# Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center

*Annual Summative Evaluation: September 2023*

## What is the Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center?

In September 2020, the Administration on Disabilities (AoD) within the Administration for Community Living (ACL) awarded the Lewin Group and TASH (Lewin/TASH) a five-year contract to support the establishment of the Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC). DETAC provides evidence-based technical assistance (TA) to grantees in six AoD programs (refer to the section Grantee Engagement). DETAC offers tools, skills, and strategies for AoD grantees interested in promoting systems change to improve competitive, integrated employment (CIE) outcomes and economic advancement of individuals with disabilities.

### Annual Evaluation

Annually, DETAC conducts a summative evaluation to provide continuous feedback on TA efforts and measure progress toward outcomes. DETAC evaluates the reach and effect of its activities by analyzing data on utilization of TA activities, satisfaction, intended or actual action taken as a result of the TA, and the impact of such action. This evaluation report covers the period of August 2022 – July 2023.

Project officers, AoD grantees, and self-advocates shared information with DETAC about their greatest needs and areas of interest related to disability employment. Key themes include financial independence; leveraging assistive technology; cultural competency and diversity, equity, and inclusion; knowledge translation and diffusion; and employer engagement. DETAC addresses these needs through activities focused on systems change, innovation, and collaboration.

| **Systems Change** | **Innovation** | **Collaboration** |
|---|---|---|
| Build the competencies of professionals at all levels of the AoD grantee network within AoD grantee entities through applied learning techniques, e-learning communities, skills-development TA, peer-to-peer mentoring, and resource development. | Build the AoD grantee network capacity to focus on CIE and economic advancement strategies through identification, development, scalability, and sustainability of evidence-based practices. | Leverage the unique strategic partnership development that leads to substantial improvements in CIE and economic advancement outcomes at individual and systems level. |

## What does DETAC Offer?

| National Community of Practice (CoP) | Results & Innovation in Systems Excellence (RISE) Peer Action e-Learning Communities | On-Demand TA | Resource Development | Website and Resource Clearinghouse |
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DETAC provides TA through five channels:

A **national CoP** provides high quality TA to grantees, self-advocates, family members, subject matter experts (SME) and government officials through webinars and podcasts.

**RISE eLearning Communities** offer small, time-limited, outcome-oriented virtual working groups focused on achieving a specific milestone to grantees. Subject matter experts, often grantees' peers, lead each interactive community.

**On-Demand TA** takes the form of online on-demand content, modularized curricula, national conferences, direct TA requests, and other modes of virtual TA and training to grantees.

**Resource development** encompasses written resources (e.g., fact sheets, briefs) on a variety of topics related to competitive, integrated employment, economic self-sufficiency, partnership development to AoD grantees and the public.

A **website and clearinghouse** offer TA resources and products, including a learning management system (LMS) with a growing library of course content to the public.

**TA Delivered**
August 2022 – July 2023

- 3 Podcasts
- 10 Webinars
- 7 RISE Communities
- 2 Conferences
- 5 Products
- 1 LMS Course
- 3 Direct TA

### Connections between DETAC Offerings

DETAC uses an iterative approach to deliver TA through multiple methods on topics of interest. For example, DETAC released a report titled *The National Landscape of Subminimum Wage, Implications, and recommendations to Elevate Competitive Integrated Employment*, which was subsequently highlighted during the June webinar. DETAC will continue to expand upon 14c phaseout with a RISE eLearning community in 2024.

