



EMPLOYMENT FIRST COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Prepared by:
THE CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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Executive Summary

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) is pleased to present its Employment First Committee's 2022 Annual Report. The Employment First Committee (EFC) is tasked with advancing competitive integrated employment (CIE) for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

While research shows that gainful employment contributes positively to the quality of life, physical and mental health, and social inclusion for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), only 17% of adult Californians with I/DD in the state currently make a living wage.¹ (Almalky, 2020; Robertson et al., 2019.) Beyond specific benefits to individuals, integrating employees with disabilities at a competitive wage within the general workforce is also good for business. Hiring people with disabilities increases business revenue, reduces turnover and recruiting costs, increases productivity, and improves customer outreach.² Employees with I/DD are rated by employers as excelling in the areas of productivity, work quality, dependability and attendance, engagement and motivation, and integration with coworkers.³ Overall, there have been indications of progress in achieving CIE and employment first for People with I/DD, although progress has been slow and uneven, given a variety of different outcome measures across demographic groups. The EFC is encouraged by increasing and ongoing attention to employment for People with I/DD, which is driving legislation and service, training, and research-related opportunities focused on solutions to what is a complex problem. Two notable pieces of legislation were signed into law by Governor Newsom in 2021-2022 and are designed to: 1) end the practice of paying subminimum wages in California by 2025 (SB 639, Durazo); 2) create alternate pathways to obtaining a high school diploma for individuals with exceptional needs (AB 181, Committee on Budget, education omnibus trailer bill); and, 3) provide exemptions for students who take alternate assessments (AB 181). These will be transformational in raising collective expectations and creating more equitable opportunities for People with I/DD. Additionally, the CIE Blueprint, in its final year (2022), created a foundation of interagency collaboration in work that must be leveraged in moving forward. The principles of customized employment, a set of best practices gaining traction in California, highlight the unique abilities of jobseekers, while providing benefits and advantages to employers. The EFC is also excited by the growing recognition of the power of post-secondary education (PSE) in enhancing employment and independent living outcomes for students with I/DD.⁴

This report will detail new policies, existing implementation efforts and progress, agency initiatives, and best practices that contribute to an increase in CIE for People with I/DD within California. In this report, the Employment First Committee will also describe some

of the most pressing barriers and challenges in achieving CIE for People with I/DD. The themes of these challenges center around the lack of inter-agency collaboration, lack of funding and programs, workforce capacity, and business engagement. A set of recommendations aligned with these needs and promising or best practices will also be provided.

The Employment First Committee

The Employment First Committee (EFC) is a standing committee of the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), created by statute in 2009. Each year the EFC holds four (4) meetings to collect data from stakeholders, discuss issues in the employment process, and receive updates on what agencies are doing to improve CIE.

The EFC is also responsible for identifying and promoting strategies to increase the number of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities engaging in competitive integrated employment.⁵ Specifically, the EFC is tasked with advancing CIE for People with I/DD by:

- Identifying the roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies to enhance employment for people with disabilities
- Employing strategies and best practices for increasing employment, which includes transition
- Identifying sources of employment data and recommended approaches for measuring progress
- Identifying demographic data that can be matched to employment outcomes
- Recommending goals to measure employment participation and outcomes for various people with I/DD across service systems

EFC Policy and Administrative Recommendations: California Legislature

The EFC develops and provides policy and administrative recommendations in support of CIE to the California Legislature on an annual basis. Recommendations are informed by cross-departmental information and feedback from professionals that provide services, as well as People with I/DD and their family members. Past EFC recommendations, by category, include:

Cross-Departmental Partnerships and Data-Sharing

Data is not released until years after collection, which impacts the ability to identify trends and create targeted interventions. Additionally, websites typically offer information about department-specific services but do not address service intersectionality across departments or agencies. Recommendations:

- 1.** The California Departments of Education (CDE), Rehabilitation (DOR), and Developmental Services (DDS) should work collaboratively to streamline the sharing of information and planning of service delivery to ensure that:
 - a)** Delivery of services is unified, and
 - b)** There is comprehensive implementation and evaluation of CIE.
- 2.** DDS should invest in the collection and reporting of disaggregated, timely data with universal client identifiers across government systems to understand the factors that impact whether a person enters or retains CIE.
- 3.** DDS and SCDD should publicly report aggregate data on the Data Dashboard (located on the SCDD website) in a consumer-friendly and accessible format, so that the impact of CIE can be assessed and People with I/DD, family members and others can make informed, data-driven decisions about choosing the best pathway to CIE.
- 4.** CDE, DDS, DOR and SCDD should create data-sharing agreements across agencies to identify benefits of employment as social determinants of health.
- 5.** Paid Internship Program (PIP) information and data about internships that evolve into CIE should be shared broadly with workforce development partners, employers, educators, family members and People with I/DD. Regional centers should be looped in to collect and provide this data.
- 6.** All government-related websites should create and provide cross-links for CIE-related resources, to avoid disconnected services.

Funding

Funding is needed in specific areas to assist in the subminimum wage phase-out and the move toward CIE for People with I/DD. Recommendations:

- 1.** DDS should prioritize a tiered incentive structure to implement Welfare and Institutions Code §4870 (d-g), which provides for higher incentive payments for people with the most significant disabilities.
- 2.** Increase funding for access to assistive technology for People with I/DD who need it to enter or retain CIE.
- 3.** Provide funding to create career pathways and training to provide direct career advancement support and credentialing to professionals to improve retention and increase competency, professionalism, and quality of support services.
- 4.** Create additional tax or other incentives for employers:
 - a)** Incorporate transportation solutions, and/or

- b) Other tangible supports for those who hire People with I/DD and engage successfully in long-term retention of employees with disabilities.

Marketing Campaign

Some families of People with I/DD are concerned about how employment might affect public and/or private benefits. To address these concerns, remove stigma for employers to hire People with I/DD, and promote a successful transition to CIE, the CDE, DOR, DDS and the State Council should work collaboratively to launch a statewide, multi-media campaign to create awareness of, education about, and incentives for a transition to CIE for People with I/DD. Recommendations:

1. CDE, DOR, DDS and the Council should work collaboratively to promote a statewide multi-media public service campaign in traditional and social media with the goal of reducing the stigma around hiring individuals with developmental disabilities.
2. A marketing campaign should:
 - a. Highlight the potential impact on and benefits to businesses when hiring a person with a disability, and
 - b. Highlight accomplishments of People with I/DD in CIE.
3. Transition planning (from subminimum wage work to CIE) should include a discussion about the impact of wages on benefits.
4. Information on CalABLE and changes around asset limits must be widely available to People with I/DD and their families, so that they are able to make informed decisions regarding employment.
5. Develop a CIE campaign for People with I/DD to showcase employment success stories from People with I/DD across industries that:
 - a. Is fully reflective of diverse cultures and communities;
 - b. Allows people with disabilities (and their family members) to see themselves in CIE; and,
 - c. Includes people with lived experience of disability, linked with self-advocacy and self-determination, to overcome fears or challenges and build resiliency during work search and/or job loss.
6. DDS and regional centers must build awareness in workforce development partners, employers, educators, family members, and people with disabilities, to further encourage career exploration through:
 - a. Work-based learning, gained through paid internships

- b. PIP information
- c. Data on how many CIE placements evolve out of PIP (Paid Internship Program)

EFC: 2022 Activities

In October 2021, the Committee engaged in its annual strategic planning process to identify its annual goals and activities. The EFC identified six (6) priority areas for 2022, which include:

1. Implementation of SB 639 (ending subminimum wages in California)
2. Data collection
3. Tailored day services
4. Preventing People with I/DD from ‘falling through the cracks’
5. Staffing shortages
6. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

The Committee convened meetings and heard from 1) individuals participating in paid internships, to gain insight in their lived experiences, and 2) community organizations, about ways to prevent people from falling through the cracks, create pathways to CIE, provide accommodation planning for clients, etc.

The Committee continued to monitor progress of the implementation of the CIE Blueprint and the implementation of the Business Use Case Proposal (BUCP), a data-sharing agreement between DDS and DOR. While EFC members worked to make progress on these activities, Committee vacancies and missing involvement from crucial stakeholders (e.g., those with unique perspectives and expertise in employment) impacted the outcomes of the Committee’s work.

To address these challenges, the Committee established a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) Goals Workgroup. This workgroup created a timeline and steps to actively recruit and appoint qualified members to fill vacancies and appoint stakeholders from needed and/or missing areas of expertise. The purpose of the SMART Goals Workgroup was to also select two-to-three (2-3) SMART goals to discuss, study and find solutions to during 2023.

The Committee determined that by ensuring stakeholder engagement and prioritizing inclusivity in decision-making, it will be able to increase the EFC’s effectiveness and the likelihood of achieving its goals.

Background

Historically, People with I/DD have had fewer educational and employment opportunities than people without disabilities. There are several federal and state policies to assist in improving employment opportunities, through services for People with I/DD:

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act: Service Rights

California's Lanterman Act is a law acknowledging that People with I/DD and their families have a right to receive supports and services to live like people without disabilities. Services are accessed through a statewide network of twenty-one (21) nonprofit regional centers, in contract with DDS. ⁶

Employment First Policy (2009)

California became an Employment First state as its Legislature established the Employment First Policy for the purpose of providing employment supports and services to People with I/DD so that they could experience integrated, independent lives, with the same quality-of-life as people without disabilities. Adopting this policy was a critical first step in developing a framework to ensure that CIE is given the highest priority, regardless of the severity of disability experienced by anyone in California. ⁷

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2014): Competitive Integrated Employment

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines competitive integrated employment (CIE) as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis, for which an individual is: ⁸

- Compensated at-or-above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate, as paid by the employer to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience
- Receiving the same level of benefits provided to other employees in similar positions and without disabilities
- At a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities; and
- Presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees in similar positions without disabilities.

Policies to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

Customized Employment (2014): The U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Customized employment is a personalized relationship between employee and employer, designed to achieve competitive integrated employment. It is a type of supported employment strategy that assists people with disabilities who have not found employment success through other employment strategies. In 2014, customized employment was included in Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as a strategy under the definition of *supported employment*.⁹ ODEP supports the practice of customized employment through a variety of educational and outreach collaborations and promotes the use of customized employment as a workplace strategy in employment centers across the United States.

California CIE Blueprint for Change (2018)

The CIE Blueprint was a five-year plan, developed in a collaboration between CDE, DOR, and DDS, to assist People with I/DD get ready for and get a job, earning at least minimum wage, while working in an integrated setting (with coworkers without disabilities) within the community. The Blueprint's focus was on creating a 'person-centered' employment planning process - planning based on the person's abilities, interests and dreams. The goal of the Blueprint was to:¹⁰

- Help each of the three departments work together to better support People with I/DD who want a competitive, integrated job;
- Create more options for People with I/DD to get ready for and get competitive, integrated employment; and,
- Help People with I/DD to make their own choices about working in the community.

The Blueprint was also designed to create awareness about CIE and educate People with I/DD and their families about how to seek competitive, integrated employment. For example:

- The CIE Toolkit is a component designed to provide tools and resources on available CIE-related supports and services¹¹
- CIE webinars (*Pathways to Real Work for Real Pay in the Real World*) provide the following information:
 - Benefits of CIE for individuals, families, the public and the business community

- Supports and services available to help people prepare for getting competitive, integrated employment
- SSI and Medi-Cal benefits: How CIE may change an individual's SSI and/or Medi-Cal benefits
- Transportation and safety: Availability of community transportation and safety-related information

The CIE Blueprint Annual Report (including data from Years 3 and 4) was released in April 2023. Its accomplishments include:

Year 3 Accomplishments

1. 1,401 People with I/DD obtained CIE
2. Partnerships and cross-system collaborations were increased through the development of 22 new Local Partnership Agreements (LPA) between local education agencies (LEA), DOR districts, and regional centers, for a total of 50 statewide LPAs.
3. Planning and discussions have continued toward the development of Interagency Agreements, including exploration of data-sharing mechanisms.
4. Community-based work opportunities have increased through the following career exploration and/or work experience activities:
 - a. 27,028 students with I/DD participated in paid work experience and/or unpaid, community-based, vocational education with CDE's WorkAbility I (WAI)
 - b. 35 People with I/DD participated in on-the-job training (OJT), state internship program (SIP), or other work experience opportunities through DOR
 - c. 1,812 People with I/DD participated in the Paid Internship Program (PIP) through DDS
5. Selected employer and business partner engagements:
 - a. DOR districts conducted a Virtual Career Fair with 11 employers, 119 consumers, and a *Virtual Smart Recruiter Roundtable*, as recruiters, job developers, and community partners came together on a virtual platform to discuss ways of organizing events for job seekers.
 - b. In partnership with Amazon, a career event was held with 67 participants, who indicated that they were interested in working at Amazon. Within three days of the event, ten jobseekers made appointments to start the hiring process through The Arc San Francisco, an employment services provider committed to improving the lives of People with I/DD.

