 5: Customized Employment Presenters Bio's

Andrew Karhan comes to the Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability with over 20 years of experience in the field of vocational rehabilitation. Andrew has a B.A. in Psychology from Messiah College, a Master's in Public Administration from the Pennsylvania State University, and Masters in Pastoral Counseling from Liberty University.

Throughout his career Andrew has administered employment services programs for individuals with disabilities in three states Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York, as well as provided technical assistance on the implementation of best practices in employment services across several other states. These efforts have consistently focused on the delivery of high-quality employment supports utilizing core principles of customized employment, individualized placement and support, work-based learning, and more "traditional" supported employment to youth and adults with disabilities.

Andrew's career has been centered on the development of and advocacy for competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. To this end, Andrew has focused his energy's on assisting organizations in developing their internal culture and shaping the external environment to ensure that individuals with disabilities are afforded meaningful, and culturally valued opportunities. In the past, Andrew authored the [Developing a 21st-Century Approach to Enhancing Supported Employment Outcomes](#) policy to practice brief which served as a catalyst to New York implementing a performance-based contracting methodology within their supported employment program.

More recently, Andrew has centered his work on the implementation of cross systems initiatives including:

- Developing a cross-systems approach, involving six state agencies, to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, through a braided



funding and service delivery approach called the New York Employment Services System (NYESS). Through this work, Andrew has assisted in the development of cross agency data sharing agreements with vocational rehabilitation, Medicaid, and labor to foster systemic solutions that lead to the opportunity for enhanced employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

- Providing leadership to the New York State PROMISE initiative funded through the U.S. Department of Education, to explore the implementation of a cross-systems approach to improving education, employment, and economic outcomes to students receiving Supplemental Security Income, and their families. As the Project Director for the NYS PROMISE, Andrew oversaw the overall efforts of the Core Management team, the Steering Committee, the Research efforts, as well as a team of direct care staff, and provider organizations involved in the day to day support of over 2000 youth receiving Supplemental Security Income and their families
- Fostering the vision and leadership for a state-wide administrative employment network under the Social Security Administrations Ticket to Work program. Through this work, Andrew has successfully engaged over 225 providers, across the labor, vocational rehabilitation, developmental disability, and mental health systems of support, in the implementation of the Ticket to Work program. This program currently serves over 8000 beneficiaries in increasing their financial self-sufficiency and independence.
- Principally authoring the [New York State Employment First Commission's Report and Recommendations](#) and providing leadership to a commission consisting of Commissioner level representation from 12 different state agencies to ensure the State is making employment the first option for individuals with disabilities in New York.