## How does DETAC offer TA?

DETAC offers TA through an evolving process that consists of identification of needs, partnering with experts for delivery, and making data driven decisions. Stakeholder engagement is present across all three steps of the process.
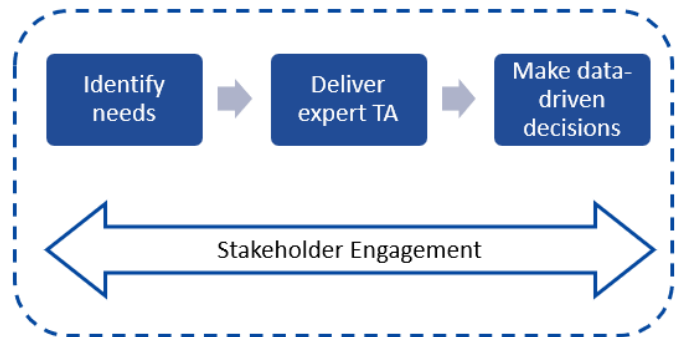


### Identify Needs

In 2020 DETAC conducted a landscape assessment of the state of disability employment activities of AoD grantees. This assessment identified current projects and activities of the AoD programs,



**Grantee Representative Work Group Members and Affiliations**

**Federally Funded Centers for Independent Living**
- Sarah Michaud, New Vistas
- Cyndy Milstead Anzek, Walton Options for Independent Living
- Chamane Barrow, Houston Center for Independent Living
- Melanie Hogan, Linking Employment Abilities and Potential
- Kevin Smith, Mental Health Peer Connection/West New York Independent Living
- Kathy Kay, League of Human Dignity
- Jessica Minor, Accessibility Center for Independent Living

**State Councils on Developmental Disabilities**
- Rachel London, Maryland Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Santa Perez, Nevada Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Kristen Larson, Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

**University Centers on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Service**
- Robin Jones, University of Illinois, Institute on Disability and Human Development

**State Protection & Advocacy Systems**
- Emily Munson, Disability Rights Indiana
- Shandra Monterastelli (Alternate), Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program

**Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Programs**
- Eileen Kelly, Minnesota Department of Human Services

**Ex Officio**
- Patricia Henke, Colorado Office of Employment First, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

gaps in grantee activities, and strong examples of AoD grantees influencing employment systems-change activities. The findings from this assessment were used to inform the strategic plan which DETAC uses to guide TA offerings.

Aside from the landscape assessment, DETAC maintains engagement with stakeholders, AoD grantee leads, and SMEs on a constant basis to identify additional needs for TA. A grantee representative work group actively engages in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the TA Center's activities. During this evaluation period, the work group met four times and provided ad hoc guidance, as needed, on written products, the LMS, and RISE eLearning communities.

**Leveraging Grantee Feedback**

The grantee representative work group identified artificial intelligence (AI) as an emerging area of interest and need for further education and TA. In response, DETAC engaged with federal partners, grantees, and private industry to offer a webinar exploring key considerations of AI in supporting disability employment and providing real world examples of AI as a tool to promote CIE.

## *Deliver Expert TA*

Once TA needs are identified, DETAC partners with experts in the field to deliver TA. These SMEs represent grantees in the six AoD programs, individuals with lived experience, researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders. DETAC frequently pairs experts to deliver webinars and RISE eLearning communities that provide research, data, or theory and real-world application.



In addition, DETAC maintains ongoing communication with national partners to promote TA activities and cross-share resources (e.g., through their websites and newsletters). Through regular engagement with partners, DETAC identifies emerging TA topics and areas of persistent need, discerns the most appropriate methods of TA, and identifies experts to deliver TA. Key partners include, but are not limited to, national associations (refer to graphic), the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and ACL grantees or TA providers (e.g., National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices Systems, StateData.info – a project of ThinkWork).
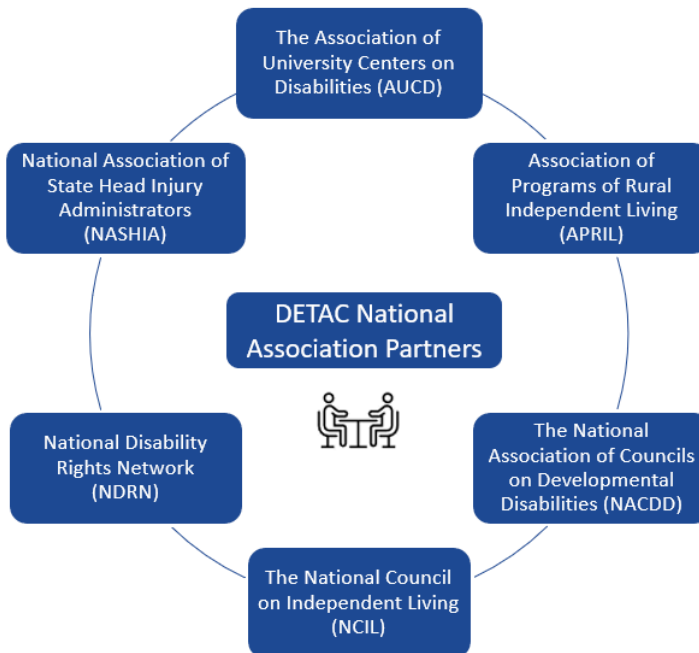
## *Make Data-Driven Decisions*

