



Subminimum Wage Myths... **BUSTED!!!**

MYTH: Senate Bill (SB) 639 would limit day programs' ability to use 14(c) certificates for job training activities.

BUSTED! The type of "training" provided is exploitive and does not prepare people for competitive integrated employment. Stakeholders are encouraged to help day programs transition to community-based work experiences and vocational training that have proven to be more effective in supporting people with significant disabilities to prepare for employment.



MYTH: Sheltered workshops allow individuals with disabilities to learn useful job skills while empowering the individual.

BUSTED! Sheltered workshops that use 14(c) certificates are typically in a warehouse type of setting. There are different stations where people with disabilities typically perform repetitive tasks, like placing screws in small plastic bags or packaging disposable forks and spoons.

They do not work alongside their peers without disabilities, and they are paid subminimum wage. They are often not taught or held to expectations of professionalism, like staying on task, which can make it difficult for them to adjust when they do try to transition to work in the community.

If the workshop does not have any contracts, there may be no work for them to do at all. In these instances, they may be bored and unengaged and are definitely NOT learning any job training.



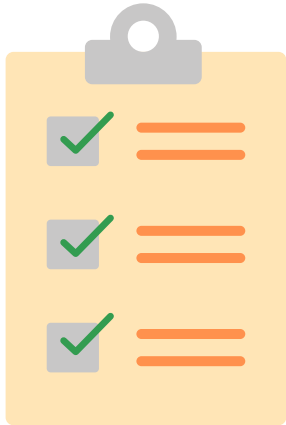


MYTH: SB 639 will eliminate employment options for people with disabilities.

BUSTED! SB 639 simply requires workers to earn minimum wage and, in fact, assists these workers to gainful employment. We should also consider what employment options are acceptable.



Is receiving pennies on the dollar for menial work the employment opportunities people with disabilities should be limited to?



MYTH: If subminimum wage is ended, it means people with disabilities will be out of jobs.

BUSTED! We would never allow that to happen. The phase out in this bill takes effect until 2024 to allow time to develop a plan to successfully transition workers to other types of employment.

We believe this multi-year transition provides support for both providers and participants. It is grounded in the values of informed choice and equal rights and is a positive path forward.

MYTH: It is fair for people with disabilities to be paid less if they work slower than their peers and produce less.

BUSTED! People with and without disabilities may perform their job at lower or higher production rates. However, if people with disabilities are provided with reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, they can perform the essential duties of the position.

Ending subminimum wage is not about paying individuals for work they did not do. People with disabilities do not want special treatment. Most sheltered workshops focus on production or assembly type work even if this is not the type of work the individual wants to do. There is a lack of choice, and their rate of pay is based on doing a job that may or may not suit them. People with disabilities, like those without disabilities, deserve the opportunity to pursue jobs related to their interests and skill sets, where they can thrive and bring value to their employer. Oftentimes, the solution involves finding the right fit in the community, providing the appropriate training, and supplying reasonable accommodations to perform the necessary tasks.



MYTH: Phasing out sheltered workshops in California will financially hurt people with disabilities.

BUSTED! In 2015, the poverty rate of working-age Californians with disabilities was 26.5 percent and the percentage of working-age people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income payments in CA was 21.3 percent. This compares with the 11% poverty rate of other Californians. Sheltered workshops have only worsened the economic well-being of people with disabilities.



MYTH: Lack of available funding has prevented some 14(c) providers from moving their business model to paying minimum wage.

BUSTED! Subminimum Wage Certificate Holders are funded through the DD service delivery system to run 14(c) settings. There's nothing preventing these same providers from changing their program design to shift away from paying people subminimum wages and towards a model, funded through the same DD service delivery system, that supports competitive integrated employment (CIE) and pathways to CIE.

In fact, there's transformation funding available for DD 14(c) providers to do just that: www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/cms-hcbs-regulations/hcbs-compliance-funding. The DD system also offers various funding mechanisms and incentives to providers to help people access CIE, get into paid internship programs, etc.



MYTH: When the economy is down, there may not be jobs for people who leave subminimum employment.

BUSTED! Including people with disabilities in the competitive workforce helps employers to staff hard-to-fill positions. Additionally, businesses may be more inclined to hire people with disabilities in a down economy in order to participate in tax incentives and state-funded internships, etc.



MYTH: Employers who are Subminimum Wage Certificate Holders are against paying employees with disabilities at least a minimum wage.

BUSTED! A number of non-profit organizations have already ended paying workers less than minimum wage. Pride Industries and the San Diego group Options for All have already phased out their subminimum wage programs.



MYTH: People with a disability can't hold a "real" job.

BUSTED! First, a person's value should not be determined by whether or not they can work. There are a lot of ways to be involved in the community outside of employment. However, incorrect assumptions are made all the time about the ability of people with disabilities to work.

As a society, we must address the attitudinal barriers that still exist for people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects people with disabilities from discrimination but low expectations and assumptions about what a person can and cannot do based on their disability still exists.

It's also important that we utilize existing service models that emphasize quality job matching so that we are connecting people with disabilities to jobs where they can thrive. People with disabilities just want equal access to employment opportunities and subminimum wage keeps them from achieving that.



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