- c. The Employer Training Panel (ETP) contracted to work with America's Job Center of California (AJCC) to provide work experience opportunities to students with disabilities, including those with I/DD, through the Summer Training and Work Experience Program for Students (STEPS).
- 6. Technical assistance (TA) and training was provided to core partners in Local Partnership Agreements (LPA) through a series of five (5) regional teleconferences.
- 7. An LPA Core Partner Self-Assessment Survey was conducted in June 2020, with results posted on California's Health and Human Services' (HHS) CIE webpage (<https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/cie/>) to guide work on future CIE enhancements.
- 8. In following the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), ODEP *Employment First* State Leadership Mentoring Program, which was initiated in FY 2018–19 and continued with quarterly meetings in Year 3, the Service Delivery System Change Task Force focused on providing training and TA to LPAs, with the intention of increasing the quality and quantity of CIE outcomes.
- 9. DDS approved the allocation of \$15 million for service providers, submitting a plan to come into compliance with the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule. In Year 3, 35 non-integrated employment programs were approved to use funding to modify services to come into compliance with the HCBS Final Rule.

For example, program modifications targeted People with I/DD who were working in non-integrated settings and were provided with options for community-based, CIE opportunities by participating in volunteer settings, work observations, job clubs, job fairs, local adult education services, and CIE job placements.

 - a. Another modification was the use of these funds to train employment vendors and staff in customized or micro-employment options. Since FY 2016–17, a total of 142 non-integrated employment entities (consisting of work activity and supported employment group programs) have received funding for this purpose, with the goal of this funding is to change systems, develop community-based programming to comply with the HCBS Settings Rule, and to improve CIE opportunities for individuals within these programs.
- 10. The capacity of service providers was supported through approval of DDS time-limited funding to provide rate increases for specified service codes, including supported employment, effective January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2021.
- 11. A statewide webinar on CIE was conducted for more than 300 employment service providers and staff. The webinar included information on benefits and Triple E practices (which stand for Emerging, Effective, Exemplary practices) for COVID-19 updates, and information on tools and resources available to achieve CIE.

12. California's HHS CIE webpage was expanded, to include an updated CIE Toolkit for People with I/DD and their families.
13. DOR's ACE (Achieving Community Employment) Team provided nearly 8,000 Career Counseling Information and Referral (CC&IR) services to more than 7,000 recipients, providing information on CIE and available employment and supportive resources. This was accomplished by coordinating with 79 California employers holding U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) 14(c) SMW certificates to pay individuals below federal minimum wage, including more than 72 Community Rehabilitation Program (CRPs).

Year 4 Accomplishments

1. 1,184 People with I/DD attained CIE.
2. Partnership and cross-system collaborations expanded by development of seven (7) additional Local Partnership Agreements (LPA), for a total of 57 LPAs statewide.
3. Development and formal review of a data-sharing agreement between CDE and DOR was initiated, as part of the agencies' non-monetary Interagency Agreement.
4. Work opportunities in the community increased through the following career exploration and work experiences activities:
 - a. 22,809 students with I/DD participated in paid work experience and unpaid community-based vocational education with CDE WAI.
 - b. 87 individuals with I/DD participated in on-the-job training (OJT), State Internship Program (SIP), or work experience through DOR.
 - c. 875 People with I/DD participated in a DDS Paid Internship Program (PIP).
1. Development and recording of technical assistance (TA) webinars occurred in May 2021 for LPAs on key areas identified for training. The selection of training topics was based on results from the LPA Core Partner Self-Assessment Survey and addressed several strategies within this report. The statewide webinars were delivered to DOR District Offices, WAI grantees, and regional centers in June 2020.
2. Regular meetings with the Service Delivery System Change Task Force were convened and focused on providing training and TA to LPAs, resulting in an increase in the quality and quantity of CIE outcomes.
3. DDS approved the allocation of \$15 million to service providers that submitted a plan to come into compliance with the HCBS Final Rule. In Year 4, 25 non-integrated employment programs were approved to use funding to modify services

to come into compliance with the HCBS Final Rule, for a cumulative total of 167 employment programs receiving funding since FY 2016–17.

4. The *CIE Roadmap for Consumers* resource was developed and made available in English and Spanish on the California Health and Human Services (CalHHS) website. The *Roadmap for Consumers* was designed to assist People with I/DD (ages 12 and above) and their families to navigate the service delivery systems of the three (3) departments and locate available employment resources.
5. Directors from CDE, DOR, and DDS participated in a panel discussion on the topic of state-level efforts to improve CIE outcomes during the *Building Back Better for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* Summit. The Summit took place over three (3) days in May 2021 and featured leaders from the federal and state government, as well as business and youth communities. The Summit focused on improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, specifically those with I/DD.
6. To provide options other than community-based work experience, CDE provided temporary flexibility during COVID-19 school closures. WAI grantees offered increased remote or virtual work experiences. CDE also provided guidance regarding the expanded on-campus work opportunities for students enrolled in the WAI program. This would apply to any upcoming situation in which work experience opportunities are scarce, due to safety measures, yet LEAs continue to remain open. Through these remote and on-campus options, students were provided with additional work experience opportunities to prepare for CIE.
7. DOR and DDS made progress toward finalizing the data-sharing agreement, in alignment with new cross-agency data-sharing recommendations from CalHHS.
8. The Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division Districts developed and piloted the Virtual Service Delivery Project (VSDP), which provides individuals with training, paid work-based learning experiences, and opportunities for employment in a remote setting. The VSDP presented this information to the State Rehabilitation Council in March 2021.

The CIE Blueprint ended its initial 5-year program run on June 30, 2022, and the Blueprint Team is currently writing the Year 5 final report. There is no anticipated release date for the final report. As the Blueprint nears completion, DOR, DDS and CDE are evaluating the effectiveness of the Blueprint to ensure that lessons learned can be applied to future efforts so that people with I/DD are engaged in CIE.

SB 639 (2021): Ending Subminimum Wages

Federal and state law passed in the late 1930's allowed employers to pay many persons with disabilities less than the minimum pay wage (subminimum) and subjected them to segregated work settings.¹² Eighty-four years passed before [Senate Bill SB 639](#)

(Durazo, 2021)¹³ ended the use of special wage licenses for employment at less than minimum wage. Now, state agencies must work together to not only provide employment services, but to also transition People with I/DD still employed through subminimum wage programs into minimum wage-or-above paying jobs (i.e., competitive integrated employment).

Transition to CIE will be a challenging task. The size of California's population and the complex demographic characteristics of its 14(c) population create uniquely complex challenges. This diverse group includes people that have different and unique types of disabilities, support needs, intersectional identities, and cultural influences. However, the majority of people working in subminimum wage jobs are People with I/DD.

The CIE Blueprint created some awareness about CIE and training for persons with I/DD and their families. With the ending of subminimum wages (SB 639), however, both short-term and long-term plans must be created to ensure success in transitioning the community of People with I/DD into competitive integrated employment (CIE) by the 2025 deadline and also ensure long-term success. SB 639 required SCDD to collaborate with other agencies to develop a multi-year phaseout plan to pay any employee with a disability no less than the state minimum wage by January 1, 2025. The phase-out plan was released in January 2023, with recommendations on how to transition approximately six thousand (6,000) individuals out of the 14c waiver program and to increase CIE opportunities for people with disabilities. The following list includes some of those recommendations:

- Ensure collaboration between agencies so that services are easy to locate and navigate.
- Ensure there is enough trained staff so there are no delays in services delivery, including job developers, coaches, services providers, etc.
- Reduce stigma around hiring individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Private sector employers will need to change hiring practices and become more inclusive.
- Collect and share data among agencies to measure success of services.

(**Note: To view the report, visit the SB 639 Report Home Section of the Council's website at: <https://scdd.ca.gov/>)

SB 639 Update (2023): Transitioning out of Subminimum Wages

Currently, DOR and DDS are working collaboratively to create pathways to CIE for individuals who are currently in subminimum wage settings or who would have been traditionally prepared for such a setting. Although SB 639 focuses specifically on the 14-c subminimum wage population, CIE services and supports are expanding for all People with I/DD. Each regional center now has employment specialists and DDS created CIE-

focused incentives that pay for CIE obtainment, Paid Internship Program (PIP) placement and certification/credentialing in Customized Employment. Additionally, incentives are being developed that focus on job match.

Creating Awareness of CIE (2022): CIE Training for People with I/DD and Service Providers

To build awareness of and encourage transition into competitive employment, agencies collaborated on a training series. In 2022, the *Let's Work!* training series was a partnership launched between SCDD, DOR, Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) and Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC). The purpose of the *Let's Work!* series was to help educate self-advocates, family-advocates, and primary/secondary/post-secondary service providers about competitive integrated employment and provide guidance on how to prepare for employment.

The *Let's Work!* series included training on the *CIE Roadmap*, which is a step-by-step guide, written in easy-to-understand language for persons with disabilities and their families to follow if they are interested in seeking employment. The *CIE Roadmap* was developed in partnership with California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), California Department of Education (CDE), and California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) as a resource to transition persons with disabilities into competitive integrated employment.

The *Let's Work!* Training workshops were part of a six-part series that took place monthly (on a Zoom platform) through June 2022, which included the following:

- Workshop #1: Learn about the Department of Rehabilitation and available services to help you prepare for and secure a job.
- Workshop #2: Learn about the regional center system and the history of *Employment First* legislation, policies, and services.
- Workshop #3: Introduce the *CIE Roadmap* tool and provide information on what to expect as you prepare your 12 - 15-year-old for employment.
- Workshop # 4: Review the *CIE Roadmap* tool and provide information on what to expect as you prepare your 16 - 17-year-old for employment.
- Workshop #5: Review the *CIE Roadmap* tool and provide information on what to expect as 18 - 21-year-old individuals prepare for employment.
- Workshop #6: Review the *CIE Roadmap* tool and provide information on what to expect as 22 - 64-year-old individuals prepare for employment.

These workshops reached approximately 405 people, including self-advocates, family advocates, professionals, and others and were made accessible in Spanish and American Sign Language interpretation. Despite these workshops, most parents and

individuals trying to navigate employment services are frustrated and confused (**Note: see *Current Employment Issues* section).

California Government

Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP)

In 2022, the Legislature passed [AB 1195 \(Garcia\)](#), which requires the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) to provide a LEAP employment referral list to any state agency upon that agency's request, without combining the LEAP list with a standard state employment list (or provide two separate lists). The purpose of the bill is to increase employment of persons with disabilities in state government. ¹⁴

The Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) is a voluntary and optional employment pathway to state civil service for persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. LEAP provides an alternative to the traditional testing process and allows applicants with disabilities to demonstrate competencies in the workplace. LEAP provides opportunities for more people with disabilities to become employed with state jobs that also provide health, retirement, and other benefits, decreasing the number of individuals relying on state public benefits and services and strengthening the state's long-term economy. ¹⁵

State Employment Initiative (SEI)

Under direction from California Governor Newsom's office to support jobseekers with I/DD in achieving full-time employment in state civil service, DOR and DDS established the State Employment Initiative (SEI) program. The intent of SEI is to provide an alternate pathway to state civil service by way of Governor-appointed exempt positions. This highly successful program has demonstrated to state entities that individuals with I/DD can be productive and valued members of the state workforce. Since its inception in 2020, the departments participating in this program have included the Departments of Finance, Corrections and Rehabilitation, CalVet, Managed Health Care, California Military (CalGuard), Tax and Fee Administration, Real Estate, Food and Agriculture, CalRecycle, and CalTrans, in addition to the Office of Planning and Research, Office of Emergency Services, Natural Resource Agency, and Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

Governor Newsom set a goal for all state agencies to employ individuals with disabilities to fill at least 16% of staffing. In February 2022, an important resource was developed by DOR to support this inclusive hiring goal by the California state government. The CalHHS hiring playbook, *Including People with Disabilities Drives Innovation*, focuses on three (3) principles: 1) helping California government become a model employer; 2) creating a culture of inclusion; and, 3) supporting upward mobility for individuals who have disabilities.

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

All DOR vocational rehabilitation services are designed to achieve CIE, including supported employment and customized employment services for people with the most significant disabilities, which includes I/DD. DOR is investing heavily in paid work experiences, including internships to prepare jobseekers for CIE, with opportunities for advancement. DOR has incorporated paid work experience as a fundamental service for its consumers. Increasing the opportunities for paid work experience as part of the service delivery model is instrumental in supporting CIE outcomes.

Historically, persons with I/DD have not been well-represented in state civil service. Increasing the opportunities for paid work experience is instrumental in supporting CIE outcomes. DOR provides paid work experience, including internships, to prepare job seekers for CIE with opportunities for advancement. DOR partners with CalHR in support of the administration of the LEAP program. DOR Rehabilitation Counselors certify that an applicant is a person with a disability for purposes of verifying LEAP eligibility. Afterward, the individual takes a LEAP examination to confirm minimum qualifications, applies for job openings, and completes a job examination period (JEP), if selected. Successful completion of the JEP qualifies an individual with disabilities for civil service classification and transition to the position for which they tested. Candidates that transition to a permanent civil service appointment after the JEP are not required to serve a probationary period.

