

Assembly Bill No. 1041

CHAPTER 677

An act to amend Sections 4646.5 and 4868 of, and to add Section 4869 to, the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to developmental services.

[Approved by Governor October 9, 2013. Filed with
Secretary of State October 9, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1041, Chesbro. Developmental services: Employment First Policy.

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act authorizes the State Department of Developmental Services to contract with regional centers to provide support and services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The services and supports to be provided to a regional center consumer are contained in an individual program plan (IPP), developed in accordance with prescribed requirements.

Existing law requires the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to, among other responsibilities, form a standing Employment First Committee to identify strategies and recommend legislative, regulatory, and policy changes to increase integrated employment, as defined, self-employment, and microenterprises for persons with developmental disabilities, as specified.

This bill would define competitive employment, microenterprises, and self-employment for these purposes. The bill would additionally require the Employment First Committee to identify existing sources of consumer data that can be matched with employment data, as specified, and to recommend goals for measuring employment participation and outcomes for various consumers within the developmental services system. The bill would require the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to develop an informational brochure about the Employment First Policy, translate the brochure into various languages, and post the brochure on the council's Internet Web site. This bill would require each regional center planning team, when developing an individual program plan for a transition age youth or working age adult, to consider a specified Employment First Policy. The bill would also require regional centers to provide consumers 16 years of age or older, and, when appropriate, other specified persons, with information about the Employment First Policy, options for integrated competitive employment, and services and supports, including postsecondary education, that are available to enable the consumer to transition from school to work, and to achieve the outcomes of obtaining and maintaining integrated competitive employment. The bill would authorize the department to request information from regional centers on current and planned activities related to the Employment First Policy.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that under existing state and federal law, special education local planning agencies (SELPA) have concurrent responsibilities to eligible students beginning at 16 years of age for the provision of assessment, planning, and necessary services to aid in the transition from school to postschool activities.

(b) This act shall not be construed to expand the responsibilities and duties of SELPA under state and federal law.

SEC. 2. Section 4646.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

4646.5. (a) The planning process for the individual program plan described in Section 4646 shall include all of the following:

(1) Gathering information and conducting assessments to determine the life goals, capabilities and strengths, preferences, barriers, and concerns or problems of the person with developmental disabilities. For children with developmental disabilities, this process should include a review of the strengths, preferences, and needs of the child and the family unit as a whole. Assessments shall be conducted by qualified individuals and performed in natural environments whenever possible. Information shall be taken from the consumer, his or her parents and other family members, his or her friends, advocates, authorized representative, if applicable, providers of services and supports, and other agencies. The assessment process shall reflect awareness of, and sensitivity to, the lifestyle and cultural background of the consumer and the family.

(2) A statement of goals, based on the needs, preferences, and life choices of the individual with developmental disabilities, and a statement of specific, time-limited objectives for implementing the person's goals and addressing his or her needs. These objectives shall be stated in terms that allow measurement of progress or monitoring of service delivery. These goals and objectives should maximize opportunities for the consumer to develop relationships, be part of community life in the areas of community participation, housing, work, school, and leisure, increase control over his or her life, acquire increasingly positive roles in community life, and develop competencies to help accomplish these goals.

(3) When developing individual program plans for children, regional centers shall be guided by the principles, process, and services and support parameters set forth in Section 4685.

(4) When developing an individual program plan for a transition age youth or working age adult, the planning team shall consider the Employment First Policy described in Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 4868).

(5) A schedule of the type and amount of services and supports to be purchased by the regional center or obtained from generic agencies or other resources in order to achieve the individual program plan goals and objectives, and identification of the provider or providers of service responsible for attaining each objective, including, but not limited to, vendors, contracted providers, generic service agencies, and natural supports.

The individual program plan shall specify the approximate scheduled start date for services and supports and shall contain timelines for actions necessary to begin services and supports, including generic services.

(6) When agreed to by the consumer, the parents, legally appointed guardian, or authorized representative of a minor consumer, or the legally appointed conservator of an adult consumer or the authorized representative, including those appointed pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 4548, subdivision (b) of Section 4701.6, and subdivision (e) of Section 4705, a review of the general health status of the adult or child, including medical, dental, and mental health needs, shall be conducted. This review shall include a discussion of current medications, any observed side effects, and the date of the last review of the medication. Service providers shall cooperate with the planning team to provide any information necessary to complete the health status review. If any concerns are noted during the review, referrals shall be made to regional center clinicians or to the consumer's physician, as appropriate. Documentation of health status and referrals shall be made in the consumer's record by the service coordinator.

(7) (A) The development of a transportation access plan for a consumer when all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The regional center is purchasing private, specialized transportation services or services from a residential, day, or other provider, excluding vouchered service providers, to transport the consumer to and from day or work services.

(ii) The planning team has determined that a consumer's community integration and participation could be safe and enhanced through the use of public transportation services.

(iii) The planning team has determined that generic transportation services are available and accessible.

(B) To maximize independence and community integration and participation, the transportation access plan shall identify the services and supports necessary to assist the consumer in accessing public transportation and shall comply with Section 4648.35. These services and supports may include, but are not limited to, mobility training services and the use of transportation aides. Regional centers are encouraged to coordinate with local public transportation agencies.

(8) A schedule of regular periodic review and reevaluation to ascertain that planned services have been provided, that objectives have been fulfilled within the times specified, and that consumers and families are satisfied with the individual program plan and its implementation.

