“WE SHOULD NOT JUDGE PEOPLE BY THEIR PEAK OF EXCELLENCE, BUT BY THE DISTANCE THEY HAVE TRAVELED FROM THE POINT WHERE THEY STARTED.”

Henry Ward Beecher
LETTERS FROM OUR LEADERS

MARGARET GILBRIDE
PRESIDENT, APSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The APSE Annual Report reflects the work of the past fiscal year (October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020) and affirms our identity as the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement for individuals with disabilities.

As we are all too aware, the world faced an unprecedented global health crisis in 2020 as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. Since March 2020, this pandemic has posed unique challenges to all of us, and specifically to people with disabilities. This annual report serves in part as an acknowledgment of the Herculean efforts of workers and job seekers with disabilities, the employers and professionals who supported their job searching, training and retention goals, and the APSE staff who assisted all of us.

APSE staff were unflagging in their continued
• advocacy with and for us
• provision of opportunities for us to learn, hone skills and network virtually
• research including on the impact of COVID on disability employment services and supports and
• dissemination of data to national policy-makers on members’ behalf

Henry Miller once said, “Whatever there be of progress in life comes not through adaptation but through daring.” I respectfully disagree with Mr. Miller and suggest “progress is very often what we experience only after daring to adapt.” As our annual report reflects, APSE boldly dared to adapt to the challenges of 2020 and has significant progress to celebrate.

Cheers,
Margaret T. Gilbride
President, APSE Board of Directors

JULIE CHRISTENSEN
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If there is a single word that I think summarizes our collective experience, it is perseverance. This past fiscal year presented uncounted challenges impacting every aspect of the APSE community.

People with disabilities persevered in obtaining and maintaining jobs during an economic downturn, adjusting to abrupt shifts in day-to-day routines, disruptions to supports and services, and sometimes layoffs and furloughs.

Job coaches and job developers persevered in helping employers see the necessity of a consistent workforce, helping individuals continue to find and maintain employment while themselves adjusting to remote and virtual supports.

Disability employment service providers persevered during the stresses that the pandemic placed on the flow of vocational rehabilitation and Medicaid dollars, along with the subsequent need to quickly invest in and train the workforce to utilize technology in new ways.

In the meantime, National APSE also needed to adapt. It is a testament to the unfailing commitment to Employment First of every member of the National APSE team during 2019-2020 that we were able to pivot to meet the emerging needs of our members and to remain sustainable as a non-profit entity operating within the context of a global pandemic. We planned our first-ever virtual conference (in just 8 weeks!) and continued to advocate to ensure that competitive integrated employment remained the priority in public policy discussions.

As you read on and learn more about some of our accomplishments, know that it took a community effort! The National APSE team would be remiss if we did not pause and acknowledge the tireless support and work of the APSE Board of Directors, the Executive Board, and our State Chapter Leaders. It is a privilege to be #UnapologeticallyAPSE together

With gratitude,
Julie Christensen
Interim Executive Director, Director of Policy & Advocacy
program highlights:
Membership & Chapter Engagement

www.apse.org/membership/

Finding Strength

2020 APSE Chapter Highlights

• Arizona APSE developed a webinar titled: Employer Engagement during COVID: AZ APSE Share Tips & Strategies, and partnered with DD Planning Council, UCEDD and Employment First efforts during NDEAM
• Georgia APSE teamed up with WISE and the Community of Practice in Georgia to develop advocacy and policy changes in the state.
• Kentucky APSE now Has 4 Chapter Board Members on the Kentucky Employment First Council.
• Louisiana APSE helped draft proposed legislation for Employment First and State As Model Employer Legislation with the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs
• Massachusetts APSE held a Series of Online Forums with almost 500 people participating
• Rhode Island APSE’s Strategic Planning session highlighted and developed new approaches to increase diversity within the board in in their work as a chapter.
• South Carolina APSE held Quarterly Community of Practice Meeting
• Wisconsin APSE held Monthly Listen and Shares to support providers as they navigated COVID - 19

2020 Chapter Leadership Institute Topics

• Chapter Financial Literacy and Responsibility
• Developing Your Chapter's Communication Plan
• Starting the Strategic Planning Process
• Emerging Leaders

Launched in 2020:

• Chapter Leadership Virtual Idea Exchange Fridays!
• Monthly Chapter Leadership Calls

Did You Know?