State Internship Program (SIP)

SIP is an interdepartmental effort that provides an alternate pathway for people with significant disabilities to become LEAP-certified and eligible for state service. The SIP allows the implementation of a more extensive and assistive 'on-the-job certification' approach, as compared to the standard LEAP certification and exam methods. DOR, DHR, and DDS work collaboratively to implement SIP. SIP interns receive wages during their internship through DDS and on-the-job supports from a Community Rehabilitation Program, funded by DOR. The SIP provides opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities to fully participate in their community of choice, including integrated employment with competitive wages and benefits.

College to Career (C2C)

DOR also collaborates with the Community College Chancellor's Office on the C2C Program, currently available on eight community college campuses. C2C serves adults with I/DD by providing support and opportunities for a degree or certificate, work experience, internships, and placement services. In addition, DOR has long-standing partnerships with community colleges through WorkAbility III cooperative programs, which provide job placement services for DOR consumers.

California Subminimum Wage to CIE Project (CSP)

One of the newest initiatives being implemented in California is the CSP. This innovation and demonstration research project supports the development of a pilot to serve Californians with the most significant disabilities, who are currently, previously in, at-risk-of being placed into a subminimum wage employment setting, or who have tried and have been unsuccessful in attaining CIE. The CSP is a \$13.9 million federal grant, running from October 2022 to September 2027. The project will provide a comprehensive set of interventions and supports to increase CIE outcomes, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion for individuals with the most significant disabilities currently in - or contemplating entering - subminimum wage employment.

Some of these interventions include:

- Job and Career Exploration, including information and hands-on experience with career technical education (CTE) and apprenticeship in integrated settings on community college campuses
- Self-Advocacy, independent living skills and workplace readiness training in on-campus classroom settings
- Access to community college coursework
- Peer support training
- Family Supports and mentoring through Exceptional Family Resource Centers (EFRC)
- Work incentives planning and benefits counseling
- Work-based learning through volunteer and paid work experience
- Exploration of self-employment, including micro-enterprises
- Customized Employment discovery and placement (based on evidence-based practices)

In this initiative, DOR's partnership leveraging of existing framework within the College-to-Career programs at two (2) community colleges will offer integrated supports for successful development of and support of the demonstration project activities. Project partners will collaborate to establish and support on-campus instruction and employment preparation, including education in integrated settings, as well as on- and off-campus instruction in self-employment and customized employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The ACE (Achieving Community Employment) Team provides Career Counseling & Information and Referral (CC&IR) services to individuals with disabilities earning subminimum wages (SMW) to encourage competitive integrated employment (CIE),

consistent with WIOA §511 (Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage requirements), California's *CIE Blueprint* goals, the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rule for Integration, and (recently passed) California SB 639 (Durazo), eliminating the practice of paying subminimum wages.

Since October 2016, the ACE Team has provided WIOA §511 CC&IR services to more than 23,500 individuals working at subminimum wage, to encourage them and their families to pursue CIE. Since 2016, 1607 CC&IR recipients have applied for DOR services and a total of 470 have obtained CIE.

Current Challenges in CIE Employment

Accessing Employment Supports is Confusing

Navigating the process to obtain employment services can be a source of confusion and frustration for clients (and their families) seeking employment services.

There are different paths, through different agencies, to access employment services. The Departments of Rehabilitation (DOR), Education (CDE) and Developmental Services (DDS) all provide case management for employment services. Knowing which of these agencies to access for services - and at what point - is confusing and stressful for parents and People with I/DD to navigate. It can also be confusing to learn for new service coordinators in agencies that provide authorization and/or funding for these services.

The first steps in assessing where the person will go for employment services will depend on several factors, including if:

- They are a student in high school, or
- They are transitioning out of high school, or
- They are adults and how much support they need during employment; additionally,
- Which agency/program(s) will be accessed for employment services will depend on the level of support the individual may need to be employed.

Department of Education (CDE)

If students with I/DD are still in high school, they are assisted by the school district to find employment. School districts use employment programs such as [WorkAbility I \(WAI\), a program through CDE or the Transition Partnership Program \(TPP\)](#), a program through DOR.¹⁶

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

High school students with disabilities, including I/DD, can access pre-employment services to prepare for work or employment services through DOR. Out-of-school youth can also receive employment services at DOR.

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and its Regional Centers

If People with I/DD are not in high school but need support during employment, they are referred to and assisted by their regional center, which is assigned by geographical area.

Lack of Standardization for the System of Regional Centers

There are twenty-one (21) independent, non-profit regional centers in California that provide services to families and people with I/DD under DDS. Regional centers use various vendors (or service providers) to provide certain employment services. Each regional center is allowed flexibility in determining how services are provided and each can establish its own processes to assess individuals for services and to determine the services they will provide. Lack of standardization means that services are not consistent across the system of 21 regional centers. Essentially, depending on where clients live, they may or may not get the same employment services as other clients, creating inequity in the statewide delivery of services.

Staff Retention Issues: Regional Center Service Coordinators

Feedback from professionals, as well as the State Auditor, in a June 2022 Report, reveals that service coordinators at regional centers have a high turnover rate and that there is a shortage in service coordinator staff. Learning the different employment paths and services takes time, which means that new service coordinators simply cannot provide the level of support that families and individuals (clients) need. The high turnover rate and staff shortages mean that clients can wait a very long time before their case is even assigned to a service coordinator. It also affects the quality of service, as service coordinators cannot dedicate an adequate amount of time to understand families' and/or individuals' unique needs, nor assist them in navigating the complex process of obtaining employment services.¹⁷

Another of the factors affecting the shortage of service coordinator is that of pay, as the formula used to pay staff is outdated. The current formula funds regional centers for old and new positions at salaries that are approximately 50% of the actual cost.

Service Providers (Vendors) for Supported Employment and Customized Employment

Regional centers and DOR work with contracted agencies and service providers (vendors) who can provide employment services to clients with support needs. Regional

centers struggle to find and retain vendors that provide job coaching or job development for persons with support needs, who require customized solutions for employment. This lack of vendors also limits the amount of employment services available to clients looking for employment and results in clients being added to waiting lists. Factors affecting this shortage of Supported Employment/Customized Employment vendors and their services includes:

- 1. Rates:** Supported Employment vendors provide services that require a lot of time, due to the need for detailed and careful assessment of skills and strengths, network building and follow-up. But the rates to pay Supported Employment vendors do not reflect the amount of work or costs of providing that work. The rate to pay vendors does not match the level of work provided and does not incentivize vendors to provide services under Supported Employment.
- 2. Direct Service Staff Turnover:** Due to the low payment rates that Supported Employment vendors receive, the direct service staff responsible for developing new jobs and supporting people with disabilities are severely underpaid. As a result, agencies have difficulty training, professionalizing, and retaining staff to do the complex work of supporting people with a variety of disabilities, considering their various support needs and work experience.
- 3. No Standardized Process for Vendors:** Both of the current practices to provide contracts to vendors and the lack of a standardized employment service provision process across the state's 21 regional centers combine to create challenges and cause delays for vendors who are interested in providing services. Vendors do not have the time and resources to navigate this confusing process to obtain a contract and must complete a different process with each individual regional center. Additionally, vendors must separately become vendorized by DOR to provide services through that agency.
- 4. No Rates for Customized Employment:** Customized Employment is not a vendorized service of the regional center system, although some vendors provide these services, under service codes such as Tailored Day Services (TDS) and Independent Living Skills (ILS). Rates used to pay for supported employment services are a huge issue and there are no rates at all for customized employment. Every regional center navigates this lack of rates for customized employment differently, leading to an inequity in services provided. To cope with the lack of rates to pay for customized employment vendor services, some regional centers have figured out ways to braid services with DOR, sharing costs between regional centers and DOR. But not all regional centers have figured out ways to provide customized employment services without set rates. Lack of rates for customized employment forces regional centers to find different ways to provide this service, causing inequity in services or differences in providing/not providing customized

employment. It is also important to note that - while there are no set rates for customized employment services at regional centers – the *Roadmap to CIE*, created to provide guidance on how to find employment, tells clients to pursue customized employment at regional centers.

Employment First Committee (EFC): Recommendation

- 1.** The California Legislature should allocate funding to create career pathways and training that provide direct support to professionals with career advancement and credentialing, to increase competency, professionalism, and quality of support services and improve retention.

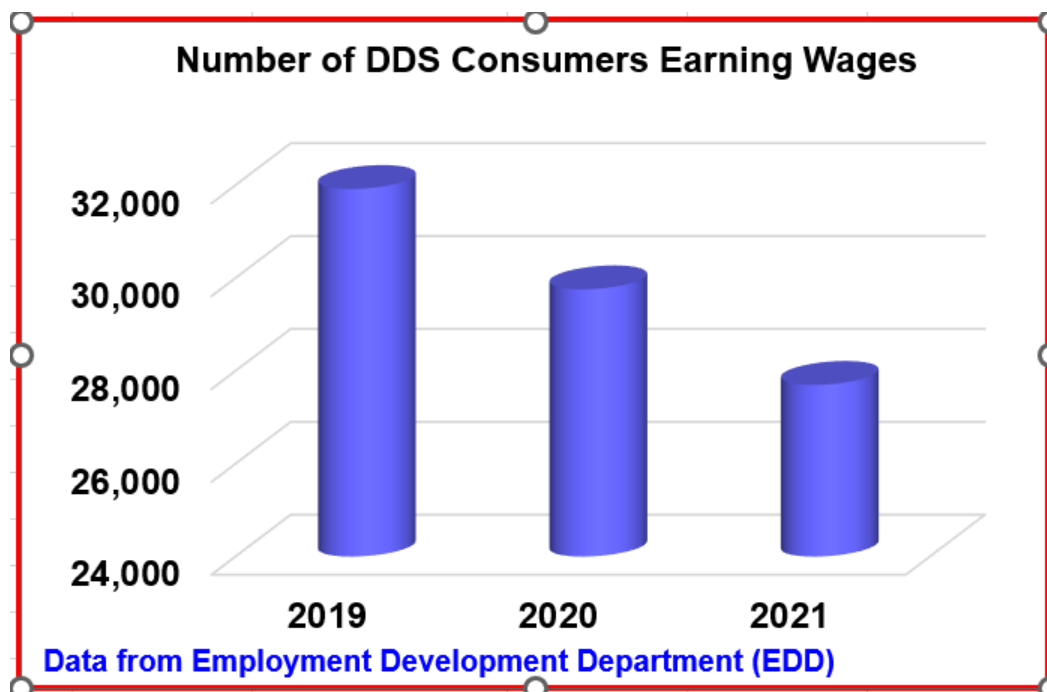
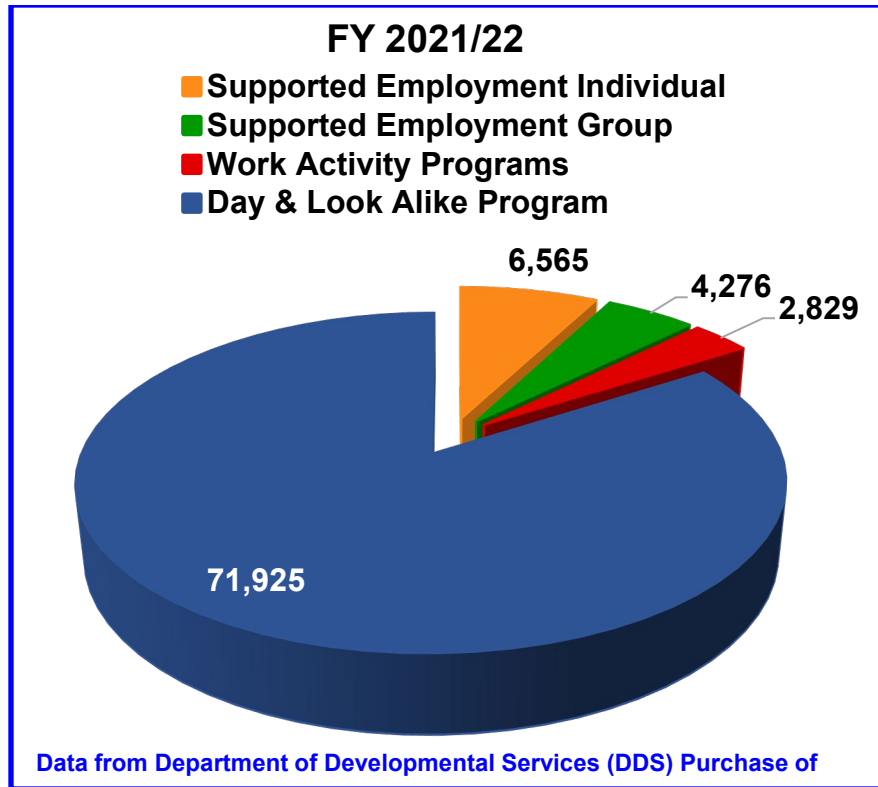
Creating and Retaining Partnerships with Employers in Regional Centers

