

IPS WORKS

A NEWSLETTER FROM
THE IPS EMPLOYMENT CENTER

Reggie's Employment Outlook

"I had no idea what I wanted to do when I grew up. I lacked self-confidence, took the college route and six months into it dropped out. I started working at a manufacturing plant in a nearby city until a few self sabotaging tendencies ruined that. I moved out of the county where I was residing, as suggested by my sister, and got connected with West Central Industries in Wilmar, MN.

In 2018, I started working part-time at Casey's General Store running the cash register. Then, I moved into the kitchen area prepping subs and pizza. I got offered full-time work because I was dependable and learned a wide variety of skills at the store. Fast forward, I have become the center store manager, filling in for people, doing the books and paperwork, learning to run the daily operations, and working every other weekend and holidays. It is a big responsibility. It can be chaotic sometimes but I have learned how to handle different situations at the store. I enjoy working different shifts. I'm not the hiring manager; the store manager does that. But I have helped with interviews and on boarding new staff.

I connect regularly with my family and outside of work, I like to play computer games. And I have bought my own car. My IPS specialist, John, has helped me set goals and manage anxiety and stress. Going back to school is still on my bucket list and I may go into information technology and software someday. ***My advice to people participating in the employment program is to find jobs according to your interests and to be open minded."***

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



Announcements

2026 Annual Meeting highlights have been posted!

[Read More on our website.](#)



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
<u>IPS Practice Principles Webinar</u> This is a free course 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.	• August 11, 2026 at 9:00 AM EST • August 25, 2026 at 3:30 PM EST • September 8, 2026 at 9:00 AM EST
Online IPS Practitioner Skills Course - <u>English & Spanish</u>	Starts on September 14, 2026 Registration for this course will open on August 10th.
Online IPS Practitioner Skills Course - <u>French</u>	Starts on September 21, 2026 Registration for this course will open on August 10th.
Online Supervisor Skills Course - <u>English</u>	Starts on September 7, 2026 Registration for this course opens on August 3 rd .
Online Supervisor Skills Course - <u>French</u>	Starts on September 21, 2026 Registration for this course will open on August 3 rd .
<u>Mental Illness and Recovery Course</u>	Starts on October 19, 2026 Registration opens on September 14th.
Zero Exclusion Webinar	The Zero Exclusion Learning Community invites you to the quarterly interactive sessions. Join us on October 28, 2026 at 11 AM EST . Read more on our website .
Quarterly Data is due (for Learning Community programs)	We are currently collecting outcomes for Q2 2026 (April 1 - June 30). The deadline for data entry is Friday, Sep. 11. Please reach out to Jennie Keleher for any support needs.

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



AFFINITY GROUPS

The IPS Learning Community has a Zero Exclusion Committee that supports two affinity groups: BIPOC and LGBTQIA+.

Read more on page 7!



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 at no cost. For assistance with any report generation or support, please reach out to [Jennie Keleher](#).

Boosting Job Development with the Help of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

IPS prioritizes in-person service delivery, including meeting with participants, connecting with service partners, and of course, contacting employers. As AI, such as ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot, become widely used, IPS specialists can use them to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of job development without sacrificing the critical aspect of in-person relationship development with employers.

When using AI to support job development efforts, proceed with caution. Follow all policies and regulations set by your agency. AI is a tool to expand possibilities for program participants, helping them learn about different jobs in their community. Searches of AI should never include personal health or identifying information about participants or their mental health agency or other service providers. In addition to the legal and ethical issues this would raise, sensitive information is not needed in order to gather robust employer information to use in a job search.

IPS Specialists target employers according to what participants want to do for work, their strengths, and their preferences. Sometimes, it's difficult to do that in an efficient manner, especially in large urban, or expansive rural areas. AI can help find employers that match a person's interests or scan job boards and online sites to provide current relevant job postings. Some tips for taking advantage of this functionality are:

- Keep prompts general and professional. For example, "Provide 10 healthcare employers with entry-level roles within 10miles of [ZIP code]."
- Avoid entering any protected or identifying information. No job seeker names, case details, agency data, or protected, sensitive information should be entered under any circumstances.
- Customize outputs. AI-generated employer lists should be reviewed and tailored to the client's goals, strengths, and preferences by the IPS specialist.
- Document appropriately. If AI tools are used, document the outcome (e.g., employer leads generated), not the AI interaction itself.
- Always verify job listings and employer details. Cross-check information directly on the employer's website to ensure accuracy and timeliness.
- Use 'temporary chat' or equivalent privacy settings. This reduces the likelihood of conversations being saved or used for model improvement.

Continue reading on next page...

