

# IPS WORKS

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE IPS EMPLOYMENT CENTER



## THIS ISSUE

- 1 Back to Work Story
- 2 Upcoming Courses & Events
- 3 Research Update
- 4 Tips for Assisting Job Seekers & Reminders
- 5 Continuation of Back to Work Story and Empowering Success Story
- 6 IPS in Finland

*IPS Stands for Individual Placement and Support and is an evidence-based practice.*

## IPS Back to Work Story

Travis, Red Rock Behavioral Health IPS Team  
Oklahoma City, OK

Travis was referred to the IPS team at Red Rock Behavioral Health after telling his clinician he wanted to work. His employment specialist, Alex, helped Travis with his résumé and interviews. The first couple “didn’t go so well.” But when he interviewed with Sprouts grocery store, Travis says, **“I took control of the interview by being confident that I could be the best for this job.”** He got a position as Bulk Clerk in December 2024. At this time, Travis is training to become the manager of the Bulk Department, something he is very excited about. He’s been in a commercial for the company and participated in volunteer food bank events with his coworkers, too.

*Continued on page 5...*

Pictured above: Travis and his IPS Specialist, Alex



Employment Center  
at Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, Inc.

# Upcoming Courses & Events

Remember to visit [the IPS Employment Center's Website](#) for training updates and announcements.

Event	Dates
<p>IPS Practice Principles Webinar (no cost)</p> <p>For new IPS specialists and mental health practitioners. These 90-minute, virtual trainings cover the 8 principles of IPS Supported Employment. Each training covers the same material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">April 15, 2025 - 3:30 PM EST</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">May 6, 2025 - 9:00 AM EST</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">May 20, 2025 - 3:30 PM EST</a></li> </ul>
<p>Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (EDI) Webinar (no cost)</p>	<p><a href="#">April 29, 2025 - 11:00 AM EST</a></p>
<p>EDI Affinity Group</p>	<p><a href="#">May 20, 2025 - 3:30 PM EST</a></p>
<p>Mental Illness and Recovery Course</p>	<p>Starts on April 14, 2025 <a href="#">Click here to register.</a></p>
<p>Online Practitioner Course</p>	<p>Starts on May 19, 2025 Registration for this course will open on April 7th.</p>
<p>Online Supervisor Course</p>	<p>Starts on June 9, 2025 Registration for this course opens on May 5th.</p>
<p>Leadership Training</p>	<p>September 3 – 4, 2025 &amp; September 9, 10, 11, 2025 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM EST</p>
<p>Quarterly Data is due (for Learning Community programs)</p>	<p>The portal opens <b>April 1</b> for submission of quarterly outcomes for January - March 2025. <b>The deadline to submit outcomes is June 20.</b> Thanks!</p>
<p>International IPS Learning Community Annual Meeting</p>	<p>The 2025 International IPS Learning Community Annual Meeting will be held <b>May 14-15, 2025, in Nashville, TN!</b> <b>Registration closes on April 11, 2025</b></p>

## Research Update: IPS in Jalisco, Mexico

Franco Mascayano, Ph.D.

A pilot randomized, controlled trial of IPS has just begun in Jalisco, Mexico. This global health project is led by a strong team in Guadalajara, who are working closely with the IPS team in the United States. Our goal is to enroll 120 people with serious mental illness and study the effectiveness of IPS in Jalisco. Outcomes include employment, financial well-being, and health (i.e., symptoms and functioning). A research adaptation team is monitoring whether adjustments to the IPS approach are necessary due to the labor market, mental health system, cultural norms, or other issues.

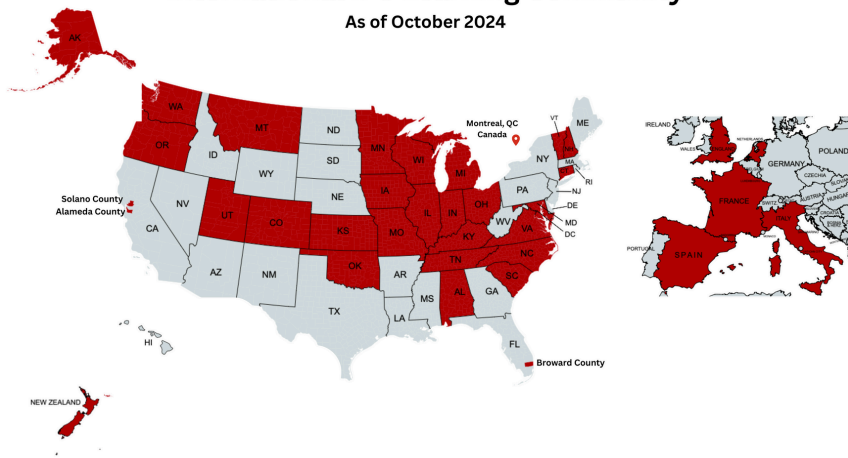
Adapting IPS to this new context without compromising its key principles is easier said than done. Major obstacles have been difficulties with community-based services and individualization of care, primarily because of structural constraints and lack of support for community jobs. However, the team in Guadalajara is doing their best to meet these two important principles, and the team in the U.S. is helping to think of innovative ways to overcome such barriers. The recruitment process is also going well, with almost 50 individuals already enrolled in the trial.