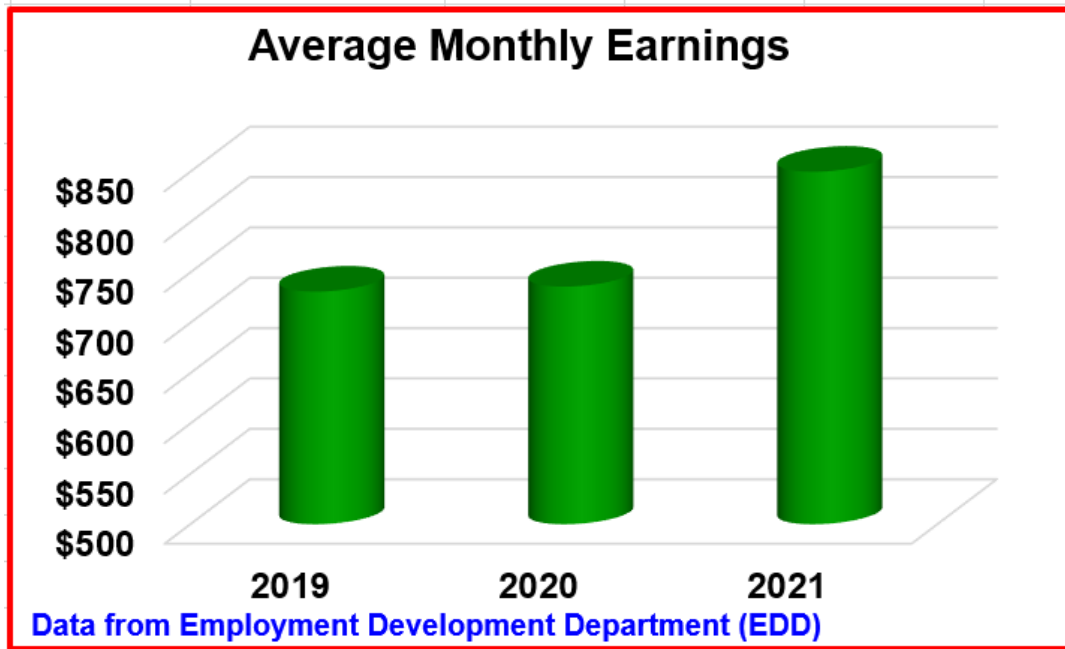
Regional Centers need partnerships with employers to help clients transition into CIE and to gain meaningful job experience. Because regional centers are short-staffed and have high turnover rates, adequate time is not spent on establishing and retaining partnerships with different employers who are interested in partnering with regional centers. These are lost opportunities for individuals with I/DD looking for CIE. There are a few cases in which different employers have created their own programs to hire individuals with I/DD.

Inconsistent Referrals to Employment Programs

Not all regional centers are referring clients to employment programs, and there is no tracking or oversight to ensure that clients are being referred to employment programs. Feedback from professionals, families, and self-advocates indicates that some working-aged individuals with I/DD are not consistently referred to employment services. Educators in the K-12 system, as well as regional center staff, are likely contributing to this barrier, perhaps due to a lack of awareness of other options, low capacity for employment services, or persistence of low expectations for young people with I/DD.

The most current data available from DDS indicates that 71,925 People with I/DD are still participating in day or group activity programs, with only 6,565 individuals participating in individual supported employment.¹⁸ These numbers do not yet reflect successfully meeting the goal of California's *Employment First* policy. Although there is much room to grow, this data indicates that not much has changed since 2017, when 72,005 individuals were participating in day or group activity programs and only 5,064 individuals were participating in individual supported employment. (See data charts below.)





Shortage of Work Experience Opportunities

Effective January 1, 2022, California Education Code [\(EC\) §45125.1\(a\)](#)¹⁹ requires any entity that has a contract with an LEA (Local Educational Agency) to ensure that any employee of that contractor who interacts with students, outside the immediate supervision and control of the student's parent or guardian or a school employee, is required to have a criminal records summary, as described in [EC §44237](#). The law specifically states that:

- (a) Any entity that has a contract with a local educational agency shall ensure that any employee who interacts with pupils, outside of the immediate supervision and control of the pupil's parent or guardian or a school employee, has a valid criminal records summary as described in §44237.²⁰ When the contracting entity performs the criminal background check, it shall immediately provide any subsequent arrest and conviction information it receives to any local educational agency that it is contracting with, pursuant to the subsequent arrest service.

The option of paid, community-based work experience is an integral component of the WorkAbility I (WAI) grant, which is funded and administered by CDE and provides comprehensive pre-employment skills training, employment placement and follow-up for high school students in special education, who are making the transition from school to work, independent living, and post-secondary education or training. Recently, WAI grantees contacted CDE to report that they were unable to consistently place students in community-based work experience placements, due to the change to EC

§45125.1(a). In response to the potential impact, CDE is providing waivers for three (3) WAI grant requirements in FY 2022–23.

The employment portion of transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) helps to facilitate movement toward CIE and should be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The local educational agencies (LEA) placing students in WAI work-based experiences should be mindful of the employer's location and ensure that participating students are provided with opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers and customers.

For more information regarding the above waiver for the WAI grant, please refer to the following guidance from CDE: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/om012423.asp>.

Any WAI grantee or LEA seeking clarification or interpretation of EC §45125.1(a) should consult their local counsel.

Interagency Collaboration Issues

Current efforts to promote cross-agency collaboration around competitive integrated employment (CIE) in California, such as the *CIE Blueprint* and the Employment First Committee, continue with common goals to achieve alignment of CIE initiatives and state-level goals across departments. While workforce and disability service programs (e.g. DDS, DOR, local educational agencies, the general workforce development system, etc.) have implemented projects and initiatives to support CIE, not all of these programs are coordinated - resulting in fragmentation and missed opportunities to leverage resources and maximize service delivery. As a result, and despite unprecedented workforce talent shortages across the state, a potential workforce that wants to work is going untapped due to some parallel efforts and missed opportunities for coordination. This fragmented approach has led to barriers that prevent people with disabilities who want to work from being able to access the opportunities and support they may need to do so.

The most requested and needed reforms from individuals with disabilities and service providers alike require major structural changes, such as fiscally responsible payment structures that support best practices and shifts in systemwide norms and expectations that cannot be addressed by one department alone. To truly advance CIE for people with I/DD and other disabilities, California must be able to align its cross-departmental work around a shared purpose and goals. Currently there is no central agency or leadership to oversee outcomes and accountability, which limits responsiveness to employment services.

Employment First Committee (EFC): Recommendation

1. Establish Interagency Data Collaboration

Currently, data is not released until years after collection, or not shared at all, and different types of data are collected by varying agencies. This delay impacts the field of practice's ability to identify trends and create targeted interventions. For example, we do not know how many People with I/DD have, to-date, not a) requested or b) accessed employment services; nor do we know if trainings and awareness about CIE are reaching most People with I/DD. It would also help to track whether or not staff at regional centers are encouraging employment as an option.

The EFC continues to recommend that agencies work collaboratively to streamline and engage in information-sharing, service delivery planning, and data-sharing agreements to ensure that People with I/DD, including those from ethnically and linguistically diverse communities, can access supports and services.

Challenges in Education and the Effect on Employment

At the high school level, there is a challenge to transition youth into employment after graduation. At the college level, California lacks inclusive college programs that could increase earning opportunities for family-sustaining wages for People with I/DD.

High School

Alternative Pathway to a High School Diploma (2022)

The addition of California Education Code (EC) §51225.31, which was included in Assembly Bill (AB) 181 (the 2021–22 education omnibus budget trailer bill), provides a new pathway to a high school diploma for students with disabilities.²¹

Students with exceptional needs attending a school district, county office of education (COE), charter school, or state special school can graduate from high school through a newly defined diploma pathway by meeting the following criteria, as referenced in the student's individualized education program (IEP):

- 1.** The student is required to take the California alternate assessment, and
- 2.** The student is required to complete state standards-aligned coursework to meet statewide coursework requirements.

Local educational agencies (LEAs) must exempt students who meet the above criteria from all local coursework and other requirements that are in addition to statewide coursework requirements, as defined in EC §51225.3.

Through the completion of the statewide coursework requirements, the LEAs must award the qualifying student a diploma of graduation from high school. Furthermore, through this newly defined diploma pathway, the qualifying student may participate in

any graduation ceremony and any school activity, related to graduation, in which a student of similar age would be eligible to participate. The award of this diploma of graduation under EC §51225.31 does not change or terminate an LEA's obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to an eligible special education student and does not constitute a change in placement. This is consistent with §7801(23)(A)(ii)(I)(bb) of Title 20 of the United States Code and §00.102(a)(3) of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

This law went into effect June 30, 2022, and all LEAs should be offering this pathway for all students who qualify. For more information, please refer to the following guidance from the CDE: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/om030723.asp>.

For more background information, please see the report created by a workgroup that studied high school diploma achievement and provided recommendations to the legislature (https://www.scoe.net/news/library/2021/10/07workgroup_reports/).

College

Lack of Inclusive Opportunities in Colleges

There is an urgent need for inclusive college opportunities for students with I/DD in California. One (1) in eight (8) students in the state's public schools receive special education services (LAO, 2019). California is over a decade behind in building inclusive college programs throughout the state and establishing an Inclusive Higher Education Coordinating Center. There are currently eighteen (18) post-secondary education (PSE) programs in California, only five (5) of which are at 4-year universities. Of those five (5), only two (2) have sustainable funding. Meanwhile, recognizing the value of these programs, other states – including Colorado, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and Maryland – have invested in inclusive opportunities at 4-year universities. Redwood SEED Scholars Program is the only 4-year residential, inclusive college program in the UC system and, sadly, within the state of California.

Beth Foraker, Co-Director of SEED at UC Davis, says,

“The Redwood SEED Scholars Program admits twelve (12) students with intellectual disabilities each year...only twelve (12). Imagine how many other incredible people with intellectual disabilities are sitting on the sidelines waiting for a chance...”²²

Graduates of inclusive, post-secondary education programs are more likely to enter the workforce, earn higher wages, and therefore be less reliant on state benefit programs. Studies have found that:

- Higher education offers opportunities for social and intellectual exploration and builds capacity for future employment. With the advent of funding due to legislation

and policy changes in the US, students with I/DD are beginning to reap these same benefits from higher education²³

- Post-secondary education for people with I/DD is both cost-effective (cheaper than other services) and cost-efficient (paying for itself over time)²⁴
- Vocational rehabilitation (VR) clients with I/DD who experienced post-secondary education (PSE) were more than twice as likely to be employed and have increased earnings when compared to their counterparts who did not participate in post-secondary education while receiving vocational rehabilitation services²⁵
- Youth who received PSE services as part of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) were 14% more likely to exit with paid integrated employment and earned 51% higher wages than those who did not access PSE services²⁶
- Graduates of PSE use fewer government support services after exiting college, earn higher wages and use 31% fewer government services than people with only a high school education²⁷
- The odds of exiting VR with an employment outcome are 1.59 times higher for those who participate in a PSE²⁸

Moreover, the US Department of Education Model Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) programs are a proven predictor of employment success.

- As of September 30, 2020, 59% of students who completed a TPSID program had a paid job, after an exit in 1 year; 66% had a paid job after an exit in 2 years; and 67% had a paid job after an exit in 3 years.
- 65% of students who attend a TPSID receive paid employment as graduates, as compared to less than 20% of adults with I/DD who do not attend a TPSID.

Past Legislation for Inclusive Higher Education

The purpose of [AB 2920 \(Arambula, 2022\)](#)²⁹ was to increase living wages and employment for People with I/DD through establishing and maintaining sustainable, high-quality, inclusive post-secondary education programs within the University of California (UC) system and at California State Universities (CSU). This bill failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Employment First Committee (EFC): Recommendation

1. Equal College Opportunities Pathway to Employment

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics confirms that more education leads to better employment and better wages.³⁰ To establish equal higher education opportunities for People with I/DD, the California Legislature will need to fund and create inclusive

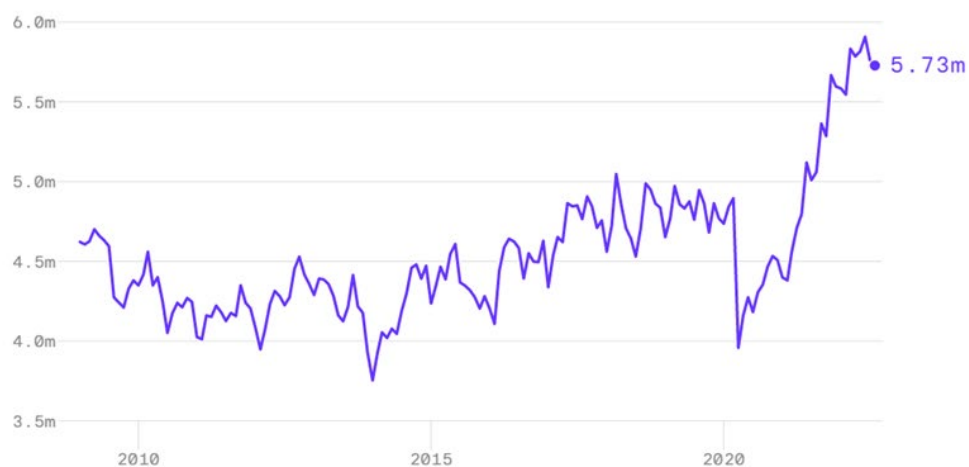
college programs for students with I/DD, expanding post-secondary education opportunities within California's higher education systems (e.g. community colleges, state universities, the University of California system, and College to Career programs) that can assist People with I/DD obtain equal employment. (See section SCDD Legislative Priorities 2023 – Education Priority.)