Adopting IPS in Maine

Samantha Fenderson

Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Augusta, ME

As the Director of Maine Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR), it is a priority that we provide evidence-based services that increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a service delivery model that promotes a collaborative, person-centered approach by integrating the individual, support networks, medical teams, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC). This model strengthens VR services by creating an integrated service delivery model that promotes coordinated employment support.

Our partnership with Maine DHHS, Office of Behavioral Health has established a statewide framework for the delivery of IPS services. A key factor in adopting IPS was the need to better serve individuals who exited the DVR program early. A significant percentage of these early exiters are individuals experiencing serious mental health conditions. The IPS model addresses this challenge through rapid employer engagement while simultaneously supporting the development of a meaningful career pathway. We are already seeing success with the pairing of a VRC with a Community Behavioral Health Center, IPS Practitioner. As we continue expanding IPS services, our focus remains on delivering services that result in sustainable employment and greater economic independence.

IPS specialists can further explore whether an employer could be a good match for someone, and plan job development outings, by using Google Maps. AI updates to this online tool incorporate real-time traffic information and support route planning. Google My Maps allows for the creation of custom maps. These tools together can help specialists determine employer locations and whether they are in accessible and safe parts of town, distances from a job seeker's zip code or general area (do not enter job seeker addresses), and transportation considerations, such as proximity to bus routes. Google My Maps can be used to plan out a specialist's route to meet with several employers in one day, thus maximizing their community time.

Remember: It is critical to meet hiring managers in person and learn about their businesses as part of the IPS job development process, even if you've found an employer who has advertised positions. AI can support the identification of potential employer matches, but the IPS specialist must still follow up with their knowledge of the job seeker, create a relationship with the employer, and determine if it really could be a good fit.

Special thanks to Phil Thomas, Chanel Weathers, Crystal McMahon and Michael Castilla for contributions to this article.

Highlights from the 2026 International IPS Learning Community Annual Meeting

The International IPS Learning Community met on April 28-29, 2026 in Covington, KY to learn from speakers and discuss strategies to improve IPS service delivery. Two hundred attendees included Learning Community members and guests from Australia, Canada, England, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and the U.S.

Discussions and presentations focused on efforts to assist young adults with jobs and education/job training, highlight the role of families in supporting workers, update our knowledge about recent IPS research studies, and learn from colleagues in different countries.

Individuals were nominated for awards in six categories and the winners were announced at a dinner, listed below.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Award

- Edmond Garcia - Illinois



Remember to visit the [2026 Annual Meeting page](#) for more pictures!

Excellence in Training Award

- Emily Singer - Indiana
- Darcey Sebolt - Iowa

Advocate with Lived Experience

- Brian Colson

IPS Facilitator Award

- Lin Nibblelink - Iowa



The Rick Martinez Leadership Award

- Lori Norton - Kentucky
- Dominic D'Aguzzo - Michigan

The Vocational Rehabilitation Award

- Lacey Conzelman - Montana
- Mallory Pitts - Ohio
- Sherri Lavery - Michigan



IPS Long-Term Outcomes

Gary R. Bond, Ph.D.

Over the last 30 years, many studies have shown that IPS is effective in helping people with serious mental illness gain competitive employment. These studies show that over twice as many people enrolled in IPS achieve competitive employment compared to those receiving usual vocational services. People receiving IPS get a job sooner, are more satisfied with their job, work a longer time, and earn more than people who receive other vocational services. Since the IPS Employment Center began collecting employment data in 2001, national surveys of hundreds of IPS programs have shown that the average quarterly employment rate for IPS is 40% or more – meaning that 40% of clients served by IPS during a 3-month period work at least one day during those three months. Based on every employment measure that researchers have studied, IPS has outperformed all other vocational programs. These findings show that IPS is an evidence-based practice. Most IPS outcome studies, however, are limited to one to three years of follow-up.

A key question for any psychiatric rehabilitation program is, what happens over the long term? Do clients continue to benefit? Many vocational programs help clients gain employment in the short term, but these gains dissipate over time. For example, programs that pay clients to complete job training increase the percentage who start a job, but often these programs have no lasting impact on long-term employment.

In the case of IPS, what are the long-term outcomes? For IPS clients who gain employment, do they continue to work? For how long?

A recent systematic review identified eight studies that assessed competitive employment outcomes at least 3.5 years after enrollment in IPS (Drake & Bond, 2026). Five studies reported long-term outcomes for randomized controlled trials, one study compared high-fidelity to low-fidelity IPS programs, and two observational studies interviewed clients 8-12 years after IPS enrollment.