DETAC makes data-driven decisions on all TA activities using the following sources:

**Website metrics** provide insight into DETAC's most viewed webinars and resources, how users reach the website (e.g., via marketing email, search engine, or link on another website), and the number of new and returning visitors. DETAC also uses LMS data to examine the number of users and their course completion rates. DETAC identified top TA resources using website metrics and outcomes from post-event data.

**Post-event data** provide quantitative and qualitative insight on webinar, RISE eLearning communities, and direct TA. The surveys track attendance rates, participant roles, satisfaction, change in knowledge, willingness to share information with colleagues, and intent to apply the material to their work. Qualitative responses provide detailed insight into how participants are using the TA they received.

**Stakeholder feedback** from grantees and stakeholders on the effectiveness and impact of TA informs DETAC on an ongoing basis.

**Most Frequently Accessed TA by Type**
August 2022 – July 2023

**RISE:** *Employer Engagement*

**Podcast:** *The Business Side of Things: Employment and Brain Injury*

**Webinar:** *Fitting the Pieces Together: Assistive Technology Solutions for Brain Injury and Employment*

**Written Product:** *The National Landscape of Subminimum Wage: Implications and Recommendations to Elevate CIE*

"I have a better understanding of tools that can be used by states and different lenses to help them see through to support diverse populations."

-RISE Participant

"This TA should help all stakeholders with having a united front in determining the best new approaches to broadening service opportunities as it pertains to individuals with disabilities being able to pursue employment in the manner that best serves their needs."

-Direct TA Recipient

"The presenters gave an excellent amount of information in the short amount of time they had. I will definitely use this in helping my consumers and employees under my supervision."

-CoP Participant

## Grantee Engagement

DETAC provides evidence-based TA to grantees in six AoD programs: Federally Funded Centers for Independent Living (CIL), State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Council), University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD), State Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&A), Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Programs (TBI Grantee), and Community Collaborations for Employment, a Project of National Significance (CCE Grantee). DETAC delivers TA to grantees in proportion to their financial contribution to the center. To maximize its reach and impact, DETAC opened many TA opportunities to all grantees this year.

### CIL Highlights

Several RISE communities specifically focused on CILs. For example, DETAC facilitated a RISE community called *Howdy Partners: Maximizing Employment through Collaboration*, which emphasized partnerships between CILs and TBI grantees.

DETAC produced a written resource, *Brain Injury: Enhancing Self-Directed Choice and Control*, targeted toward CILs and TBI grantees. The brief features resources, strategies, and screening tips for working with individuals who experience brain injury, including those with hidden brain injury.

CILs served as presenters and panelists during DETAC's CoP webinars including:
- *CILs that are Employer Networks* (New Horizons)
- *Utilizing Creative Strategies to Increase Employment for Hispanics with Disabilities in Texas* (Valley Associates for Independent Living)

**Case Study.** During this evaluation year, CILs demonstrated interest in developing Employer Networks. CETAC held a webinar with New Horizons to spotlight their work as a CIL in an Employer Network through Social Security's Ticket to Work Program. DETAC also initiated TA to a CIL on establishing their status as an Employer Network.

