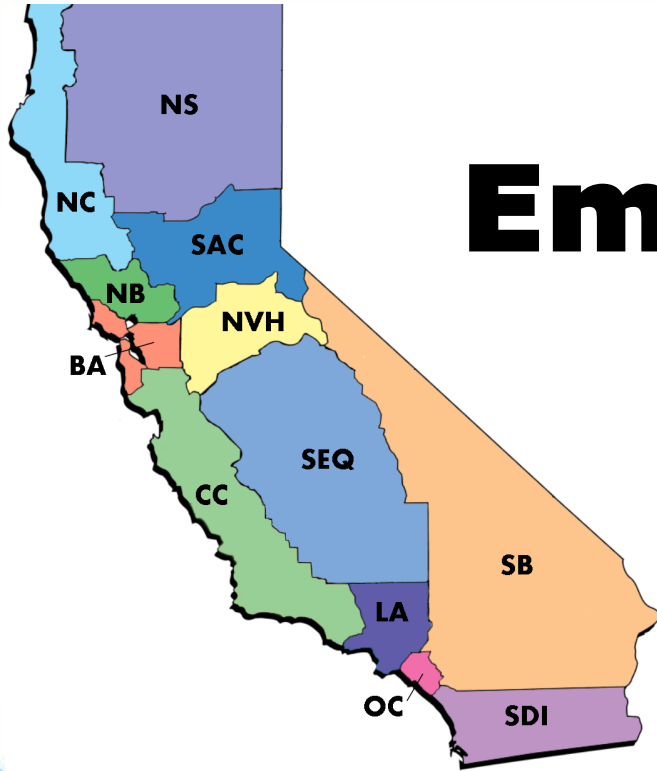


# Employment First



**Statewide Self  
Advocacy Network**



# Training Outline

- 1) Introduction
  - A. What is the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities?
  - B. What is the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network?
- 2) What Is Employment First?
  - A. What the Law Says
  - B. Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)
  - C. Why is it important?
- 3) How does Employment look for People with I/DD in California?
  - A. Statistics (Numbers)
  - B. History
- 4) What is the Employment First Committee?
- 5) What are Some Examples of Employment?
- 6) What are some Pathways to Employment?

# What is the State Council on Developmental Disabilities?

- An independent State agency that exists to Promote:
  - Self-Determination
  - Independence
  - Productivity
  - Inclusion
- Composed of:
  - State Council
    - 31 Governor-Appointed Members
    - 12 Regional Offices
      - Located throughout California and Representing 58 Counties



# What is the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN)

A cross-disability training network started in 2012 to strengthen self-advocacy efforts in California by developing leaders and connecting advocates from across California to each other.

## Members:

- Learn about issues and policies
- Lead regional and statewide advocacy groups/networks
- Develop Leadership Skills
- Train advocates in their communities
- Solve problems by collaborating with others
- And so much more....



# **What is Employment First?**

- On October 9, 2013, Governor Brown signed AB 1041 into law, which established California's Employment First Policy
- This law prioritizes competitive integrated employment for working-aged people with developmental disabilities, no matter the severity of their disabilities.

# What is “C.I.E.”?

According to the Employment First Policy:

“Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) is intended to be the first option considered by planning teams for working-aged individuals”

“Competitive” means you are paid minimum wage or above.

“Integrated” means a job in the community, where you do not spend most of your day with people who have disabilities.



## **CIE Does Not...**

Mean you have to 'earn' your way to minimum wage job in an integrated setting by...

- Going to a workshop first, or working in a group or enclave first or...
- Improving your behavior first, or having good attendance at a workshop before you can get help to look for integrated competitive employment in your community.

# Why is Employment Important? 1 of 2

## 1. Independence

- To have control of your life; make your own decisions and choices



## 2. Life with Meaning (Productivity)

- To work or make other contributions to a household or community





# Why is Employment Important? 2 of 2

## 3. Equity (Integration)

- Right to access the same opportunities, services, or community resources as all other Americans.



