MOVING MOUNTAINS
FOR EMPLOYMENT FIRST TO FACILITATE
FAIR PAY, PERSONAL RECOGNITION, DIVERSE
AND FULLY INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES,
PERSONAL ENRICHMENT, SOCIAL GOOD,
AND ENHANCED COMMUNITY.
PERSISTENCE IS THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE ON EARTH, IT CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS.

- Albert Einstein
Working with you, APSE moves mountains. In the third year of the pandemic, many of us are still recovering from profound loss and are still finding our footing in the ‘new normal’. And yet, together with you, APSE persists and continues forward. This annual report measures our progress and acknowledges the incredible persistence and achievement across the country.

As you read this report, I hope you feel pride in the accomplishments of the organization and our membership. You will find growth in APSE’s policy work, notable achievements of state chapters, and continued progress in growth of membership including CESP and participation in career growing opportunities like Rising Stars and Emerging Leaders. APSE also hosted the first post-pandemic, in-person (and online), conference in Denver, Colorado. It was incredible to feel the sense of community, hope, and optimism amongst attendees. Even more, it was wonderful to see the innovation and strength that has emerged from the pandemic. So much of what has been accomplished comes from partnership and the hard work of membership. The benchmarks and achievements reflected in this report have come with efforts and partnership with members. I am motivated and inspired by APSE and the membership’s hard work and achievements. We are grateful for all of you.

The Board of Directors, charged with providing strategic vision and oversight, has charted APSE’s path forward with a new strategic plan. The intent of these plans are to ensure that APSE’s movement and persistence keeps us on a trajectory that supports APSE’s mission, vision, and values, with an eye toward equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Here are the priorities directing the course:

- **Moving the field forward:** We stand on the shoulders of giants whose innovation and hard work has given us the policies, practices, and opportunities to push Employment First forward. We must build upon these to adapt to the changing landscape we operate in. We must adapt to support equitable access to professionals and job seekers with diverse lived experience to truly support Employment First.

- **Professionalizing the field:** The Employment First movement depends on our membership, an incredible workforce that walks alongside job seekers in their journey to employment. To support the workforce receives the recognition it deserves, APSE continues to work to support training, certification, and recognition.

- **Building capacity:** We want to make sure that APSE continues to be the leading voice of Employment First. To do so, we must work to support financial stability and effective resources. This also requires clear, effective communication with our most valuable resource: our membership.

We know that we are stronger when individuals with a diversity of life experiences contribute to the work and developing solutions. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I invite each of you to join us in the journey ahead. Together, we can continue moving mountains.

Best wishes,

Maya Cox
Chair, APSE Board of Directors
It seems we increasingly feel compelled to focus our attention forward. However, before we delve into the opportunities ahead in 2023 for the Employment First community, it’s important to pause and reflect on the past year: our successes, our struggles, and our continuing challenges.

APSE membership grew in almost every category, with over 400 new members! Yet we have 10 states with no active APSE Chapter.

We welcomed 284 new CESP's and congratulated 330 CESP's who recertified. Yet the total number of CESP's across the country is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.

We met in person for the first time since the pandemic began at our annual conference in Denver, Colorado. Yet so many of our community were still unable to join us!

Three states passed legislation to eliminate the use of 14c certificates and subminimum wage, bringing the total to 13 states! Yet Federal legislation has not yet crossed the finish line.

Most critically, the past year has seen record rates of employment for people with disabilities. Yet the gap in the labor participation rate is still wide.

Yes, there is much to celebrate! And yet, there is so much ground still to be made. As you read on and learn more about APSE’s accomplishments over the past year, we invite you to consider how you can help contribute to the cause in the year ahead.

On behalf of the National APSE team, we are grateful for each and every one of our members and supporters. We particularly wish to acknowledge the tireless support and work of the APSE Executive Board and Board of Directors, as well as our network of State Chapter Leaders across the country.

It takes ALL of us to move mountains!

With gratitude,

Julie Christensen
Executive Director/
Director of Policy & Advocacy
2022 APSE CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

• **FLORIDA APSE**
  Florida APSE hosted their first in-person conference in 3 years with over 200 attendees and many dynamic speakers (all volunteer). Through ticket sales and sponsorships, the conference was a huge success! Attendees of the conference noted the conference was the best employment focused state conference they had ever attended. They enjoyed networking, the session topics, the schedule, and the entertainment.

• **GEORGIA APSE**
  Georgia APSE is part of a coalition for Phasing out 14c in Georgia. They are advocating to legislators to fund sustainable employment services and strengthen the Employment First council. GA APSE is also part of the Advancing Employment Team in the state which brings together all the key stakeholders, and they hosted the NDEAM Awards ceremony.