# DD Council Highlights

Councils may complete an LMS course titled *Disability Employment and DD Councils*. This course provides a foundation for Councils to understand state and federal laws aimed at advancing CIE.

DETAC facilitated a RISE community called *Small Allotment State Councils and Employment*, which focused on enhancing partnerships with local and state governments, and community rehabilitation providers.

Councils served as presenters and panelists during DETAC's CoP webinar *Celebrating Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month*. Presenters represented NACDD and the California and South Carolina Councils.

**Case Study.** DETAC provided direct TA regarding Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers to two different councils. DETAC partnered with NASHIA to provide TA to the West Virginia Council on employment supports for people with brain injury in the HCBS waiver. The California Council also received ongoing TA on enhancing CIE services through the HCBS waiver related to the phase out of the 14(c) and sheltered work.

# UCEDD Highlights

DETAC held a RISE community called *Engaging Diverse Communities* specifically focused on CCE grantees, with many representing UCEDDs. This community discussed implications for diverse communities as it pertains to CIE.

UCEDDs served as presenters and panelists during DETAC's CoP webinar, *Taking a Deeper Dive into a Project of National Significance: Community Collaborations for Employment (CCE).* Speakers represented CCE grantees from UCEDDs.

**Case Study.** Upon being awarded a CCE grant to increase CIE outcomes for youth with ID/DD, the University of Massachusetts Boston requested TA for their community landscape analysis. DETAC partnered with a SME to provide support on facilitating community conversations, analyzing data, and utilizing data to work with stakeholders on next steps.

## P&A Highlights

DETAC produced a written resource, *The National Landscape of Subminimum Wage, Implications, and Reccomendations to Elevate CIE,* targeted toward P&As. This brief features strategies and reccomendations regarding 14(c) phase-out of sheltered work settings.

P&As served as presenters and panelists during DETAC's CoP webinar *Celebrating Olmstead: Exploring the 14c Report and National Trends in the Movement to End Segregation and Exploitation of People with Disabilities*. Representatives from NDRN served as speakers.

**Case Study.** DETAC partnered with NDRN to create a series of products related to 14(c) phaseout. The written report was a landscape assessment of findings from states that phased out 14(c) sheltered work settings, which contains examples of strategies that states used to phase out 14(c). The report also included recommendations for holistic phase-out approaches. Following the release of the report, DETAC and NDRN discussed findings and implications during the Celebrating Olmstead webinar. DETAC will present findings of the report during the national TASH conference in November 2023.

## CCE Highlights

DETAC held a RISE community called *Engaging Diverse Communities* specifically focused on CCE grantees. This community discusses implications for diverse communities as it pertains to CIE.

Direct TA focused on teaching CCE grantees how to facilitate community conversations and how to analyze data gathered from the event.

CCE grantees served as presenters and panelists during DETAC's CoP webinar*, Taking a Deeper Dive into a Project of National Significance: Community Collaborations for Employment (CCE)*. Speakers represented CCE grantees from Arizona, Massachusetts, and Kansas.

**Case Study.** During this evaluation year, DETAC conducted a RISE community targeted toward CCE grantees on engaging diverse cultural and linguistic communities. DETAC also attended calls with grantee leadership to further assess TA needs for subsequent years.

# TBI Grantee Highlights

DETAC facilitated a RISE community called *Howdy Partners: Maximizing Employment through Collaboration,* which focuses on employment outcomes for individuals with brain injury and establishing partnerships between CILs and TBI grantees.

