PHASE II
PROPOSAL BRIEF #10
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Analysis of Recent Policy and Other Federal Directives
as they May Benefit Persons with Disabilities
in Postsecondary Education Settings

Statement of the Problem
The recent passage of federal policy and the development of new directives (Workforce Investment Act, Ticket to Work, Social Security Administration directives) concerning preparation and employment of persons with disabilities could lead to changes in the manner in which students with disabilities are supported in postsecondary education and other life-long learning opportunities leading to subsequent employment. At this time it is unknown what impact this new policy will have on students seeking to participate in postsecondary education and other life-long learning opportunities. There is a need to review the new policy and conduct an analysis of those policy components that might impact upon the participation of student with disabilities in postsecondary education.

Preliminary Areas of Review
A preliminary review of the WIA has yielded the following six areas of policy for further analysis and clarification:

1. Eligibility of Training Providers
A key principle of the 1998 Workforce Investment Act is the streamlining of services through the integration of multiple employment and training programs at One-Stop service Centers. Another principle is the empowerment of individuals with information and resources to manage their careers through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) to allow maximum customer choice in their training providers.

The statute does not specifically outline the criteria by which training providers are selected. Are traditional postsecondary institutions automatically included in the ITA? There is a need for clarification of selection criteria to ensure that students with disabilities wanting to pursue higher education career goals are not denied this choice.

2. Disability Representation on Local Workforce Investment Boards
State and local Workforce Investment Boards play an important role in the development of Workforce Investment Plans. The statute mandates Board membership to


include at least one member representing each One-stop partner, and two or more members representing categories described in the WIA, including "organizations representing indi-
viduals with disabilities." WIA regulations do not, however, mandate a membership seat for each category of entities listed in the statute. Should state and local Workforce Investment Boards be directed to include representation of people with disabilities?

3. Postsecondary Education
   Representation on Local Workforce Investment Boards
In addition to the need to ensure the representation of people with disabilities on state and local Boards we need to consider representation of including postsecondary education institutions. To ensure equal opportunity, self-determination and economic self-sufficiency - all key principles of federal disability policy - students with disabilities should be encouraged to strive for higher educational goals leading to high-end employment and lifelong learning. Thus, state and local Workforce Investment Boards should be directed to include representation of postsecondary education institutions.

4. Performance Accountability
A key provision of the Workforce Investment Act is state and local accountability for the performance of the workforce system. Training providers and their programs must demonstrate successful performance and customer satisfaction to remain eligible to receive funds. For the adult program, state performance indicators include entry into employment, retention, earnings, and educational or occupational credentials. Local workforce investment areas are subject to the same indicators, in addition to additional indicators the Governor may select. Local performance indicators should therefore include both 'career advancement' and 'improved quality of life' to further the achievement of higher education goals and lifelong learning for students with disabilities.

5. Disability Awareness Issues
The purpose of the WIA is to create a national workforce preparation and employment system to improve workforce quality and reduce welfare dependency. This statute serves the need of all job seekers, including people with disabilities. To ensure that people with disabilities have universal access to this new workforce system and are able to participate freely, there is a need for a directive mandating disability awareness training for training providers and all persons participating in One-Stop programs.

6. Youth Programs: Self Advocacy Training
The WIA creates Youth Council to serve the needs of low-income youth ages 14 to 21 who meet at least one of six barriers to employment and youths with disabilities. The design framework for local youth programs must provide preparation for postsecondary education programs, among others, and provide linkages between academic and occupational learning. For youth with disabilities, self-advocacy training is an essential component of as well as pre-requisite for academic and occupational learning. There is a need for a directive mandating disability self-advocacy training for youth with disabilities by age fifteen. The outcome of such training would yield adults with disabilities being able to understand their disability rights and advocacy needs in the workplace.
Preliminary Method

1. A research team will conduct a search for documents and reviews concerning recent federal policy impacting upon the education and employment of persons with disabilities (partially completed).

2. An analysis will be conducted of all information gathered to determine those sections of federal policy that might impact upon persons with disabilities seeking supports to participate in postsecondary education and life-long learning, including supports for subsequent employment.

3. Based on the analysis, raise a number of issues or questions requiring clarification or directive.

4. Share the issues and questions with a group of policy experts (Bobby Silverstein, Sue Swenson, Pat Morrissey, Jonathan Young & others) through an online focus group discussion. This discussion will generate new insight and clarification to be applied when implementing the new policy.

5. Each issue or question area will be written up with responses and feedback appropriate to different audiences concerned with the implementation of the new policy and as it impacts students with disabilities seeking supports within postsecondary education.

Projected Products/Outcomes

1. Series of Discussion Briefs targeted to different audiences involved in postsecondary education and life-long learning/employment.

2. Document to be published in a professional journal or other appropriate outlet.