

Employment First Committee (EFC) - 2018 Annual Report - Executive Summary

In 2018, California continued to see minimal growth in the labor force participation and employment rate for persons with developmental disabilities, despite continued economic growth. The percentage of people with developmental disabilities reported by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) in 2016 to be working is 14.2 percent. Despite passage of two bills to improve the data, challenges remain in data sharing amongst agencies and it is anticipated that California will have more nuanced data to better understand the barriers to competitive integrated employment (CIE) next year as the result of two bills.

The roles and responsibilities of the different departments are being delineated more specifically at the local level because of the CA CIE Blueprint. The report on the first year of implementation includes that 13 Local Planning Agreements had been established to facilitate improved collaboration and coordination amongst agencies at the local level. The report also shows increased utilization of programs such as WorkAbility and the Paid Internship Program. The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Council) has invested in developing service providers' professional competency in the area of Customized Employment in order to increase employment outcomes. The Council has also sponsored multiple legislative proposals to improve data sharing amongst agencies and to ensure people with disabilities are considered for apprenticeship opportunities (SB 1274 (McGuire) in 2018 and AB 1019 (Frazier) in 2019).

It is important that California continue to ensure that policy and programmatic barriers to CIE are removed and that the funding is available to build capacity and implement systemic change. The report concludes with 11 recommendations for California to undertake to remove barriers and create a system that more fully supports CIE. Some highlights include:

- The California Department of Education (CDE), the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), DDS and the Council should work collaboratively to launch a statewide multi-media public service campaign in traditional and social media with the goal of reducing the stigma to hiring individuals with developmental disabilities.
- CDE, DOR and DDS should continue their efforts to collaboratively work to streamline information sharing and service delivery planning to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities, including those from ethnically and linguistically diverse communities, experience a service delivery system that allows for unified planning and data sharing across agencies.
- The State Legislature should allocate funding to create a pathway for career advancement and credentialing that provides professional development for organization leaders, program managers, and staff responsible for delivering services to support CIE.
- The State Legislature should provide funding to promote the creation and enhancement of new and innovative projects that support CIE and facilitate systems transformation from sheltered employment and other segregated day services, to make way for an end to sub-minimum wage and segregated employment under 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- The Council, CDE, DOR and DDS should explore opportunities to work in partnership to develop programs that build students' self-advocacy and self-determination skills including how to make informed financial decisions.
- The State Legislature should pass legislation to create an incentive for employers who demonstrate a commitment to CIE by incorporating transportation solutions and supports into their business practices.