• **IOWA APSE**
  Iowa APSE is working to advance the policies and practices of Employment First through education, advocacy, and capacity building. IA APSE’s nationally renowned job coaching and job development foundation training provides a solid framework of the history of disability and employment in the United States and engages new professionals in the chapter’s work to eliminate subminimum wage employment and advance competitive integrated employment for Iowans with disabilities.

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

“I began working with APSE after obtaining my CESP and participating in the Emerging Leaders program. I’m excited to bring the knowledge and resources from this national network to help develop our new Hawaii APSE Chapter.”

- Patrick Gartside, CESP, CWIP
  Executive Director
  Work Now Hawaii
  President, Hawaii APSE
  (NEW Chapter in Development)
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTER ENGAGEMENT

www.apse.org/membership/

2022 APSE CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)

• **KENTUCKY APSE**

Kentucky passed Employment First legislation this past year. Four board members are on the Employment First Council which led this effort. Board members have also been providing information/education on a possible 14c bill in the interim. Kentucky APSE members and board members are in key positions in state agencies that have worked to shift practice and regulation/procedures to ease the service side for providers. A KY APSE board member has been key in creating a smooth process to switch funding from VR to Medicaid waiver when long-term supports are needed.

• **MINNESOTA APSE**

The Minnesota APSE podcast features self-advocates and uses the platform for them to share their experiences working in the community. These conversations are focused on advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through the lived experiences of participating in the workforce. MN APSE had a training session at the state conference focused on how provider organizations can address and expand EDI efforts. The MN APSE board will be discussing the intersectionality of EDI and disability at their strategic planning session in December to better support employment first in Minnesota.

• **OHIO APSE**

Ohio APSE held their first in person training since 2018 and by all accounts it was a huge success. They revamped OH APSE’s Business Engagement training. They also formed a broad scale coalition that was successful at having HB 716 introduced to phase out 14c in the state. OH APSE formed a new membership network group, and board members sit on various workgroups at the state level to ensure all workgroups are equitable, diverse, and inclusive. Ohio APSE is a member of a state workgroup called Breaking Silence whose sole purpose is to hold state agencies accountable for ensuring equal opportunity so that workgroups draw from the full diversity of the state.

NEW MEMBERS IN FY22:

- **16** Gold Members
- **10** Silver Members
- **39** Bronze Members
- **303** Professional Members
- **23** Student Members
- **22** Self-Advocate and Family Members

**DID YOU KNOW?**

WE HAVE NEW APSE PROFESSIONAL MEMBER BENEFITS.

Professional Members now get:

- **12 Free** Professional Webinars a Year (Available monthly for Professional Members!)
- **6 Free** JVR Research to Practice Webinars
- **Free Access** to APSE Communities of Practice (Current offering: Pre-ETS and CESP Convos)
- **Free Access** to Annual Regional e-Institutes
- **25% Discount** on the National Annual Conference and Other Events & Trainings

And there are new memberships developed specifically for Students and Patrons!
The Employment Support Professional Credential Council (ESPCC) held a series of roundtables in October 2021 aimed at understanding the opportunities and barriers to increasing CESP certification of employment support professionals. Representatives from 18 states took part in this discussion. Participants included state-level decision-makers and representatives with Vocational Rehabilitation; Intellectual Disability/ Autism Services; Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services; and University Centers on Disabilities. There were also current credential holders (CESPs) in attendance that spoke to their state requirements, as well as the experience of holding the credential and working in the field. Read the full report!

**CESP ROUNDTABLES**

**REACHING THE HIGHEST LEVEL**

**CESP BY THE NUMBERS**

- **284** NEW CESP
- **330** CESP RECERTIFICATIONS (required every 3 years)
- **180+** TRAININGS pre-approved for CESP recertification credit

**STATES WITH THE MOST CESP**:

- Ohio (542)
- Maryland (222)
- Pennsylvania (185)
- Iowa (149)
- Oregon (142)
- Tennessee (131)

**WHY I CESP**

- Beau from Oregon: “To provide the highest level of supports with my team, within my organization and state.”
- Selena from Utah: “To improve employment options for people with disabilities.”
**Program Highlights: CESP Credential**

**www.apse.org/cesp-central/**

**CESP Spotlight**

**Terri Nelles (Illinois) was the recipient of APSE’s CESP of the Year Award in 2022.**

Terri has been working in the field for 20+ years. Terri has a passion for providing professionalism, credibility, and quality to employment support professionals nationwide. She has demonstrated dedicated leadership, serving as the chair of the ESPCC for many years. She also provides mentorships to new coworkers who are employment support professionals.

