Federal to State Policy Transfer Model (PTM) Study (State Exchange on Employment Disability—SEED)
Project Director: Daniel Weissbein
Period of Performance: September 2015 – September 2017

For this study, Coffey Consulting, along with its partner, the American Institutes of Research, is to conduct an evaluation of the Policy Transfer Model (implemented as the State Exchange on Employment and Disability or SEED initiative). SEED was conceived by the U. S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP's) in collaboration with and leadership by intermediary organizations that work to advance policy development at the state and local level that promotes employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Coffey conducted an evaluability assessment and recommended a formative evaluation design that was approved by ODEP and the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO). We are working with DOL to obtain required federal clearance for the proposed data collection protocols. Additionally, we continue to provide feedback to SEED on ways to improve, and we have written issue papers and shared recommendations regarding how the approach could be used by other policy agencies. We conducted a scan on the Implementation Science literature that was considered helpful in validating SEED strategies for reaching out to legislatures and implementing the initiative.

The key challenge in this project is a SEED initiative that is still evolving quickly, so we are evaluating a moving target. The initiative's name, method, logic model, and partners have all changed in the first year. We have addressed this by being flexible and adapting our evaluation approach and design as SEED evolves and constraints allow.

The other challenge is being funded for two years when the key outcomes (state legislation) that they are aiming for will likely take longer. We adapt to this by looking at interim indicators of progress and process. We identified shorter-term outcomes that may indicate movement toward longer-term results. The salient innovation in SEED is the requirement to evaluate an evolving program, and having to continually reassess whether the prior plan must be modified accordingly. The main outcome sought are documentation of the SEED approach, an assessment as to how it was implemented and what was accomplished, and the implications for other policy producing agencies that may want to replicate the intermediary approach.