



## Evaluation of Managing Your Benefits for Employment Success and Transition (MY BEST)

In January 2011 through 2012, the Kessler Foundation provided AHEDD a Signature Employment Grant to support its “Managing Your Benefits for Employment Success and Transition” Program. The MY BEST program was designed to provide work incentive counseling for youth with disabilities in order to promote effective employment outcomes.

During 2011 and 2012, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, conducted an evaluation of AHEDD’s MY BEST program including pre and post program survey of participants, focus group, analysis of participant data and outcomes and structured interviews of program staff. The MY BEST program educated individuals with disabilities on the benefits of employment and introduced them to the various work incentive programs that allow them to work when receiving public benefits such as SSI and Medicaid. MY BEST also referred participants of the program to an outside agency for financial literacy training and provided job development and job placement assistance to individuals who needed help finding a job. Finally, MY BEST trained special education transition staff in high schools throughout the target community on work incentive programs and participated in the transition process for young people exiting the education system and entering the vocational rehabilitation system.

The Heldrich Center’s principal finding in the two year evaluation was that AHEDD’s MY BEST program was highly successful and effective: Highlights from the report are as follows:

- All participants of the MY BEST program received work incentive counseling and participants thought AHEDD staff to be a strong team;
- The MY BEST program succeeded in its recruitment efforts at bringing youth who receive SSA benefits into the program;
- After receiving work incentive counseling, participants expressed greater willingness to pursue employment and this helped participants to believe that they could become successfully employed;
- AHEDD’s program substantially exceeded its employment placement goals, with a wide variety of placements and high job retention.