(b) For all active cases, individual program plans shall be reviewed and modified by the planning team, through the process described in Section 4646, as necessary, in response to the person's achievement or changing needs, and no less often than once every three years. If the consumer or, where appropriate, the consumer's parents, legal guardian, authorized representative, or conservator requests an individual program plan review, the individual program shall be reviewed within 30 days after the request is submitted.

(c) (1) The department, with the participation of representatives of a statewide consumer organization, the Association of Regional Center Agencies, an organized labor organization representing service coordination staff, and the Organization of Area Boards shall prepare training material and a standard format and instructions for the preparation of individual program plans, which embody an approach centered on the person and family.

(2) Each regional center shall use the training materials and format prepared by the department pursuant to paragraph (1).

(3) The department shall biennially review a random sample of individual program plans at each regional center to ensure that these plans are being developed and modified in compliance with Section 4646 and this section.

SEC. 3. Section 4868 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

4868. (a) The State Council on Developmental Disabilities shall form a standing Employment First Committee consisting of the following members:

(1) One designee of each of the members of the state council specified in subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), (F), and (H) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 4521.

(2) A member of the consumer advisory committee of the state council.

(b) In carrying out the requirements of this section, the committee shall meet and consult, as appropriate, with other state and local agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to, the Employment Development Department, the Association of Regional Center Agencies, one or more supported employment provider organizations, an organized labor organization representing service coordination staff, and one or more consumer family member organizations.

(c) The responsibilities of the committee shall include, but need not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) Identifying the respective roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies in enhancing integrated and gainful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

(2) Identifying strategies, best practices, and incentives for increasing integrated employment and gainful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, including, but not limited to, ways to improve the transition planning process for students 14 years of age or older, and to develop partnerships with, and increase participation by, public and private employers and job developers.

(3) Identifying existing sources of employment data and recommending goals for, and approaches to measuring progress in, increasing integrated employment and gainful employment of people with developmental disabilities.

(4) Identifying existing sources of consumer data that can be used to provide demographic information for individuals, including, but not limited to, age, gender, ethnicity, types of disability, and geographic location of

consumers, and that can be matched with employment data to identify outcomes and trends of the Employment First Policy.

(5) Recommending goals for measuring employment participation and outcomes for various consumers within the developmental services system.

(6) Recommending legislative, regulatory, and policy changes for increasing the number of individuals with developmental disabilities in integrated employment, self-employment, and microenterprises, and who earn wages at or above minimum wage, including, but not limited to, recommendations for improving transition planning and services for students with developmental disabilities who are 14 years of age or older. This shall include, but shall not be limited to, the development of a policy with the intended outcome of significantly increasing the number of individuals with developmental disabilities who engage in integrated employment, self-employment, and microenterprises, and in the number of individuals who earn wages at or above minimum wage. This proposed policy shall be in furtherance of the intent of this division that services and supports be available to enable persons with developmental disabilities to approximate the pattern of everyday living available to people without disabilities of the same age and that support their integration into the mainstream life of the community, and that those services and supports result in more independent, productive, and normal lives for the persons served. The proposed policy shall not limit service and support options otherwise available to consumers, or the rights of consumers, or, where appropriate, parents, legal guardians, or conservators to make choices in their own lives.

(d) For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) “Competitive employment” means work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

(2) “Integrated employment” means “integrated work” as defined in subdivision (o) of Section 4851.

(3) “Microenterprises” means small businesses owned by individuals with developmental disabilities who have control and responsibility for decisionmaking and overseeing the business, with accompanying business licenses, taxpayer identification numbers other than social security numbers, and separate business bank accounts. Microenterprises may be considered integrated competitive employment.

(4) “Self-employment” means an employment setting in which an individual works in a chosen occupation, for profit or fee, in his or her own small business, with control and responsibility for decisions affecting the conduct of the business.

(e) The committee, by July 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, shall provide a report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature and to the Governor describing its work and recommendations. The report due by July

1, 2011, shall include the proposed policy described in paragraph (4) of subdivision (c).

SEC. 4. Section 4869 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

4869. (a) (1) In furtherance of the purposes of this division to make services and supports available to enable persons with developmental disabilities to approximate the pattern of everyday living available to people without disabilities of the same age, to support the integration of persons with developmental disabilities into the mainstream life of the community, and to bring about more independent, productive, and normal lives for the persons served, it is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment shall be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This policy shall be known as the Employment First Policy.

(2) Implementation of the policy shall be consistent with, and shall not infringe upon, the rights established pursuant to this division, including the right of people with developmental disabilities to make informed choices with respect to services and supports through the individual program planning process.

(3) Integrated competitive employment is intended to be the first option considered by planning teams for working age individuals, but individuals may choose goals other than integrated competitive employment.

(4) Postsecondary education, technical or vocational training, and internship programs may be considered as a means to achieve integrated competitive employment or career advancement.

(5) This chapter shall not be construed to expand the existing entitlement to services for persons with developmental disabilities described in this division.

(6) This chapter shall not alleviate schools of their responsibility to provide transition services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

(b) The State Council on Developmental Disabilities shall develop an informational brochure about the Employment First Policy, translate the brochure into various languages, and post the brochure on its Internet Web site.

(c) Regional centers shall provide consumers 16 years of age or older, and, when appropriate, their parents, legal guardians, conservators, or authorized representative with information, in an understandable form, about the Employment First Policy, options for integrated competitive employment, and services and supports, including postsecondary education, that are available to enable the consumer to transition from school to work, and to achieve the outcomes of obtaining and maintaining integrated competitive employment.

(d) The department may request information from regional centers on current and planned activities related to the Employment First Policy.