**I. Background**

The transition from school to work for students and youth with significant disabilities involves many interwoven components. Person-centered planning, transition planning, community-based work experiences, job development, individualized job supports, family involvement in support of employment, and interagency collaboration have been demonstrated to lead to successful employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities. Even though the effectiveness of these practices is known, they are often unevenly available. Consequently, many young adults with significant disabilities continue to experience high unemployment as well as insufficient opportunities to obtain competitive integrated employment.

A successful model addressing issues commonly faced by these students has been developed and refined in several localities across the country by Employment First Leadership State Mentor Program (EFLSMP) subject matter expert, Dr. Richard Luecking and his staff at TransCen, Inc. This model is based upon a systematic delivery of specific evidence-based transition services beginning in early high school, and coordination of resources resulting in uninterrupted, seamless transition from public secondary education to employment and/or postsecondary education.

A schematic depiction of the seamless flow of student transition services that characterizes the model is available [here](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Seamless_Transition_V.1.2_511761_7.pdf). TransCen will be the primary subject matter expert providing technical assistance for each of the teams selected. Other subject matter experts providing technical assistance may include Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) - Michigan Rehabilitative Services (MRS) or the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), the Michigan Department of Education/Office of Special Education, and/or other community agencies.

Key features of this employment model include: work experiences while the individual is still in school, occurring no later than two years before projected school exit; early case initiation by VR (MRS or BSBP); linkages with adult employment service providers well before school exit; and paid work and follow-up supports in place at the point of school exit or acceptance/enrollment in postsecondary education or both. Schools, MRS/BSBP, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities or mental health funding entities, and employers collaborate throughout the process on behalf of each young adult, by blending and braiding resources and efforts.

The model, when implemented with fidelity, has proven to result in the following long-term outcomes:

* higher post-school employment rates for participating students;
* increased ability by schools to meet Indicator 13 and 14 requirements of the federal special education law;
* increased successful rehabilitation closures for State VR agencies;
* improved ability of adult employment programs to provide competitive, integrated employment service; and
* better outcomes and more efficient use of limited resources for adult service funding entities.