**Why I CESP**

“I am a CESP because I love the work, I love helping individuals with challenges and barriers succeed in employment and life long goals.”

- Gail from Georgia

“Lead the way!”

- Dale from Arkansas

“I have had the privilege of learning about the benefit of Employment First Initiatives”

- David from Nashville

**Did You Know?**

APSE hosts a monthly CESP Conversation. We now offer CESP CE credit for participating in our monthly communities of practice! [Register at the Online Store!](#)
EMERGING LEADERS AND RISING STARS

Facilitated by Rick McAllister, twenty-seven (27) mid-level managers participated in the Emerging Leaders program and completed their experience with presenting at APSE National Conference in June. SourceAmerica will be sponsoring a cohort of fifteen (15) participants beginning in late December. Additional we will be kicking off a cohort in mid-November 2022 and a second in March 2023. We had twenty (20) participants complete our Rising Stars program this year. We are excited to hold four additional groups this coming year in December, February, May, and August!

APSE’S ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

APSE continues to update our highly acclaimed regional institutes and organizational transformation workshops to jump start learning around best practices to achieve competitive, integrated employment. With funding support from Anthem, APSE completed monthly meetings with the original group from Arkansas. In the summer of 2022, we kicked off a new program in the state of Texas. Currently three Employment First Regional Collaborative groups met virtually twice a week for 8 weeks, a fourth group kicked off in October!

"Participating in the Texas Employment First Collaborative this year provided me a great look at the possibilities and potential that partnering with APSE brings. Wow! What a group! The information, camaraderie, collaborative connections, and shared desire to serve was tremendous, and inspirational. I vowed to be more intentional in my approach. Participating in the Communities of practice and APSE State chapter activities provides the perfect platform for such participation. I encourage you to join me/us. Thanks APSE!"

- Jerold M. Terry (JT), Texas APSE member

DID YOU KNOW?

APSE hosts a monthly Pre-ETS Collaborative meeting. We now offer CESP CE credit for participating in our monthly meetings! Register at the Online Store!
APSE’s Public Policy Priorities and Federal Legislation worked to support:

Phase out of 14(c) and subminimum wage
- Transformation to Competitive Integrated employment Act (HR2373)
- Raise the Wage Act (HR603/S53)

Building the Capacity of the Direct Support Workforce
- American Rescue Plan (HR1319)
- Relaunching America’s Workforce Act (HR602/S200)

Achieving the full intent of current Federal employment first law
- Disability Employment Incentive Act (S630)
- SSI Restoration Act (HR3824/S2065)
- National Apprenticeship Act (HR 447)

Promoting ABLE expansion
- ABLE Adjustment Act (HR1219/S331)
- Work without Worry Act (HR4003/S2108)
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: POLICY & ADVOCACY

www.apse.org/legislative-advocacy/

STATEWIDE MOVEMENTS

STATE LEGISLATION
3 states phased out the used of 14c certificates:

• RHODE ISLAND – S2242
  Repeals § 28-12-9 of the general laws which provides that the director of labor and training may approve of wages below the minimum wage for those persons whose earning capacity is impaired due to physical or mental disability.

• SOUTH CAROLINA – S533
  Prohibits The Use of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to Pay Subminimum Wages to Individuals With Disabilities.

• TENNESSEE – SB2042
  Removes the subminimum wage exception for an employee whose earning or productive capacity is impaired by age, physical, or mental deficiency or injury. Amends TCA Title 8 and Title 50.

POLICY SPOTLIGHT ON KENTUCKY!
KY passes Employment First legislation!

• KENTUCKY – SB104
  Creates new sections in KRS Chapter 151B to establish the Employment First Council; amends KRS 12.020 to conform.

DID YOU KNOW?
Every Chapter should have an identified policy liaison who is the point-of-contact with the National Team to coordinate policy and advocacy efforts to advance Employment First.

SUPPORTED WORKER SPOTLIGHTS

Van serves a vital role at the National Institutes for Health (NIH). He truly is an essential worker!
Van, District of Columbia

#NDEAM
Disability Part of the Equity Equation

I believe that people with disabilities serve an essential role in the workforce and economy.
Ronald, Tennessee

#NDEAM
Disability Part of the Equity Equation
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
OUTREACH

POWERFUL OUTREACH

APSE IN THE NEWS (Click each image below for live link)

APSE continues to be a voice in the national dialogue of advancing employment equity.

OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

4,583
LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

3,006
TWITTER FOLLOWERS

4,649
FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

17,020
EMAIL NEWSLETTERS SUBSCRIBERS

DID YOU KNOW?

APSE hosts a monthly State Policy “Coffee Talk” on the 4th Tuesday of the month. This is an opportunity to connect with peers around the country to discuss strategies for moving Employment First policy forward at the state level. Contact julie@apse.org for more information.

Minn. expands push to phase out subminimum wages for people with disabilities

Chris Serres, Star Tribune
September 16, 2022 - 5 min read

The Walz administration is making a push with millions of dollars in grants to help adults with disabilities move into the mainstream workforce and out of jobs that pay less than the minimum wage.

For decades, Minnesotans with disabilities — including those with autism, cerebral palsy and mental status disturbances — have been paid subminimum wages. Despite their complaints, they were often held back byffbyp blurred standards and arrangements, including those in the workplace.

The federal government is expected to publish proposed rules that would require states and employers to pay people with disabilities based on their productivity or market rate. Pay through this system amounts to just pennies on the dollar.

Many people with disabilities are paid just pennies. Build Back Better could help end that.

The subminimum wage allows employers to pay people with disabilities even less than the bare cost of living. The Build Back Better Act would incentivize states to phase out subminimum wages and allow people to support themselves and their families.

Sheltered workshop or community jobs? Missouri debates disabled adults in the workforce

Missouri’s first sheltered workshop shifted focus to support disabled employees in the traditional workforce. Five years later, here’s a look at the lasting effects.

The Department of Labor is asking for feedback on its proposed rule that would allow employers to pay employees with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

The proposal has been met with mixed reactions, including from Missouri Republican state senator Sen. Betsy Schupp, who co-sponsored Senate Bill 152, which would have prohibited employers from paying employees with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage.
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
SPECIAL EVENTS

APSE 2022 CONFERENCE BY THE NUMBERS

24 SPONSORS

Partners

COLORADO OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT FIRST
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Labor and Employment

Platinum

CareSource

Gold

Anthem

melwood

SETWorks

MOVING TRIBUTES FROM CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS:

“SO GREAT! The presentations were fantastic this year - great perspective of the work done and still in progress.”

“All of the speakers had individualized information to share based on their personal and business experiences. I didn’t have a favorite because they each shared different information which was helpful and valuable.”

REGIONAL EVENTS

We were excited to bring back Regional Events in 2022. In partnership with Chapter Leaders across the country, APSE held five regional e-learning events:

- Midwest: February 8
- Rocky Mountain & Southwest: February 22
- Southeast: March 16
- Northwest & Pacific: March 21
- Northeast & MidAtlantic: March 25

388 participants joined these events.

MOVING MOUNTAINS TOGETHER

APSE 2022 CONFERENCE BY THE NUMBERS

Emily Ladau (left) and ADAPT (right)

566 ATTENDEES

21 EXHIBITORS

2 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
SNAPSHOT:
FISCAL YEAR 2022

FINANCIALS

REVENUE: $1,192,667

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<td>Conference</td>
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<td>Membership Dues</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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EXPENSES: $1,074,559

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<td>Program Expenses</td>
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SNAPSHOT:  FISCAL YEAR 2022

SUPPORTED WORKER SPOTLIGHTS

Work is not just a "job." It’s a new beginning and a way to make a difference.
Reina, Kentucky

#NDEAM

I'm a disability part of the equation.

I like earning money, meeting people, and being more independent. I enjoy my job and look forward to going to work.
Derek, North Dakota

#NDEAM

DISABILITY PART OF THE EQUITY EQUATION
MEMBERSHIP

APSE membership grew in almost every category during Fiscal Year 2022!

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH (as of 9/31/22)

NEW MEMBERS: 413 (10/1/21 - 9/31/22)
APSE LEADERSHIP

STRONG LEADERSHIP

NATIONAL STAFF

Erica Belois-Pacer
Director of Professional Development

Julie Christensen
Executive Director/Director of Policy & Advocacy

Sarah Manning
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 (2021-2022)

Top row:
Margaret Gilbride, Maya Cox, Bridget Hassan, Duane Shumate, Wally Tablit, Julia Barol

Middle Row:
Ryan Aldrich, Wesley Andersen, Justin Blumhorst, Paula Johnson, Katie Wolf Whaley, Pamela Cross

Bottom row:
Jan Dougherty, Kie O’Donnell, Cindy Burns, Tricia Jones Parkin, Emily Munson, Matthew Shapiro

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

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