DETAC produced a written resource, *Brain Injury Enhancing Self-Directed Choice and Control*, targeted toward TBI grantees and CILs. This brief features resources, strategies, and screening tips for working with individuals who experience brain injury, including those with hidden brain injury.
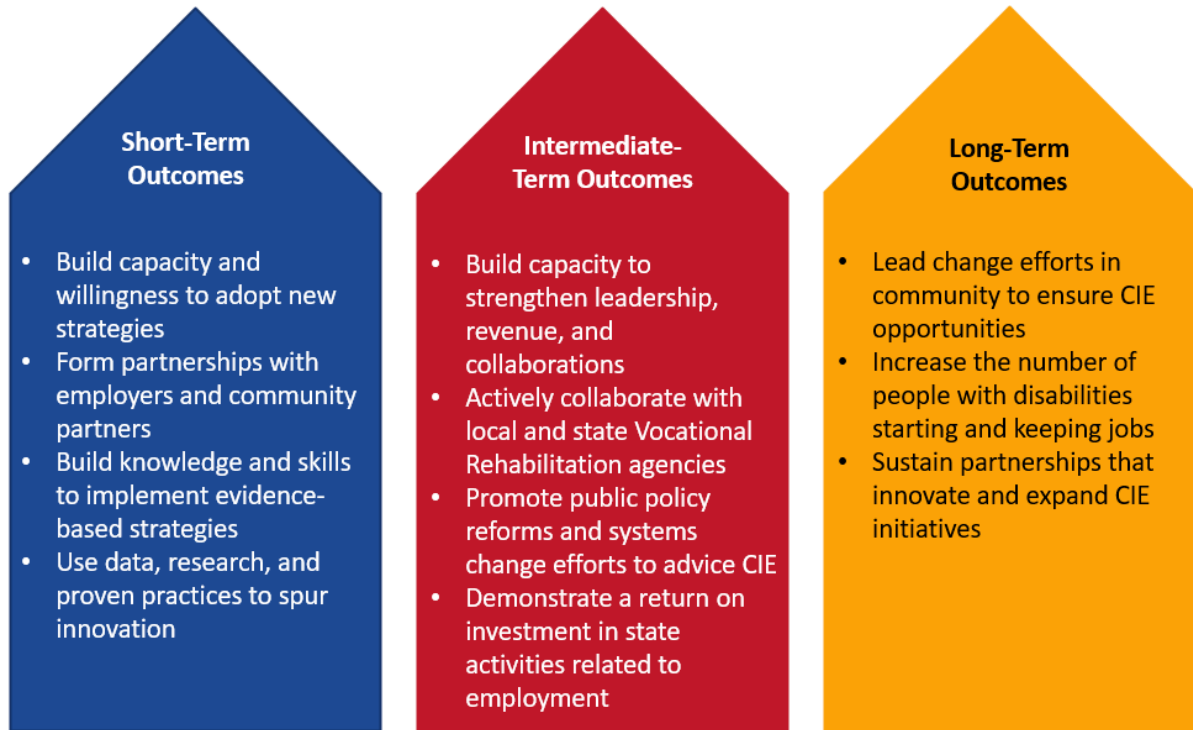
TBI Grantees served as presenters and panelists during DETAC's CoP webinar *Fitting the Pieces Together: Assistive Technology Solutions for Brain Injury and Employment.* Speakers were representatives from NASHIA.

**Case Study.** DETAC produced a variety of TA resources for TBI grantees this evaluation year with a focus on partnership and collaboration. A brief on brain injury and employment targeted CILs working with individuals who experience brain injury. DETAC also held a webinar on leveraging assistive technology for individuals with brain injury to achieve employment. One of the final eLearning communities for this year supported TBI grantees and other grantees to understand other systems and form partnerships to elevate employment outcomes for people with brain injury.