We have two new chapters!
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
CESP CREDENTIAL

www.apse.org/cesp-central/

SKILLED DIRECTION

THE CERTIFICATION COUNCIL (ESPCC), QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RECERTIFICATION COMMITTEES:

- **Launched** a Continuing Education Pre-Approval process for trainers looking to market CESP for employment-focused Professional Development!

- **Prepared** for the 2021 shift to remote online testing of the examination!

OTHER EFFORTS INCLUDED:

- **Continued** work with partners & states – Released state considerations for competency-requirements with ACRE, plus scholarships for credentials!

- **Every other week** virtual CESP Conversations held with credential holders since April 2020 – with 80+ regularly attending!

CESP BY THE NUMBERS

530 NEW CESP earned their credential

273 CESP RECERTIFICATIONS (required every 3 years)

STATES WITH THE MOST CESP:

- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
- Iowa
- Maryland
- Oregon

DID YOU KNOW?

APSE members with a CESP membership have the highest retention rates of all of our membership categories!
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

www.apse.org/events-learning/

HIGHER LEARNING

FOCUS ON INCREASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
This past year has required us to think differently about ensuring our members had access to up-to-date news and strategies as service delivery shifted to a virtual environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Emerging Leaders program kicked off with Cohort 1 in August 2020
- Universal Employment Competencies Webinar Series (Domains 1-5) developed

NATIONAL APSE’S (FIRST) VIRTUAL CONFERENCE BY THE NUMBERS
We made a successful move to an all-virtual platform with

45 SESSIONS | 979 ATTENDEES

2020 Total Attendees: 979

Employment/Direct Support Professional
Other
CEOs or Executive Directors
State or Federal Agency Personnel
University Personnel
Self-Advocate/Family Member
School Personnel/Transition Specialist
Student

JOIN US FOR APSE WEBINARS

7,582 ATTENDEES | 41 LIVE AND RECORDED WEBINARS OFFERED

DID YOU KNOW?
APSE has a podcast!
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: POLICY & ADVOCACY
www.apse.org/legislative-advocacy/

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

APSE’S PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION WE WORKED TO SUPPORT:

Phase out of 14(c) and subminimum wage
- Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (HR 873 / S 260)
- Raise the Wage Act (HR 582 / S 150)
Supporting implementation of WIOA and achieving CIE
- CAPABILITY Act (HR 3070)
- Disability Employment Incentive Act (HR 3992 / S 255)

Compliance with the Medicaid HCBS settings rule
- Disability Integration Act (HR 555 / S 117)
- HCBS Infrastructure Improvement Act (S 3277)

Promoting ABLE expansion
- ABLE Age Adjustment Act (HR 1814 / S 651)

Preventing cuts to Medicaid and Social Security
- SSI Restoration Act (S 2753)

Addressing the DSP workforce shortage crisis
- Direct CARE Opportunity Act (HR 4397)

National APSE staff testified before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights at a public hearing on Subminimum Wages: Impacts on the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities Click here to read the testimony.

Iowa APSE members, Kyle & Bill Stumpf, testified at a Congressional briefing in support of competitive, integrated employment.

DID YOU KNOW?
You can sign up to receive APSE Action Alerts delivered to your inbox. Click here.

POLICY & ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS

80+ NATIONAL COALITION MEETINGS ATTENDED

50+ POLICY PRESENTATIONS GIVEN

46 CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES AND FEDERAL AGENCIES VISITED

23 ACTION ALERTS & POLICY EMAILS SENT

15 STATES
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: OPERATIONS & OUTREACH

TRAVERSING NEW TERRAIN

APSE IN THE NEWS!

• Why businesses can still get away with paying pennies to employees with disabilities, Vox, 3/16/20
• Workers with disabilities are especially hard hit in the coronavirus economy, CNN, 5/14/20
• Disabled workers, already in a tough spot, now have it worse, Bloomberg News, 7/18/20
• Commission on Civil Rights calls for end to subminimum wage, The Hill, 9/17/20

OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

3,312 LinkedIn Followers
4,230 Facebook Followers
2,597 Twitter Followers
268 Podcast Downloads
25,447 Email Newsletter Subscribers

DID YOU KNOW?