Disparity in Employment for Persons with Disabilities

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 27% of adults in the United States have a disability.³¹ In 2022, only 22.5% of people with a disability participated in the workforce compared to 67.8% of people without a disability.³²

Number of disabled Americans in the workforce

Monthly; January 2009 to August 2022



Data: NYFed analysis of the Current Population Survey; Chart: Axios Visuals

It is expected that the number of employees with disabilities to grow because of COVID-19.³³ The pandemic created a new disability: long Covid. Many people experiencing long Covid are not working. According to the Brookings Institute, approximately two (2)-to-four (4) million people are unable to work due to long COVID.³⁴ Persons with disabilities were also disproportionately impacted by COVID. Workers with a disability in service occupations accounted for the largest share of the total decline in employment.

Federal Employment Hiring Process: Fear of Disability Disclosure

Number of Americans reporting disabilities

Monthly; January 2009 to August 2022; Among those ages 16 to 65



Data: NYFed analysis of the Current Population Survey; Chart: Axios Visuals

In 2022, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released its report: *The EEO Status of Workers with Disabilities in the Federal Sector*,³⁵ which identifies current trends for workers with disabilities within the federal employment sector. In its findings, it was determined that: a) a large percentage of federal employees did not identify their disability status; b) the federal government agencies failed to meet the 12% hiring goal for persons with disabilities; c) they were less likely than persons with no disabilities to be in federal leadership positions; and, d) harassment (non-sexual) and reasonable accommodation were the most commonly alleged issues in disability-related complaints. The report made several recommendations to achieve an equitable workforce, including: 1) federal agencies should ensure confidentiality of disability disclosure to increase the number of employees who identify their disability status, and 2) recruit people with a broad range of disabilities to improve hiring rates.

Use of Technology and Current Hiring Practices Have Embedded Barriers

The standard hiring process for businesses, which includes advertising, reviewing resumes and interviewing potential candidates, is a time and labor-intensive process that can have embedded barriers to fair selection of qualified candidates and potentially deny large sectors of the workforce an opportunity to be considered for employment. Employers began using technology to cope with the large numbers of job applicants and reduce hiring process costs. The EEOC found that use of technology (e.g., software, algorithms, artificial intelligence, etc.) during the hiring process can – either intentionally or unintentionally - lead to screening out an individual with a disability and breaking ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Equal Opportunity laws.³⁶

The use of technology and widespread management practices are limiting applicants that are considered for jobs. The standard business pipeline of advertising, reviewing resumes and interviewing potential candidates is a time and labor-intensive process, which can, at best, have embedded barriers to hiring managers selecting the most qualified candidates and can, at worst, deny large sectors of the workforce an opportunity to be considered for employment. Businesses are often unaware of the obstacles to keeping qualified applicants from consideration or the potential workforce that is unable to navigate the process. According to a study by Accenture and Harvard Business School, applicants with non-standard work qualifications including people with disabilities make up a large sector of 'hidden workforce' applicants, who often have less opportunity to learn about, apply for or be considered for job openings.³⁷ The Accenture report also found that 75% of employers in the U.S. use automated recruitment management systems (RMS) to filter and/or rank job seekers, many of whom are filtered out from the beginning of the application process based on many factors with little-to-no bearing on ability to perform the job. Of the average 250 jobseekers applying for a position, only four (4) people are interviewed. This process favors a select pool of workers, leaving a large 'hidden workforce' that employers are unaware exists, as recruitment efforts rarely reach them. Furthermore, when they do apply, they are filtered out from the very beginning of the job application process. Many business leaders are aware of the inequity of the current screening system; 78% of business leaders estimate that half or more of qualified middle-skilled candidates never have an opportunity to be considered because they are filtered out during automated screening. The same report found that 94% of employers estimated that middle-skilled candidates were filtered out because they did not match the exact qualifications stated within the job description. (Accenture)

Unfortunately, many businesses that have not yet actively engaged with employees with disabilities often have unrealistic concerns about the risk to a business and the performance levels that can be expected. Accenture found 40% of business employers believed that hiring candidates filtered by traditional strategies would make their business significantly less competitive; 50% believed that these would significantly increase the risk to the business; and 41% of business employers believed that hidden employees would decrease profitability. (Accenture)

A 2014 Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) Report found that employers significantly overestimated concerns related to hiring workers with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, overestimating the possibility of workers with I/DD to be a fit for their jobs by 21%, while overestimating productivity concerns by 13% and concerns about safety by 13%³⁸. Finally, despite having the skills and ability to perform job duties, traditional job interview practices often disadvantage people with developmental disabilities, such as autism, who may have social communication differences.³⁹

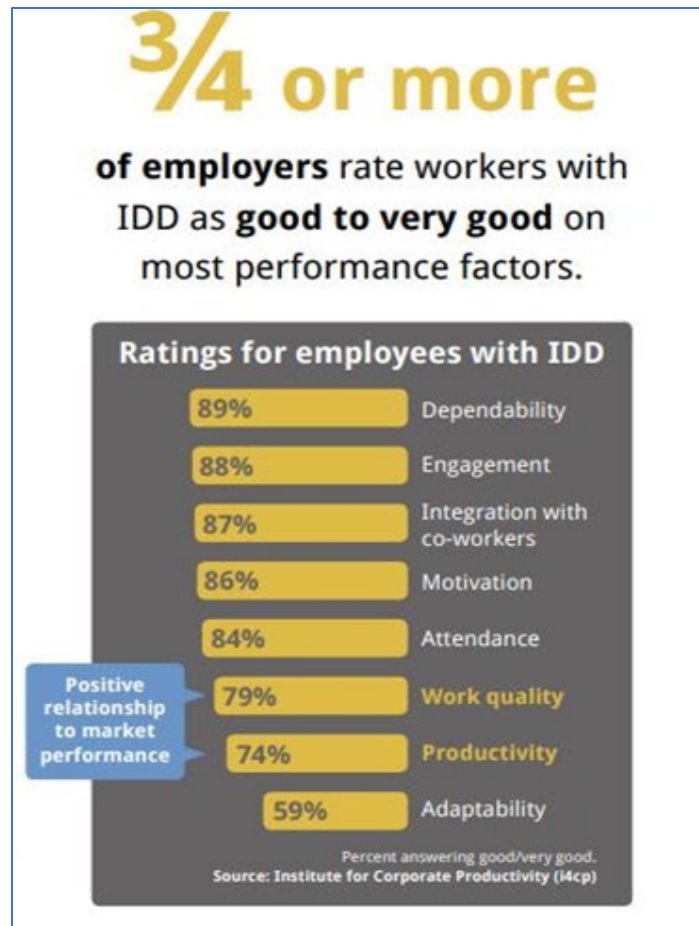
Figure 10: Employers and hidden workers agree that employer hiring processes often filter out qualified candidates

Do you think employers' hiring processes filter out potential candidates who could successfully perform the job, but don't fit the exact criteria in the job description (e.g., lacks professional experience)?



Benefits of Inclusive Hiring

Businesses that create new pathways for people with disabilities to be considered and hired, report very high satisfaction with their performance in key areas. Companies that successfully incorporate employees with disabilities have 28% higher revenue and 2x higher net income, according to Accenture.⁴⁰ They also experienced reduced turnover, lower recruiting costs, increased productivity, and improved customer outreach. i4cp has found that when businesses hired people with I/DD, three-quarters (¾) of those businesses reported that it was a positive experience. (i4cp Report)



The i4cp report mirrors the findings of the 2021 Accenture report, in that people with I/DD excel, when compared to the general workforce, in the areas of attitude and work ethic, productivity, quality of work, employee engagement, attendance, and innovation.

EFC Recommendations for Employers Hiring Persons with I/DD

1. Business-to-Business Trainings

Businesses distrust vendors and outside consultants but are very open to peers within their business community sharing innovations that are practical and proven to be effective. Businesses are eager to share these experiences and be recognized for leadership and innovation.

Business-to-business trainings exist, in which managers who have hired applicants with disabilities showcase the:

- a. Path the business found to consider and hire people with disabilities
- b. Work performance of their employees with disabilities surpassed expectations
- c. Supports employers received from disability support agencies

- d. Barriers the employer discovered that were previously preventing them from previously meeting and considering employees with disabilities for open positions
- e. Increase in customer loyalty to businesses with a workforce that reflects the community, including people with disabilities

EFC Recommendations for Employers Hiring Persons with I/DD

2. Conduct Research

Conduct research to identify the inefficiency and inequity of current outreach and recruitment practices. This should include trainings to support them with:

- a. How to connect to supported employment, DOR services and other job development and support agencies that serve people with disabilities, which can screen applicants who are qualified and motivated but are unable to overcome systemic barriers that block employers from considering them.
- b. How to reduce technology barriers that automatically filter out qualified applicants from the beginning of the application process.
- c. Identifying job requirements that are unnecessary to perform the essential functions of a job and not setting up barriers to employment, such as requiring:
 - 1) High school diplomas
 - 2) Certifications
 - 3) College degrees
 - 4) Experience

EFC Recommendations for Employers Hiring Persons with I/DD

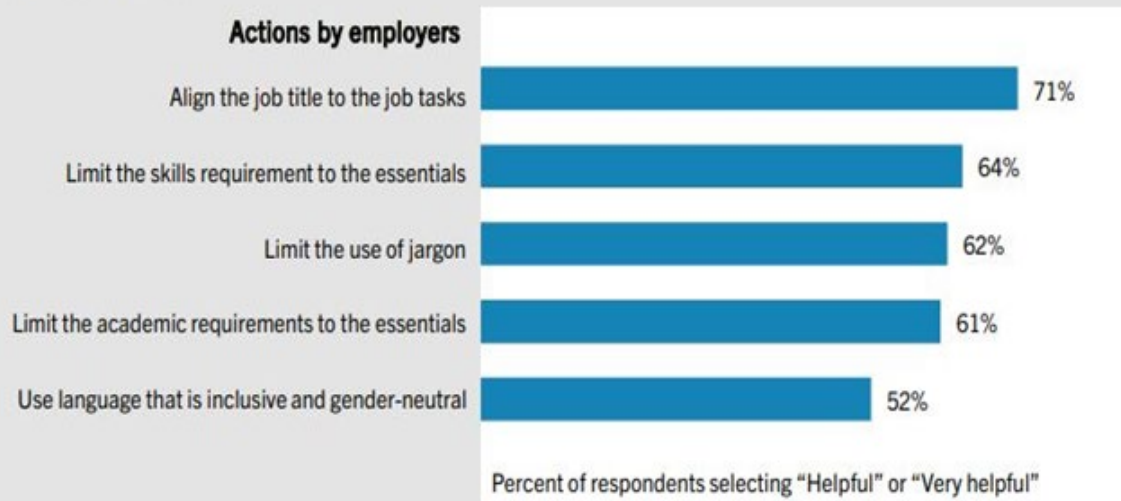
3. Provide Trainings

Provide trainings to support businesses with understanding identified strategies to support businesses with understanding strategies identified by people with disabilities that allow them to overcome systemic barriers. These are identified in the 2021 Accenture Report as:

- a. Simplified and clarified job descriptions
- b. Aligning job title to job tasks
- c. Removing unnecessary skills and academic requirements
- d. Limiting jargon
- e. Using language that is inclusive and gender-neutral

Figure 9: Employer actions that hidden workers cite as helpful in finding work

When creating job descriptions, which of the following actions by employers do you think would help you find a job?



Source: "Hidden Worker – Worker Survey," Accenture and Harvard Business School's Project on Managing the Future of Work, May-June 2020.

EFC Recommendations for Employers Hiring Persons with I/DD

4. Outreach and Recruitment

The effort to actively recruit persons with disabilities is the first step toward employers simply considering qualified applicants with disabilities.