## How is the TA Center Advancing CIE?

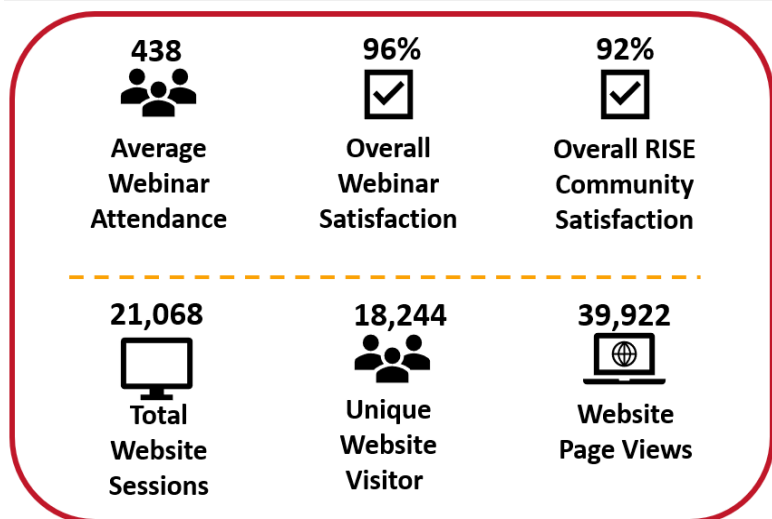AoD identified the following short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes for the TA Center.

**Short-Term Outcomes**

- Build capacity and willingness to adopt new strategies
- Form partnerships with employers and community partners
- Build knowledge and skills to implement evidence-based strategies
- Use data, research, and proven practices to spur innovation

**Intermediate-Term Outcomes**

- Build capacity to strengthen leadership, revenue, and collaborations
- Actively collaborate with local and state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
- Promote public policy reforms and systems change efforts to advice CIE
- Demonstrate a return on investment in state activities related to employment

**Long-Term Outcomes**

- Lead change efforts in community to ensure CIE opportunities
- Increase the number of people with disabilities starting and keeping jobs
- Sustain partnerships that innovate and expand CIE initiatives

Grantees demonstrated progress toward outcomes in the following areas during this evaluation cycle.
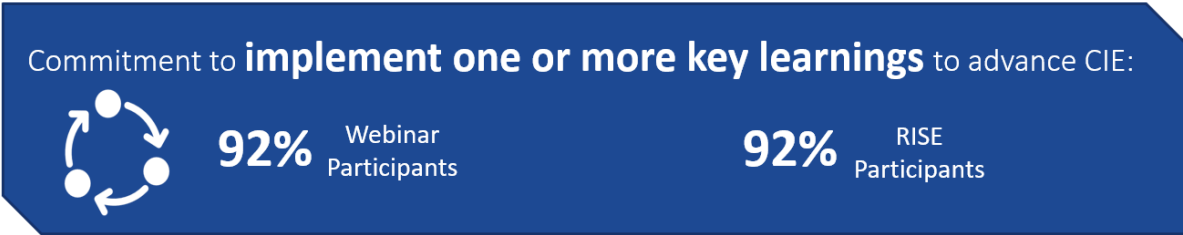
### *Short-term outcomes*

**Increased knowledge and capacity to implement evidence-based practices**. The DETAC uses a multi-faceted approach to build knowledge and skill among grantees. On average, more than 1,520 people visit DETAC's website each month, which is home to over 500 linked resources. Nearly 4,378 participants attended webinars during the year on topics such as collaboration, employer networks, and AI work tools. Webinar attendance and web page views increased this year as compared to last evaluation year.

**438** Average Webinar Attendance

**96%** Overall Webinar Satisfaction

**92%** Overall RISE Community Satisfaction

**21,068** Total Website Sessions

**18,244** Unique Website Visitor

**39,922** Website Page Views

**Commitment to implement new strategies to advance CIE.** After engaging with the DETAC, nearly all grantees expressed intention to act on what they learned. The TA Center helps translate knowledge into action by providing practical strategies from peers and subject matter experts, tailored TA opportunities, and multiple TA efforts (e.g., written resources, blogs, podcasts, webinars, RISE communities) that amplify a single topic of interest.