## 4. Inclusion

- To fully participate or be welcome in social, educational, work and community life



# California Statistics



“In California, only 12.45% of working-age regional center clients get a paycheck. Of this 12.45%, many work in segregated work sites, make sub-minimum wage or work only a few hours a week. Only 8% work in integrated competitive employment.”

~State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
2013 Employment First report

# History of Employment First in California



In 2009, AB 287 became law. This law told the State Council to do these things:

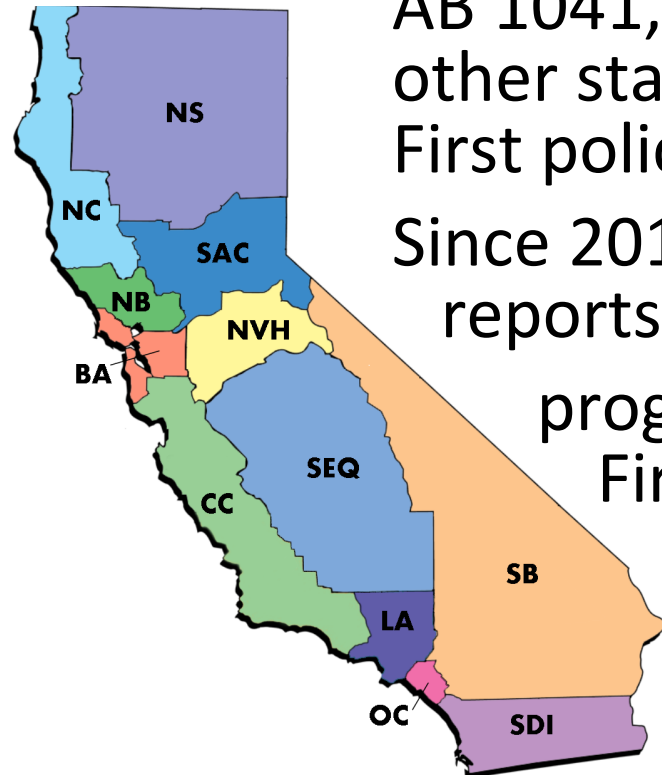
- Start an Employment First Committee (EFC)
- Develop an Employment First policy
- Identify strategies, best practices, and incentives to increase integrated competitive employment

# EFC Accomplishments



In Oct 2013, California Governor Brown signed AB 1041, the Employment First law, joining 22 other states that already had Employment First policies in place.

Since 2011, the EFC has submitted annual reports to the state Legislature on the progress of implementing Employment First in California



# Pathways to Employment

Employment looks different for everyone. What works for one person might not work for others. There are also different ways to learn about job opportunities and to get a job:

- ☐ Job fairs
- ☐ Internships
- ☐ Volunteering
  - ☐ Joining a board or commission
- ☐ Microenterprise
- ☐ Job Training
  - Programs/Limited/Short-term work like AmeriCorps, or Conservation Corps
- ☐ Supported Employment Agencies
  - ☐ Department of Rehabilitations
  - ☐ Some Independent Living Centers
  - ☐ Regional Center Vendors
- ☐ Post-secondary education

# Different Ways to Work

There are many different work schedules and ways to work (especially now, during an ongoing public health crisis). Here are a few:

- Full-time (usually around 40 hours a week, with benefits like medical, dental, and retirement savings)
- Part-time (around 20 hours a week, with no benefits)
- Temporary or contract work (for a shorter amount of time and may be connected to a specific project)
- Self-employment or micro-enterprises (small businesses owned by a person with I/DD who is responsible for decision-making in the business)
- Onsite/in-person, remote/telework, or hybrid/combination of in-person and remote work



# Customized Employment

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, is:

- Flexible
- An individualized match that is based on YOUR strengths, interests, and needs
- Considers the needs of the organization/business looking to hire
- Uses an individual approach to employment planning and job development

One person at a time . . . One employer at a time.