All previous IPS studies have been conducted in the U.S. and other high-income countries. There are stark differences in the nature and extent of job markets (e.g., formal vs. informal jobs), health care systems (e.g., integrated vs. fragmented health services), and national welfare policies (e.g., generous vs. limited welfare benefits) between high-income and low- and middle-income countries. To scale up IPS in low- and middle-income countries, the IPS model needs to be studied to understand these differences and whether adaptations should be made. The transportability of IPS to low- and middle-income countries, where most of the world's population lives, is the next major challenge for the IPS model.

This study offers an opportunity to inform future IPS implementation in Latin America. Jalisco is like much (though not all—for example, the sociocultural context may be different for indigenous populations in remote areas) of Latin America in terms of its job market, health care system, welfare policy, and culture (e.g., importance of family in sharing decisions and resources, stigma in the community and workplace).

### International IPS Learning Community

As of October 2024



Being a member of the International IPS Learning Community provides states, regions, and countries with opportunities that foster growth, guide successful implementation, and support sustainment of their IPS programs.

For more information on becoming a member, please contact Sarah Swanson at [sarah.swanson@nyspi.columbia.edu](mailto:sarah.swanson@nyspi.columbia.edu)

## Tips for Assisting Job Seekers Who Have Been Impacted by the Justice System

Deona “Dee” Dorsey

Director of Population-Specific Programs

San Diego Workforce Partnership

---

- Use “services” instead of “program” because formerly incarcerated individuals often view program as something they are mandated to complete, rather than something that they choose to do.
- Connect individuals’ interests to career pathways. When having conversations, it’s about finding out what a person really loves to do, what they feel passionate about and connecting that to a career pathway.
- Remove or change language and preconceived ideas about how challenging it is to help justice impacted individuals to obtain employment. When you really look at the skills and scope of interest people have you create an opportunity for competitive employment. Don’t focus on the challenges-- focus on talents.
- With job seeker permission, meet in-person with potential employers. Our team considers ourselves to be resource brokers. We look at what occupations and sectors are growing and advancing in our region.
- **Ignore lists of “felony friendly” employers.** Instead, focus on what the person wants to do rather than who may have hired individuals with legal histories in the past.
- Learn about the needs of individual employers so that you can match those needs to a job seeker’s skills and desired career. Request going on tours of business and set up informational interviews for job seekers.
- Share incentives with employers such as work opportunity tax credits, federal bonding programs, and your job supports.
- Help job seekers maintain hope that employers will hire them for their skills and abilities. Explain, “Your past does not define who you are.”

## Reminders & Announcements

### Quarterly Outcomes Data Entry

The system will re-open in early April for entry of the Q1 2025 (Jan 1 – Mar 31) outcomes.

Last quarter, we saw a slight increase in the number of sites entering their data. We hope to see more data entered this quarter so that we can continue to learn about IPS.

### Did you know?

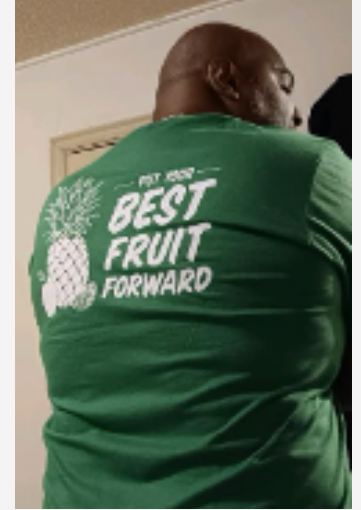
You can use the IPS Reporting System “Reports” feature to generate visual data that may be useful in supervising teams, setting quarterly goals, or raising awareness among leadership and funders about the accomplishments of your program. Reports may be downloaded and printed at no cost. Additionally, completed templates of quarterly data entered by a site are available. From your data entry screen, simply click on “Print Report” in the row of the quarter date you need and from the window that pops up, choose your preferred format (Excel, Word or PDF) and print. For assistance with any report generation, please reach out to [Jennie](#).



