

# Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint Ombudsman Fact Sheet

## SUMMARY

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This bill would create the position of California Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint Ombudsman within the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD).

## BACKGROUND

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For people with disabilities, employment means greater economic self-sufficiency, an opportunity to use their skills, and more active participation in community life.

The National Council of State Legislatures states:

“Today, the employment of people with disabilities is seen not only as a civil rights issue, but also as a practical boon for businesses, government budgets and citizens. Employing people with disabilities has been shown to benefit businesses, for example, as a result of lower turnover, increased productivity and access to a broader pool of skilled workers. In addition, increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities “saves the federal and state government money by reducing dependency on cash and medical and disability benefits,” according to a 2013 Employer Assistance and Resource Network report.

Nevertheless, a striking employment gap persists between Americans with and without disabilities. At nearly 20 percent of the population, people with disabilities are one of the nation’s largest minority groups. Yet the most recent national disability employment statistics show that only 20 percent of people with disabilities are participating in the workforce, compared to 69.1 percent of people without disabilities.”

In addition, studies have consistently shown that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are frequently employed at below minimum wage (if they are employed at all), and often work only a minimum number of hours a week.

## What is Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)?

CIE is employment that offers competitive earnings, an integrated location, and opportunities for advancement. Failure to meet any of these three criteria means it is not true competitive integrated employment. CIE is sometimes referred to as “a real job with real pay in the real world.”

## What is The California Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint for Change ?

A proactive interagency plan, the “Blueprint” has been created by representatives from the California Department of Education (CDE), California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), and California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to jointly identify ways to increase competitive integrated employment (CIE) opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) over a five-year period.

While laudable and promising, the Blueprint is a complicated document. It will require numerous parties cohesively working together to effectively implement.

## HOW WOULD THIS BILL HELP?

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To assist Californians in navigating the complexities of the Blueprint, and to be a liaison between the public and the organizations implementing the Blueprint, the position of CIE Ombudsman will be created within SCDD. Acting as the key contact person, the ombudsman would assist in answering questions and troubleshooting problems related to the implementation of the Blueprint. Among other duties, the Ombudsman would initiate impartial investigations of complaints concerning the Blueprint, endeavoring to bring a fair and expeditious conclusion to all inquiries.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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