# Robert's Employment Story

- Robert worked in a sheltered workshop for 2 years before deciding to look for a job in the community when his request for a raise was turned down after he was identified as the 'Employee of the Month'
- Robert was able to find a part-time job with Target, where he worked for 20 years before choosing to focus on other jobs.
- Robert has now been employed with both UC Davis MIND Institute and Progressive Employee Concepts for over 10 years!

- Robert, Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN)  
Representative from the UC Davis MIND Institute





# Rebecca's Employment Story

- After being told that work wasn't for her, Rebecca decided to go to college, where she volunteered with different groups, and helped organize a symposium.
- Rebecca has had a part-time job at Denny's and served on the board of Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC).
- Rebecca was encouraged to apply for a Governor's Appointment on a state board.
- Rebecca's position a statewide board helped her to build her confidence and get involved in the community after her term expired.
- Now: Rebecca is the Community Organizer at Resources for Independence Central Valley and looks forward to encouraging other self-advocates to follow their dreams to find meaningful employment.

- Rebecca Donabed, Sequoia Regional SSAN Representative



# Lisa's Employment Story

- Lisa started her employment journey by volunteering with AmeriCorps at two different sites as a Resource Center Aide and teacher's assistant
- Lisa was able to find a contract position at Disability Rights California (DRC) on hiring teams for potential employees
- Lisa has also served as a Governor-appointed member on a state board
- Lisa's advise for those looking for work: "Don't give up on yourself and don't be afraid to volunteer your time to get experience."
  - Lisa Cooley, Sacramento Regional SSAN Representative



# Steps to Take if You Want a Job

1. Tell your service coordinator that you would like to have an IPP meeting to talk about a job.

## **REMINDER:**

You can ask to have an IPP meeting any time you want to change your services; you do not have to wait until your annual or triennial meeting.



# More Steps to Take

2. At your IPP meeting, say that you want an individual job in the community that pays at least minimum wage. Ask for a referral to the Department of Rehabilitation.
3. Choose a supported employment agency with which you want to work.

If anyone tells you 'no' or says that you're 'not ready,' get help from a friend or an advocate.



# Supported Employment Agency: Here to Help

A supported employment agency should not just help you fill out applications.

A supported employment agency can:

- Help you figure out the kinds of jobs you might like and would be good at doing
- Can help set up internships



# How a Supported Employment Agency can Help You

- Can help you interview
- When you are hired, they will train with you and make sure you know the job
- Can help you work out supports or accommodations that will help you succeed
- Once you know the job, they can follow up to make sure things continue to go smoothly



# Building Connections to Find Work 1 of 2

Building connections with people who work in the type of job, company/organization, or “field” to learn more about the work or tasks connected to a job you are thinking about is sometimes called “networking” and can help you:

- ☐ Meet new people
- ☐ Build connections with a goal or purpose
- ☐ Get a different perspective or viewpoint on your job path
- ☐ Tell people about your hopes and dreams
- ☐ Learn about volunteer/job opportunities



# **Building Connections to Find Work 2 of 2**

There are many ways to network:

- ☐ Attend a Toastmaster's or leadership group
- ☐ Use social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- ☐ Attend workshops, symposiums, trainings, panel presentations, or lectures
- ☐ Email organizations that interest you
- ☐ Ask your friends and family if they have any ideas



# There's Still Work For All of Us to Do



Getting the Employment First law passed in California was an important step, but there is still work to do!

- ✓ Tell your friends about Employment First
- ✓ Contact your SCDD Regional Office to find out what new laws are being considered to help people get supported employment services

# Resources

- Contact your regional center Employment Specialist to learn more about your employment options
- [State Council on Developmental Disabilities Employment First Committee](#)
- [Department of Rehabilitations Employment Services](#)
- [Understanding SSI and Work Incentives](#)



**Thank you!**