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Commitment to **implement one or more key learnings** to advance CIE:

**92%** Webinar Participants          **92%** RISE Participants

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*Intermediate-term outcomes*

**Collaboration with partners.** During this evaluation cycle, DETAC focused on building knowledge and capacity for developing partnerships. For example, DETAC offered TA on building collaborations with other grantees to achieve successful outcomes on CIE through a RISE eLearning community. This approach supported grantees to acquire knowledge and leverage it to develop their own strategies for engagement. Additionally, DETAC collaborated with other TA Centers and federal agencies to advance CIE.

**Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).** DETAC also directed grantees on how to build collaborations with VR. A webinar featuring the Texas Workforce, Division of VR showcased a local collaboration between VR, a CIL, and Disability Chamber of Commerce as an example of how such partnerships can increase CIE opportunities for people with disabilities. The RISE eLearning community on CILs and Employment further demonstrated lessons for grantees to leverage when working with VR.

**Promote public policy reforms.** DETAC supports AoD grantees to enhance their policies and systems to advance CIE. In particular, DETAC provided support to grantees to phase out use of 14(c) certificates and sub-minimum wage in a written product and webinar. By linking grantees and subject matter experts, the TA Center facilitated intensive strategy sessions to support grantees in addressing these significant policy issues.

**Commitment to share learning with colleagues.** Nearly all grantees participating in CoP webinars and RISE eLearning communities committed to share something they learned with their colleagues. RISE sessions also provided a structured forum for teams to discuss challenges and identify strategies for implementation.

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Commitment to **share information learned with colleagues**:

**95%** Webinar Participants          **92%** RISE Participants

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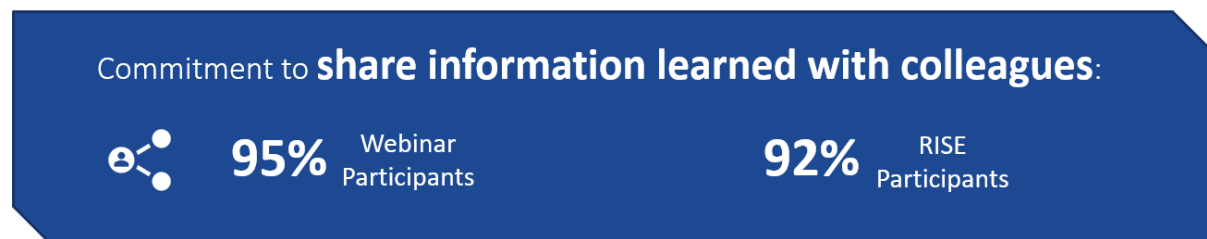
## *Long-term Outcomes*

**Lead change efforts.** Direct TA is a crucial way for DETAC to assist local and state entities with leading systems change efforts. This evaluation year, state councils have received direct TA on adjusting HCBS waivers to better support individuals with disabilities to achieve CIE. Through these efforts, councils were given the tools to succeed in conducting systems change in their communities.

**Sustain national partnerships.** DETAC has made great strides in developing and sustaining partnerships with national organizations. These partnerships are critical for developing TA, promotion of the center, and reducing duplication.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

In partnership with subject matter experts and guidance from a grantee workgroup, DETAC supported AoD grantees to advance CIE through written products, a website and learning management system, webinars, RISE eLearning communities, podcasts, conference presentations, and direct TA.

### Looking Ahead

Highlights from DETAC's upcoming TA offerings include:

- Phasing out 14(c), including leadership by self-advocates

- Delivering high-quality pre-employment transition services to youth with I/DD

- Creating and implementing post-secondary education programs for students with I/DD

- Engaging with employers to develop and sustain partnerships

- Celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month by demonstrating how organizations are working in partnership with people with disabilities from minority populations to build equity as it pertains to technology

DETAC will continue its momentum into the 2023-2024 year by expanding the reach of RISE eLearning communities and increasing its in-person presence at conference and events. Up-to-date information on all of the DETAC's activities are available on its website.