EFC Recommendations for Employers Hiring Persons with I/DD

5. Require Trainings

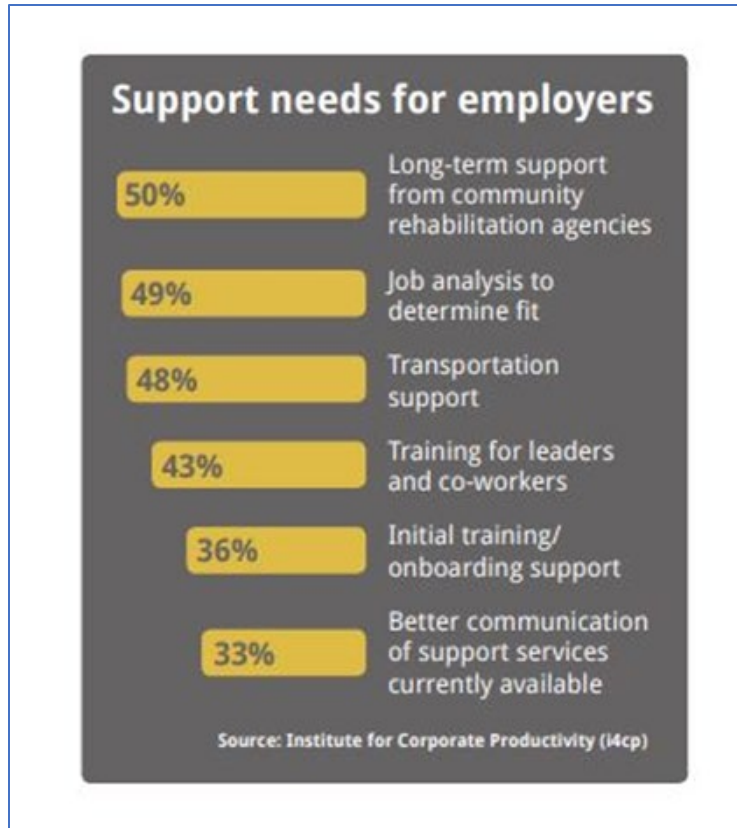
Employers should require training in successfully onboarding employees with disabilities and helping them achieve a sense of belonging by adopting a *User Experience* lens. The Accenture report also made the following recommendations:

- a. Become familiar with the challenges that current employees with disabilities faced when onboarding and how employees overcame those challenges.
- b. Address the concerns and challenges identified through intentional engagement with current employees with disabilities related to challenges during both onboarding and throughout their employment at the business.

- c. Learn about and engage in the disability community and services that support the community.
- d. Educate the current workforce about myths regarding employees with disabilities and the data showing employees with disabilities are high-performing, qualified and productive, when properly supported.
- e. Provide opportunities for current employees with disabilities to educate coworkers about challenges they face and how people with disabilities can be better supported.
- f. Involve supervisors and coworkers during onboarding of new colleagues with disabilities.
- g. Involve senior leadership throughout the process of changing policies and processes to recruit and onboard people with disabilities.
- h. Ensure that any new policies and support changes adopted for new employees with disabilities are also granted to existing employees with the same needs
- i. Ensure employees with disabilities are afforded opportunities for training, employee development and advancement.
- j. Engage in improving policies related to the employment of people with disabilities to help reduce structural barrier.

Additionally, the i4cp report found that employers who hired applicants with I/DD identified the following needs from supported employment agencies:

- Long-term support (50%)
- Job analysis to ensure to the person was a good fit for the job (49%)
- Transportation (48%)
- Training for supervisors and co-workers (43%)
- Onboarding and initial job training (36%)
- Better communication with supported employment agencies was identified by 33% of employers



Routes to Employment

Paid Internship Programs (PIP)

A business-friendly opportunity to explore hiring people with disabilities in state service is the Paid Internship Program (PIP) model. The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), American Job Centers (AJC), and regional centers all have paid internship programs for businesses exploring hiring people with disabilities. In addition to PIP and paid work experiences, DOR supports on-the-job training with the state and other types of employers. Regional centers have a PIP program that allows businesses to have a paid intern with an intellectual/developmental disability for 1,040 hours per year, per internship. This is an excellent opportunity for a business to observe a person performing the job with support from a job coach and overcome initial hesitation about productivity, the ability of people to do complex tasks, and/or other concerns, while also becoming familiar with how job-coaching services work. Many businesses have tested the viability of hiring employees with I/DD through the PIP model and quickly become convinced that inclusive hiring is a smart business decision. Businesses, including SMUD and Franklin Templeton, have found that converting people from paid internships to employment is a viable path for large businesses with fixed HR processes. These are businesses that may rely heavily on AI to screen potential applicants and have rigid competitive hiring processes to meet and onboard people with disabilities who would

have been screened out by more traditional processes. (See also section: *Issues Creating and Retaining Partnerships Employers in Regional Centers*)

While a general training on paid internships raises awareness of the opportunity, business-to-business trainings are effective testaments to the benefits, ease, and how to connect with supported employment services that support paid interns. Business-to-business trainings are especially important for large businesses that have the additional hurdle of shepherding a paid internship process through Human Resources (HR), Payroll, and/or other departments.

DOR: Employer Efforts

DOR is implementing a variety of efforts to address unmet needs and enhance communication through services to employers. One such project is the Demand Side Employment Initiative (DSEI), an employer incentive program that provides resources and retention practices for employers who hire people with disabilities. DOR is engaging more directly with the business community to change attitudes and provide resources that will normalize the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. To date, DOR has: a) given more than \$1.5 million in grants to small businesses that are committed to hiring people with disabilities; b) worked with the Society for Human Resources Managers on developing disability hiring training; and, c) partnered with three organizations to provide paid training apprenticeships in high-demand fields.

EFC Recommendations for Reducing Stigma Among Employers

1. Multi-Media Campaign

The first step to any change is awareness that a problem exists and then the creation of a pathway to possible solutions. Small businesses are often able to quickly adopt new strategies with a minimum of effort. Large businesses and corporations often require additional strategies and support with navigating changes to embedded HR policies and layers of bureaucracies. But the more employers hire persons with disabilities, the more they are exposed to what being inclusive is and eventually become more inclusive. (Accenture)

CDE, DOR, DDS, and SCDD should work collaboratively to launch and promote a statewide, multimedia public service campaign in traditional and social media with the goal of reducing stigma around hiring individuals with I/DD. Departments will need to request funding from the legislature to create an impactful awareness campaign. The campaign should:

- a. Highlight the impact and benefits to businesses when hiring a person with I/DD
- b. Highlight the accomplishments of People with I/DD in CIE

- c. Increase outreach to local businesses through employer partnerships, such as Chambers of Commerce

EFC Recommendations for Reducing Stigma Among Employers

2. Create Employer Incentives

The State Legislature should create a budget to make (tax) resources or incentives available to employers to provide supports for employers who hire people with I/DD and retain them long-term.

SCDD Legislative Priorities: 2023

In past reports to the California Legislature, the Employment First Committee (EFC) has recommended:

- More collaboration and data-sharing between agencies, to ensure streamlining of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) employment supports and services and the creation of a leadership office position to coordinate all CIE activities
- Funding and development of inclusive college programs on state college campuses to provide equal education opportunities

The following SCDD 2023 Legislative priorities are recommendations taken from both the Employment First Committee (EFC) and the SB 639 Report.

EFC and SB 639 Report Recommendations

1. Evolution of Employment First Policy and Need for an Employment First Office

In 2023, advocating for CIE and equal employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is a policy focus for SCDD. Since [AB 1041 \(Chesboro, Chapter 677\)](#)⁴¹ established California as an *Employment First* state in 2013, progress has been slow in assisting persons with I/DD attain competitive and integrated employment. In 2017, DOR, CDE and DDS came together to develop the *CIE Blueprint for Change*, a 5-year interagency project designed to establish employment in an integrated setting, at a competitive wage, for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). This interagency work ended in 2022 and its final report is pending.

In 2021, Senate Bill [SB 639](#) (Durazo) ended below-minimum-wage pay for workers with disabilities. In 2022, the implementation of SB 639 and the *CIE Blueprint* resulted in significant employment investments across agencies that had developed in relative silos, resulting in an incomplete and fragmented rollout of employment opportunities for People with I/DD.

The challenge in providing employment services for person with I/DD has been the significant number of efforts underway and the lack of adequate coordination across state agencies - causing employment services to be disjointed and inefficient. At a time when California employers are desperate for workers and when people with disabilities want to work but can't find a job, the state would benefit from the Employment 1st Office, facilitating a better rollout of *Employment First* programming. The Office's role would include ending agency and department silos on *Employment First efforts*, improving coordination across the many employment programs and facilitating an accurate, streamlined interpretation and implementation of Employment First policy across the state. The Office may also function as a go-to clearinghouse for all the state's employment first efforts and function as a resource for the public.

SCDD successfully advocated for the Employment 1st Office in the Legislature and with the administration, including CalHHS, DDS, and DOR, to raise awareness of the need for a single leadership office to streamline employment services. As of June 2023, the coalition supporting this successful proposal included Disability Rights California (DRC), California APSE, Inland Regional Center Integrated Community Coalition, Disability Voices United (DVU), PathPoint, and Progressive Employment Concepts.

EFC and SB 639 Report Recommendations

2. Prioritize Education

Although Assembly Bill [AB 2920](#) (Arambula, 2022)⁴² failed in the legislature last year, this year SCDD is supporting Assembly Bill [AB 447](#) (Arambula, 2023)⁴³: Public Post-Secondary Education: Students with Disabilities - Inclusive College Programs. Currently, People with I/DD) do not have the same opportunities after high school as other students. AB 447 will provide equitable and inclusive access to higher education for students with I/DD.

This bill will establish and expand existing inclusive college programs for students with I/DD on public 4-year university campuses, increasing the wage-earning capacity of People with I/DD throughout the state. By offering a sustainable funding source, AB 447 will enhance post-secondary programs for People with I/DD, supporting their goals of obtaining both a college education and increasing opportunities to gain competitive, integrated employment (CIE).

The purpose of AB 447 is to increase post-secondary opportunities for students with I/DD. If we expect the community of People with I/DD to transition successfully into CIE, availability of higher-education opportunities must be a part of the transition equation. (See also section ***Current Issues- Challenges in Education and its Effect on Employment.***)

Data Trends in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

National and state-level data is vital to monitoring progress in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). Highlighting the ongoing gaps in employment and wages occurring between individuals with disabilities and people without disabilities helps us to understand the challenges and barriers to achieving CIE. It is also important to understand the surveys being used and the populations represented to better understand if we are improving in CIE.

Trends in the U.S. suggest improvement but gaps between people with and without disabilities in employment, wages, and poverty levels continue. In 2021, these trends continued. It was estimated that 40.7% of the population of people with disabilities were employed, as compared to 76.6% of the population of people without disabilities. The gap of 35.4% has improved between 2019 and 2021 but continues to be substantial. When analyzing median earnings of full-time/full-year workers, the gap decreased from 2019 to 2021 by an estimated \$2,200 annually.⁴⁴ Of continuing concern are the ongoing disparities that exist within the population of people with I/DD. Black individuals with I/DD had fewer annual earnings, were less likely to work in integrated jobs and were less likely to have a successful outcome when receiving vocational rehabilitation services than Whites. Women with I/DD had similar rates of employment but earned almost 1/3 less than men with I/DD.

California, like the rest of the United States, continues to see gaps in employment participation and unemployment rates for people with disabilities. People with disabilities continue to be much more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than people without disabilities. A secondary analysis of the American Community Survey (ACS) for California reported that, in 2022, the employment rate of working-aged people with disabilities was 38%, compared to 74% of working-age people without disabilities.⁴⁵ A gap of 36-37% continues from 2017 to 2019.

The rates of employment for persons with I/DD increased by 2% to 27% in 2019, when compared to 2018. Also in 2019, 22% of working-aged people with disabilities were living in poverty, compared to 10% of working-aged people without disabilities. That gap increases to 16% when comparing working-aged people with I/DD to people without disabilities. In 2020, only 13% of persons with I/DD were in integrated employment settings.⁴⁶ The percentage of working-aged people with disabilities who were not working - but actively looking for work - was 7.9%, compared to 16.6% of working-aged people without disabilities.⁴⁷

In 2020, DDS reported that 19.6% of working-aged people with developmental disabilities receiving services through regional centers were working, compared to 17.9% in 2019. The average monthly regional center client's wage was \$816, compared to \$747 in 2019.⁴⁸ California has also continued to expand the number of regional

center clients receiving Supported Employment Program services and the amount of Supported Employment Program expenditures.

As more states, including California, are moving away from subminimum wage and into CIE, federal officials are beginning to support a new ‘push’ to support People with I/DD in CIE. Grant funding to DOR (almost \$14 million) will support innovations to support people with disabilities to be employed alongside persons without disabilities.⁴⁹ The *Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment Project* will expand college-to-career programs in North Orange and San Diego counties, allowing participants to pursue academic or career technical education (CTE) that can lead to CIE.⁵⁰

EFC Recommendation

1. Increase Collaboration and Funding

Overall, data trends suggest some movement toward improving CIE in California. Outcomes can improve with greater collaboration between state agencies and increases in funding supporting CIE. (See also section ***Interagency Data Collaboration.***)

Internship and Employment Stories

Sharing the lived experience of People with I/DD helps us to connect to the personal impact of employment initiatives and supports, while also continuing to highlight the real-world effect of employment barriers. These stories can break harmful stereotypes for employers and inspire others with I/DD to pursue work, by seeing themselves represented in positions and careers from which they have been historically excluded.