A Chapter Zoom account is available to all Chapters!

FRONT-LINE SPOTLIGHT

“While many people chose not to work during the pandemic, Matt and many other individuals with disabilities chose to continue working to ensure that the needs of their community were going to be met.”
Matt (Iowa)
SNAPSHOT:
FISCAL YEAR 2020

FINANCIALS

REVENUE: $977,210

- Grant Income: 7%
- Training: 6%
- Certification Exam: 16%
- Conference: 42%
- Membership Dues: 27%
- Other: 2%

EXPENSES: $965,841

- Program Expenses: 18%
- Office Expenses: 8%
- Salaries & Benefits: 64%
- Legal/Professional Fees: 8%
- Other: 2%

FRONT-LINE SPOTLIGHT

“I believe that people with disabilities, alongside typical people of our community, have equally served as a vital component of the workforce and economy throughout the pandemic.”
Eddy (Florida)

FRONT-LINE SPOTLIGHT

“Katie could have easily been temporarily let go during COVID. Her supervisors saw her as an essential part of the team, so she’s continued to work during this difficult time.”
Katie (Kentucky)
SNAPSHOT:
FISCAL YEAR 2020

MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL MEMBERS: 2,394 (as of 9/31/20)

- 1% Other
- 49% Bronze Business
- 22% Professional
- 14% Gold Business
- 6% Silver Business
- 6% CESP Professional
- 2% Self Advocate & Family Members

NEW MEMBERS: 492 (10/1/19 - 9/31/20)

- 1% Other
- 37% Bronze Business
- 19% Professional
- 25% Gold Business
- 7% Silver Business
- 8% CESP Professional
- 3% Self Advocate & Family Members

FRONT-LINE SPOTLIGHT

“People with disabilities want to work harder and earn a paycheck. We focus on what the supervisor says, are loyal to the company, and help customers.”
Oscar (Maryland)

FRONT-LINE SPOTLIGHT

“Kenneth has thrived in this position, even more so during this pandemic because having this job shows him that he truly matters. His job has brought him new life, and a greater sense of significance.”
Kenneth (California)
The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged every aspect of our society and economy, including employment of people with disabilities. Both the wide shut down of businesses and the mass shift to “work from home” directives have directly and negatively impacted employees and job seekers with disabilities and the delivery system for disability employment services.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) has collaborated with the broader disability advocacy community to ensure that emergency response efforts to COVID-19 included an intentional focus on addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Of vital concern has been maintaining supported employment and other employment services in local communities so that people with disabilities who can work have the supports they need to remain successful and safe on their jobs.
To understand the direct impact of COVID-19 on disability employment and to identify immediate needs, APSE conducted a national survey of community-based service providers who offer employment services and supports. This effort aimed to understand the impact of COVID-19 on employment service provision, the direct support workforce, supported workers and job seekers with disabilities.

Phase 1: June 15-28, 2020 (n=612, 47 states)
Phase 2: August 31 – September 25, 2020 (n=438, 41 states)

Survey findings were provided to Congress and were used to guide APSE’s advocacy efforts around COVID relief.


FRONT-LINE SPOTLIGHT

“Having people with different perspectives, leads to better problem solving and decision making as an organization.”

Jennifer (Washington)
APSE LEADERSHIP

OUR GUIDES

NATIONAL STAFF

Erica Belois-Pacer
Director of Professional Development

Julie Christensen
Interim Exec. Director/ Director of Policy & Advocacy

Sarah Manley
Systems Manager & Program Support

Erynn Pawlak
Director of Operations

Christa Rainwater
Director of Membership & Chapter Engagement

Kari Tietjen
Director of Certification

NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2019-2020)

Top row: Wesley Anderson, Justin Blumhorst, Heidi Maghan, Nancy Boutot, Kelly Nye-Lengerman, Wally Tablit, Julia Barol, Ryan Aldrich, Katie Wolf Whaley

Bottom row: Chaz Nicklaus, Maya Cox, Paula Johnson, Ross Ryan, Bridget Hassan, Courtney Horton, Kelley Land, Margaret Gilbride

THANK YOU
to our members, collaborators, sponsors and contributors!

GET INVOLVED!
Email info@apse.org to learn more