## IPS Back-to-Work Story

*Continuation of Page 1...*

Travis and Alex have worked together to ensure his success on this job. Alex hand-delivered ride share and bus passes to help him get back and forth when he first started. Travis knows he can call Alex if anything goes wrong or if he just wants to talk and says that Alex will go out of his way to help him. However, Travis wants to be his own advocate on the job. After realizing the city bus schedule could cause him to be late for his shift, Travis asked his supervisor if she could adjust the shift by a half hour; she agreed. Now he arrives on time, even if the bus is running a little late. He also asked questions to be sure he was doing what was expected of him. His supervisor gave him a checklist, which he uses to keep track of his tasks.



Travis says his job allows him to focus on being productive rather than on his racing thoughts and keeps him from thinking too much about things that are upsetting. Also, he gets to walk around the store during his shift, which he enjoys. He encourages others to take advantage of IPS if it's available to them, saying, ***"A job gives you purpose and responsibilities...you can't go wrong with that."***

## Empowering Success: Melissa Woods and the IPS Journey

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services  
Virginia

Melissa Woods-Clark, a dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor for the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), is actively working with Frontier Health to implement Individual Placement and Support (IPS). Though still in the early stages, their collaboration is already making a difference.

By traveling with the IPS specialist to meet participants, Melissa streamlines the VR intake process while the specialist gathers Career Profile information. With participant consent, shared documentation helps expedite VR eligibility, allowing Melissa to issue service authorizations efficiently. Regular meetings, emails, and calls keep the team aligned and focused on each person's employment goals.

Beyond daily operations, Melissa is engaged in IPS training, fidelity reviews, and client progress evaluations. She looks forward to deeper involvement with mental health treatment teams, emphasizing that "with any client, the motivation to work should be acted upon." In her short time with IPS, she has already witnessed success stories and encourages VR counselors to embrace the process with an open mind.

"As with any job, setbacks can be part of growth," she says. "There is humanity in the employment process. Look to the whole team and be proactive." Melissa remains a champion for recovery and employment, ensuring that each individual receives the support they need to succeed.

## IPS in Finland

Minna Ahola

Senior Planning Officer, IPS Coordinator  
Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare

Finland has joined the European IPS family by starting IPS activity in 2020. Ever since, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare has coordinated and studied IPS among persons with severe mental illnesses.

The aim of our IPS development programme is to spread IPS activity to public psychiatric services in the whole country. The development programme is part of the National Mental Health Strategy, with the emphasis on mental health rights and necessary extensive services.

For now, more than half of Finnish wellbeing services counties have taken IPS in their service range. IPS method has been piloted among clients in social services, too, and more and more interest is shown to IPS concerning other groups such as young people and long-term unemployed persons.

According to our research, 49% of the participants of our IPS programme found employment in the competitive labour market at least once. At the one-year follow-up, the situation of the study participants had changed in a positive direction in terms of self-assessed health, self-esteem, experience of social inclusion and appreciation as well as mental health symptoms. More than 90 % of the psychiatric professionals considered that IPS was suitable to support employment of persons with severe mental illnesses.

The Fifth International Conference of the IPS European Learning Community will be held in Helsinki, Finland on September 16th and 17th, 2025.

Read more:

IPS – Individual Placement and Support Programme in Finland (<https://thl.fi/en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/ips-individual-placement-and-support-project>)

Research on the Finnish programme (abstract in English): Sipilä, Noora and Appelqvist-Schmidlechner, Kaija (2024) (<https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-408-240-2>)

IPS European Learning Community Conference 2025 (<https://thl.fi/en/topics/management-of-health-and-wellbeing-promotion/promotion-of-inclusion/inclusion-in-working-life/ips-european-learning-community-conference-2025>)



### Make a suggestion

What would you like to see in the next edition of this newsletter? If you have suggestions, please contact

Jennie Keleher at [jennie.keleher@nyspi.columbia.edu](mailto:jennie.keleher@nyspi.columbia.edu)



The IPS Employment Center  
at Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, Inc.

[ipsworks.org](http://ipsworks.org)