Below, we have included multiple narratives describing the individual experiences of People with I/DD in pursuing employment goals. Through these individuals’ perspectives, it is exciting to see the benefits of programs in action, such as the regional centers’ Paid Internship Program (PIP) and DOR’s College-to-Career inclusive post-secondary education programs. Other stories depict challenges and the reality that much work remains to be done to help People with I/DD gain meaningful employment.

Employment Stories

1. Brennan Cable



My name is Brennan Cable. I live in Fair Oaks, California, with my mom, dad, and older brother. In June of 2022, I started working at Grateful Bread, a local bakery that provides their products to grocery stores and restaurants in the area, as well as to customers that purchase directly from our store. My job coach, Storm, started working with me through Progressive Employment Concepts in March of 2022, when I was finishing a Paid Internship Program at a senior living facility.

I am very outgoing and love to help people, but the senior living facility did not give me many opportunities to share my personality with my coworkers and the residents I was servicing. Storm and I worked together to look for different opportunities in my community that matched my skill set and also allowed me to express myself and interact with people freely. After a few months of searching for employment, Storm supported me to speak with the manager at Grateful Bread and we connected instantly. My manager, Ryan, was really helpful in training me and working with me to find which tasks in the bakery I was good at.

When I first started working at Grateful Bread, I spent my shifts packaging different types of breads. Storm supported me to learn what techniques worked best for me and how I could work fastest and most effectively. It only took about a month before I was able to be completely independent at work and felt comfortable asking my coworkers and supervisors for help instead of my job coach. I became close friends with many of

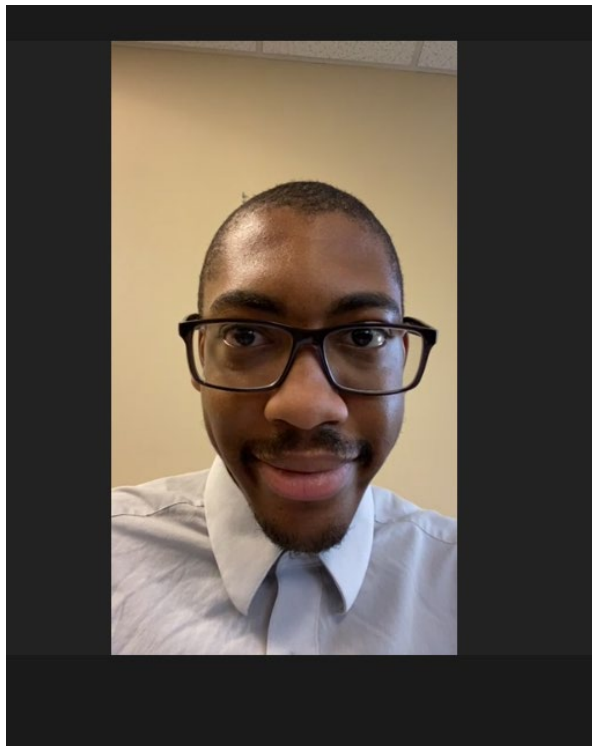
my coworkers, and they even taught me how to use Snapchat, so I could text and talk to them outside of work.

Over the past few months, I've been expanding my job duties with support from my supervisor, Rebecca. She gave me the opportunity to work at the register, which is what I really love doing at work. I'm very good at counting and handling money, and it gives me the ability to talk to all of the customers that come in. I enjoy leaving an impact on people and making them smile. There are several regular customers now that come in just because they like to talk to me and I'm so happy that I can be helpful to them.

I had been looking for a job that I feel is a perfect fit for me for about five years before I found Grateful Bread. Unlike some of the other jobs I've had, I always feel welcome and accepted by the people at Grateful Bread. I've been given the same opportunities as my coworkers, I've been able to increase the number of hours I work each week from nine to fifteen in just a few months, and I feel accomplished when I clock out each day.

Being employed and enjoying the work that I do has made a positive impact on my personal life as well. The confidence I've gained from my experience at Grateful Bread has carried over into how I interact with my family and friends. I see myself working for Grateful Bread for a very long time and I'm excited to see what opportunities lie ahead for me in this company!

2. Jean-Michel Corbier



I currently work full-time for the Mullen & Filippi law firm as a Document Specialist. Essentially, my job is to validate legal documents, such as Worker's Compensation cases, as well as scan and review other legal documents, such as medical reports and civil cases that come to our firm. I also sort and scan the mail, as well as work on projects, such as indexing new files and emailing attorneys about materials related to cases. I first started this job position on Monday, April 25, 2022.

I like that I can take on very important responsibilities such as dealing with confidential legal documents and checking for accuracy when validating legal documents.

I got my job when I was searching for new, more professional careers in my area in Sacramento. I actually got this position through Indeed, which is very cool. It actually took me only a week to get this position at Mullen & Filippi, LLP.

This work is important to me because it prepares me to take on my complex roles in a professional setting. I also want to feel that my work is making a difference in someone's life other than my own.

I first created my online store, Storeology, at storeology.shop, on Monday October 17, 2022. I created my store after publishing my Facebook group, *Mythical Creatures of the World*, on Friday, November 26, 2021. I created *Mythical Creatures of the World* because I loved the fascinating lore of mythical and fantasy creatures and wanted to make an entire website or social media channel just dedicated to those concepts. Storeology was my urge to see if I could make a profit off of my passion for mythical creatures. There have been some ups and downs when publishing and managing my group, but it has all been worth it to finally start my own business.

Note: Jean-Michel was supported by a Job Developer at InAlliance in earning the position at Mullen & Filippi. He is also supported through the Paid Internship Program (PIP) to assist in his self-employment venture. He meets weekly with his Job Developer at InAlliance to collaborate on his business, provide feedback, give advice, and help him connect to community resources, such as the Small Business Association (SBA). Jean-Michel has full control of his business and makes all the final decisions. InAlliance is a nonprofit organization⁵¹ that provides individualized support to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities within the greater Sacramento area.

3. Maribel, Family Advocate



My son Chris, who is autistic, is 20 years old and participates in a transition-to-adulthood program, where he practices independent living skills, some work skills at a community grocery store, and experiences going out into the community to order food or make a purchase. Sounds good, but the reality is that they still working on some academic assignments that are not at his reading level. He is a kid with a high school reading level and his assignments are still at the first-grade level; he is still practicing mathematics, I imagine at the level of most of his classmates, because I remember seeing 3 or 4-digit multiplications to solve, with a calculator, but he could do it. He learned 2 or 3-digit addition and subtraction in his elementary years, when he participated in regular education; and in addition to this, for me as a mother, it is too much and I respect the decisions of my adult son. I have to consent that he go to the community college to pick up recyclables; they cannot go with him to register him for a class, but they can take him to take the sun and pick up trash, so it's really unclear what the expectation is for Chris's future.

The offer of a day program for him is not something real for me. As a mother and responsible for his well-being, my idea of an opportunity is very different: he should have access to other opportunities closer to the things he likes or his abilities. For

example, he is a very skilled sculptor, he reads music, plays the piano and none of this is considered to create a plan for his adult life. This is further complicated when they take away the opportunity to continue supporting us, because they are adults and as parents, we can go to register them at the community college because their presence is necessary, and the school staff cannot do it; they cannot support their students to find a class at the community college.

And so we enter into the dilemma of who is responsible for providing these supports and looking for these services, at the end...is the family!! Not the regional center, not the rehabilitation department, not the transition-to-adult life program - that from their best intentions, share with us that everything is fine, that our student is doing very well at school, that there are no concerns, and that day program is waiting for them!!

It would be nice if you could help us realize that when our child with a disability enters the workforce, they will be 4 years behind, plus a disability, compared to most Americans who began their work experience at age 16 or 18. It would help us if they mentioned that waiting lists also exist for paid work opportunities for people with disabilities. It would help us if they clarified that it is the family who should contact the rehabilitation department and create a work integration plan with accommodations, with a job coach or some other service that is necessary, because although DOR has the tools for a job, it can also cover other services related to education or routines of our student.

4. Miriam

Miriam has been taking DSS classes at North Orange Continuing Education (NOCE) since 2018. She learned about DSS classes from her Adult Transition Program teacher, and she thought the classes sounded interesting. She simultaneously took DSS classes and Early Childhood Education classes through NOCE. Miriam is an extremely hard worker and very positive to everyone around her.

She shared that she doubted herself and whether she could pass her ECE classes. She had previously not had to write long papers, so this was something new. Miriam often utilized tools, such as speech-to-text to write these papers. She also taught other students how to use these tools to help with success. Miriam received support from College to Career (C2C), and - not only did she pass her classes, but she excelled in them.

While in ECE, she began volunteering at a preschool. We could see Miriam apply her knowledge gained from her hands-on experience to her Early Childhood classes. She gained confidence and insight into working with kids. After she completed her ECE certificate in Spring 2022, she worked with C2C's Job Developer and was hired at a preschool. She continues to work at the preschool while finishing up her remaining DSS

classes, which she will finish in 2024. She enjoys the independence she gets from working and having her own money. She wondered whether she could do the job and noted previously being shy. She has been doing very well at work and has been more outgoing. Miriam shared that her favorite things about NOCE are learning new things and meeting new people.

5. Adrian Arroyo

My name is Adrian Arroyo and I am a student at Fresno City College. I am a part of the College-to-Career (C2C) program at DSPS. I have been doing this for three years and I am about to graduate this year in May 2023. I aim to become a special education teacher assistant to help students with special needs.

In 2019, I signed up for the College-to-Career program and my counselor was Tiffany Myers. I told her that I wanted to be a special education teacher assistant and she put me into the Para-Educator major classes. I have taken four education classes and one English class. I told Tiffany I am not letting her or my family down because I told myself I am going to pass all my classes.

I met a lot of wonderful educational coaches and C2C students. I was a little bit shy talking to them. I got good experience with this program because I learned a lot from them and they provided the support I needed to accomplish my goals. I was part of volunteer work at the Terry House where I was a housekeeper and donated food, movies, and clothing to people who needed them. I have done volunteer work at the two elementary schools I was a part of as a yard duty aide and para-educator. I met a lot of students at the elementary school during my time and built a good relationship with them. I loved working with my fifth-grade students while doing my yard duty and TK and spent time in the classroom helping with classwork.

In 2020, I used to work at Walmart as a personal shopper during the pandemic; I was doing part-time and seasonal only. I had a good experience there.

I was going through a lot during the pandemic to find a way to pass all my classes, but I overcame that because I worked so hard, studied every day, and asked for help when needed. It took me three years to pass and reach my goal to become a special educator. I won't give up because I put in a lot of hard work, and I scored a good GPA of 3.15.

I met two amazing instructors at Fresno city College – Mr. Tackett and Mrs. Marquez who helped me so much because they gave good feedback and time with my homework and assignments. Mr. Tackett was so cool with me; we had a lot in common together; we are huge fans of superheroes. Bobbie Wells was another instructor who changed my life when I was going through personal issues. Sage Talbot, my counselor,

selected me as a guest speaker for a C2C program about my classes and my time at the volunteering site. Also, my family, friends, education coaches, peers, counselors, and job developers are so happy for me seeing me accomplish my goals and be successful.

I am currently working at the Clovis Campus Club Aide for an afterschool program showing me I can have good skills to become a paraeducator. When I told my wife the news I got a good job, she was so happy for me. Now I am on my way to graduating from Fresno City College to earn my certificate of achievement.

6. Jackie Armstrong

Going from a sheltered workplace to a competitive employment setting has been absolutely life changing. I wouldn't change it for the world. I'd say the biggest recommendation is to provide individualized or customized service (i.e., Scott may love working outdoors but Fiona wants to work at an office). It wouldn't make much sense to have them both doing janitorial at Walmart in a group for minimum wage now, would it? It makes more sense to find Scott an outdoor job while helping Fiona find clerical work. They'd be much happier, and the office and outside work productivity goes way up by their presence. This can best be done by the process of discovery. By thinking about the individual, the organization begins to shift as they stop thinking of people as a group or a cog in the machine and the de-institutionalization of the company can begin.

Lastly, I have several friends that are walking examples of what needs to change. I'll give you two examples:

1) One just graduated from San Jose State with her Bachelor's. She's eager to get a state job. She's also part of the regional center system. I gave her a list of supported employment agencies that offer individualized discovery and job development. The regional center service coordinator said not to go to those and to go to Department of Rehabilitation instead. It's been months, and she hasn't heard a thing from the Department of Rehab despite several phone calls and emails.

2) The other one is even sadder and more worrisome. She wants to work with dogs and was very excited about the micro-enterprise presentation that was held at my People First group. She said all this at her IPP and the reply from her worker was to put her on the waitlist for a segregated, art day program. She tried giving out resumes by herself but eventually gave up as nobody called back to hire her.

Both these scenarios are current - not past - scenarios. With all the *Employment First* policies and PIP available in California, it still boggles my mind that people have to fight so hard just to get the available services that they are entitled. I fear that more people

will get told "there is nothing for you" when the segregated day programs, like my latter friend who is currently on the waitlist for, close next March with HCBS.