Altogether, these studies assessed long-term outcomes for over 3,000 clients (1,555 receiving IPS and 1,469 receiving usual services or low-fidelity IPS). Some key findings:

- Seven of eight studies found that, with help from IPS specialists after enrollment, most clients achieved positive employment outcomes and usually maintained these gains over multiple years.
- Of the six studies with comparison groups, four found significantly better employment outcomes for IPS than the control group several years after the formal study ended.
- Three studies reported “steady worker” rates. A steady worker is defined as someone who has worked at least half the time period of follow-up, in other words, at least 6 months working for every year of follow-up. Combining results for these three studies, 49% of 120 IPS clients were steady workers, compared to only 11% of 54 control clients.
- One controlled study examined annual earnings for a 5-year period after the study ended. The IPS group earned significantly more than the control group in each of the five years of follow-up. Moreover, annual earnings for the IPS group increased significantly over this period, while the control group earnings did not.

These findings suggest that many people sustain the benefits from IPS over the long term. IPS can be the catalyst for changing the trajectory of one’s life. This is a hopeful message for people who want to work despite years of doubt and discouragement. It is also a reminder to IPS specialists of the life-changing effects of their efforts.

Reference

Drake, R. E., & Bond, G. R. (2026). Does IPS produce long-term employment? A review of long-term follow-up studies. *Psychiatric Services*, 77, 462-466.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.20250422>

Building IPS in Mexico: From Pilot Study to National Opportunity

Jesús Alejandro Aldana López, MD

Chief of Education, Training and Research

Centro de Atención Integral en Salud Mental (CAISAME) Estancia Prolongada

Instituto Jalisciense de Salud Mental (SALME)

Over the past three years, our multidisciplinary team in Jalisco, Mexico has adapted, implemented, and evaluated the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model within the Mexican public mental health system. As our pilot project approaches its final stage, we are proud to reflect on progress made, lessons learned, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

One of our greatest achievements has been the successful collaboration between the Jalisco Mental Health and Addiction Institute (SALME), the Center for Comprehensive Care in Long-Stay Mental Health (CAISAME-EP), the National Institute of Psychiatry Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz, the IPS Employment Center, and Mexico's National Employment Service. This partnership has allowed us to build a bridge between public mental health services and competitive employment opportunities for people living with serious mental illness.

During the project, we successfully completed participant recruitment, implemented IPS services, and maintained weekly interdisciplinary meetings. Despite a state government transition and changes in institutional leadership, operational teams remained committed, allowing IPS implementation to continue.

The project has also contributed to the scientific literature, with two publications providing some of the first evidence describing IPS implementation in a Latin American middle-income country. These publications are our pilot study protocol, published in *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, and our qualitative study describing barriers and facilitators to IPS implementation in Mexico, published in the *International Journal of Public Health*.



Pictured: Dr. Aldana, the IPS team, research and implementation partners, and friends enjoyed a celebratory lunch as the pilot wrapped up.

An important milestone has been the continued improvement in implementation fidelity. Fidelity assessments identified progress in collaboration between mental health and employment services, outreach activities, and employer engagement. At the same time, reviews identified important structural priorities—including executive leadership, dedicated supervision, and greater community-based practice—that will guide the next phase of implementation.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson has been that implementing IPS in Mexico is not simply about translating a model; it requires building new partnerships, adapting to local realities, and creating a shared vision across health and employment sectors. These experiences have reinforced the importance of implementation science when introducing evidence-based practices into different cultural and organizational contexts.

Looking ahead, we hope the pilot represents the beginning rather than the end of this effort. Together with the National Employment Service, we are exploring the development of a national framework of employment best practices for people with psychosocial disabilities grounded in IPS principles. We also anticipate that the final results of our pilot trial will provide valuable insights into IPS implementation in Latin America and help identify both shared and context-specific challenges compared with programs in other regions of the world.

AFFINITY GROUPS

IPS affinity groups are a collection of individuals formed around shared interests, goals, or a common identity to create safe and connected spaces for IPS practitioners.

The IPS Learning Community has a Zero Exclusion Committee that supports two affinity groups. Our mission is to create a dedicated, supportive space where **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+)** individuals can connect, share experiences, and thrive. IPS program staff, government leaders, IPS trainers or other friends of the learning community are welcome to join a group that matches how they identify themselves. Whether you want to network, discuss shared challenges, or simply find a community of peers, your voice and presence are welcome!

On behalf of the IPS Zero Exclusion Committee, we would like to invite you to participate:

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Affinity Group

3:30 PM -4:30 PM Eastern Time (US)
Every 3 months on the Third Tuesday
August 18, 2026
November 17, 2026

LGBTQIA+ Affinity Group

11:00 AM Eastern Time (US)
Every 3 months on the Third Tuesday
Aug 18, 2026
November 17, 2026

We invite you to join! These groups are entirely voluntary. Please visit our [webpage](#) for more information!

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



Employment Center

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

ipsworks.org