Let me be clear, both friends are at similar "functioning levels" that I am. The only difference between them and I is my family got educated and went to trainings and I'm on multiple advocacy boards, so I knew how to fight. Again, it shouldn't be this hard for people WANTING to work to be able to work and get services to work. I've heard of people being told they're too severe to work and thank God there's places like Progressive that have a zero-exclusion policy and so many ways around that, but I fear too many people that are "high functioning" like the two friends I mentioned will continue to fall through the cracks into unemployment and isolation if something doesn't shift soon.

DDS: Incentives and Grants

In FY 2021/2022, DDS received \$10M to develop the Employment Grant to increase CIE opportunities for individuals served by regional centers. Grantees were to utilize new, innovative, best, or promising practices to support career pathways for youth and adults with I/DD and provide opportunities for CIE. Forty-five (45) projects were awarded through the Employment Grant and began work in January 2023. In FY 2022/2023, DDS received \$8.3M in funding to develop a pilot, in response to SB 639 (Durazo) and the phaseout of subminimum wages.

DDS has initiated the development of a Career Pathways to Competitive Integrated Employment (CPCIE) service, a new service option specifically designed for People with I/DD who are exiting secondary education or work activity programs, to prepare to achieve CIE. The pilot program focuses on improving equitable access to services and supports to achieve the goals established by the individual through person-centered career planning (PCP). The service option is for anyone, regardless of where they are on their career path. This includes participants who: 1) may have a job and would like a better one or to move up; 2) want a job but need help to find one; 3) are unsure about work and need help to learn more; or, 4) do not think they want to work but may not know enough about it.

More importantly, DDS states the pilot program will include services to individuals with high support needs. All consumers, regardless of I/DD level will be included in this service. The service establishes a Career Pathway Navigator, who assists and trains consumers and their family members on career options and navigating regional center and generic services and supports (including DOR and local school district) that are tailored to overcome barriers and meet their unique needs. Individual participants will be able to customize a flexible support system of community integration and employment services that reflects their individual preferences, skills and goals for career

preparedness and employment. All participants will receive benefits planning, and information and resources for financial empowerment. Training, and technical assistance will be provided to the regional center, providers, and community agencies to strengthen organizational capacity, and the coordination and delivery of evidence based, promising or best practices in employment services to the participants of the program.

Quality Incentive Program

In FY 2022/2023, DDS released two new Quality Incentive Program opportunities for vendors focused on employment:

1. Quality Incentive Program: Employment Capacity

This program provides incentive payments to providers to increase the number of employees who are certified as trained employment specialists through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE), Basic Employment Services, ACRE Basic Customized Employment Services, or as Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESP).

2. Quality Incentive Program: Employment Access

This will provide incentive payments to providers to increase the number of consumers entering CIE. Providers can qualify for incentive payments for consumers who achieve CIE and maintain employment for 30 days and 6 months, CIE placements, as a result of a PIP, and CIE placements for individuals exiting subminimum wage settings.

Appendix

EFC Membership (2022)

- **Alexis Deavenport-Saman, DrPh, MPH**
University of Southern California (USC)
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
- **Cathay Liu, Family Advocate**
California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)
- **Christine T. Moody, PhD**
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
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Statutory Responsibilities of the Employment First Committee (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] §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 decision making 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).

Responsibilities of the Employment First Committee (EFC): Plain Language Version

The Lanterman Act tells the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to have an Employment First Committee (EFC).

Why was the EFC created?

The Lanterman Act created the EFC to help get more people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (People with I/DD) jobs in competitive integrated employment (CIE).

What is Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)?

It means good jobs with good pay (minimum wage or above). Jobs should be in the general workplace, where people with disabilities work with other people from their community who do not have disabilities. These are jobs where people with disabilities get the same pay and benefits as people without disabilities doing the same work and where they are paid directly by their employer. Having a good job can also include people who make money with their own small businesses or by working for themselves.

Who is a member of the EFC?

The EFC includes representatives from government departments and other organizations that help people with developmental disabilities get good jobs.

What does the EFC have to do?

- Describe how the state government departments will work with each other to help people get good jobs with good pay.
- Find what works to help people get good jobs with good pay.

- Find good ways to plan for transition aged students (age 14 and above) to go to work after they are finished with high school, or their education beyond high school.
- Find ways to encourage agencies to support people to get good jobs with good pay.
- Develop partnerships with employers and agencies that help people find good jobs with good pay.
- Find out how many people with I/DD are working and how much money they are earning.
- Each year, measure if the state is getting better at supporting people to get good jobs with good pay.
- Recommend ways the state can improve how they measure progress in helping people get employed.

What does the EFC recommend as CIE goals for the state?

- Recommend legislation and other ways that the state can do a better job of supporting people to get good jobs with good pay.
- Recommend ways to improve helping transition age students (age 14 and above) go to work after they are finished with high school, or their education beyond high school.
- Recommend an *Employment First* policy that will get more people good jobs with good pay, with the supports they need. This will help people with disabilities to be part of their communities, have jobs, and make money, just like other people their age without disabilities. The policy will make sure people can choose the services they want, like they do now under the Lanterman Act. This policy is now California law.

Other things the EFC thinks will help:

The EFC has to send an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor. The report makes recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor and describes all the work of EFC. The Council approves the report.

Definitions

Definition of Developmental Disability in the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Welfare and Institutions Code §4512[a])

“Developmental disability” means a disability that originates before an individual attains 18 years of age; continues, or can be expected to continue, indefinitely; and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual. As defined by the Director of Developmental

Services, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, this term shall include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. This term shall also include disabling conditions found to be closely related to intellectual disability or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with an intellectual disability but shall not include other handicapping conditions that are solely physical in nature.

Definition of Developmental Disability in the Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §15002[8][A])

The term “developmental disability” means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

- (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely;
- (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 - (I) Self-care.
 - (II) Receptive and expressive language.
 - (III) Learning.
 - (IV) Mobility.
 - (V) Self-direction.
 - (VI) Capacity for independent living.
 - (VII) Economic self-sufficiency; and
 - (VIII) Reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

Best Practices

**California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD):
Sharing of Best Practices**

Beginning July 1, 2022, AB 133 (Committee on Budget) in California will increase the asset limit for Non-Modified Adjusted Gross Income (Non-MAGI) Medi-Cal programs. Non-MAGI programs generally provide health care for seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals who are in nursing facilities, as well as some other specialty groups. The increased asset limits will allow a larger number of applicants to become eligible for

Medi-Cal benefits, and will allow qualified beneficiaries to retain a larger amount of non-exempt assets and still be eligible for Medi-Cal. All other Non-MAGI Medi-Cal rules regarding the treatment of assets will still apply, such as exemptions for your home and vehicle.

Best Practices in 2021-2024: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plans

As the California Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) Employment and Training and State Coordination subcommittees collaborate on workforce issues, it is important that collaboration includes local areas identified as best practices. Following the review of the 2021-2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local plans, and discussions with CCEPD partners, initial best practices have been identified. These best practices will be used as work products with the goal of replication.

The local areas listed below were identified as having best practices. Although many strategies were located within Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) strategies of plans, these best practices also often included the most overarching strategies for inclusion of cross-disability regardless of CIE connections. CCEPD partners attempted to identify local areas of differing sizes and state regions. As collaboration discussions progress, additional best practices may be added.

Humboldt

Humboldt's local plan highlights a Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) partnership and was raised as a best practice for behavioral health by a CCEPD partner. DOR's Student Services Team works in collaboration with the Transition Partnership Program (TPP) at the Humboldt County Office of Education. The team also works to provide services to students that are not involved with the TPP contract. They attempt co-enrollment for people with disabilities whenever possible.

Madera

Madera's local plan utilizes numerous programs to address the needs of people with disabilities. Madera County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has received funding and staff training through the Disability Program Navigator, Disability Employment Initiative, and Disability Employment Accelerator grant programs. America's Job Center of California (AJCC) houses an Employment Network through Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program and ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to the services and information needed to successfully transition back into the workforce. There is also a Partnership Plus agreement with the DOR to provide long-term services and supports to individuals who have exited the public Vocational Rehabilitation system. In addition, two staff are trained Community Partner Work Incentive Counselors and can provide individuals with disabilities who receive SSI

and/or SSDI benefits counseling about the impacts on earnings when returning to work. Community Partner Work Incentive Counselors are required to renew their certification annually by completing 18 continuing education credits.

When a young person with a disability seeks services through the Workforce Assistance Center, assessments are administered and an Individual Service Strategy is developed to identify past educational attainment, skills levels, interests, barriers, and unique or specialized needs. Depending on the results of the assessment and service planning process, WIOA Youth Program staff may engage colleagues from the DOR, special education or other partners to assist in securing services and, as necessary accommodations, to facilitate the youth/young adult's participation in the program. Merced's local plan was not originally identified amongst best practices after CCEPD review of the local plans (the plan was not made available by the CWDB) but was raised by a CCEPD partner in follow-up discussions due to their work and ongoing commitment human centered design.

Orange County

The Orange, Santa Ana, and Anaheim workforce development boards are combined into a single local plan for Orange County. Board staff participate in the Orange County Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) meetings that include the education providers, Regional Center of Orange County, DOR regions, and other community-based organizations.

The latest employment and training programs include Addressing Barriers to Employment (ABE) for adults and the STEPS program for youth. The Orange board and Goodwill Industries of Orange County are lead program partners. The program gives Orange County region students and adults facing challenges more opportunities to achieve their greatest levels of personal and economic independence. Program participants are provided opportunities to participate in soft skills training, vocational preparation and social adjustment training, work experience, and permanent placement into CIE. DOR collaboration includes student services to the AJCCs for eligible youth program participants and cross-training and professional development to ensure local board front-line staff understands DOR's vast offerings.

Pacific Gateway

The Pacific Gateway local plan includes many references to addressing trauma and homelessness and utilizes an equity toolkit from the City of Long Beach's Office of Equity. DOR leadership is on both the workforce development board and youth committee. Additionally, they exhibit extensive work and an ongoing commitment to human centered design.

Sacramento

The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) grant initiatives have allowed SETA to build the capacity of AJCC staff to serve individuals with disabilities through specialized training opportunities for staff and reviews of physical and programmatic access. The program and system staff formed a Disability Services Workgroup, comprised of disability services navigators and led by a disability resource coordinator.

SETA works with the Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) on eligibility and enrollment, and disability etiquette. SETA and DOR staff have collaborated for cross-training in eligibility, enrollment, and service delivery. SETA and DOR collaboration has included employer outreach and engagement. SETA participates on the Northern California Business Advisory Council, which was developed in 2015 to promote partnership between local employers and employment/training programs to promote employment of people with disabilities.

At the release of the new local plan, SETA had not yet utilized the LPA template developed by DOR, DDS and the California Department of Education (CDE). However, SETA included extensive information on WIOA's §188 and ADA compliance, including disability etiquette and reasonable accommodation trainings for staff. SETA takes a *no-wrong-door* approach for all service locations, with memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in place for many service partners.

San Bernardino

San Bernardino engages with local partners to promote CIE by assigning staff to attend LPA meetings, cross-training, and identifying resources and partners for business engagement for a paid work experience program. Staff members of the San Bernardino DOR office are co-located at the three AJCCs, to help better serve the disability community by linking to available resources. They have developed paid work experiences and internships through DOR, including WIOA's out-of-school youth programs. DOR and the Inland Regional Center (IRC) support the job-coaching function as part of this collaboration to serve jobseekers. They are part of the DOR CIE Business Services team, which is responsible for recruiting, referral, and employment engagement strategies to serve the population of people with I/DD. Additionally, AJCC staff members are trained to meet the needs of people with disabilities, including the use of assistive technologies, and virtual services through the Virtual OneStop (VOS) system. They have recently completed upgrades to their assistive technology equipment.

Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara's plan includes extensive references to partnerships with DOR. Through an agreement with DOR, DOR staff co-locates in AJCC eight hours monthly. During that time, trainings are held to ensure that partner staff gain the knowledge necessary to assist in serving people with disabilities. DOR is working actively to set up on-the-job trainings for individuals with I/DD and look forward to working with the AJCC and community partners to assist these individuals to succeed in a competitive, integrated environment. The plan included an extensive list of partners for addressing the needs of people with disabilities

Solano

The Solano local board, through increased coordination with the North Bay Regional Center (NBRC) and DOR, has built partnerships with contractors that serve individuals with disabilities to improve access and utilization of the AJCC system and WIOA services. Through this work, they have created a community partnership with the Solano Local Plan Agreement (LPA). Partners have come together to learn about strategies for creating employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities as part of a DEA grant for customized work. The board's work has increased on-the-job training reimbursements to employers for hiring individuals with disabilities from 50% to 75%. This has allowed businesses to take on the additional training needed to bring an individual with a disability up to speed on the job.

The board also added transitional jobs as a *work-and-learn* service offering. Solano and its disability partners continue to develop strategies around employer engagement, *earn-and-learn* strategies, educational transition services, disability benefits counseling, and improved service coordination. Solano plans to develop strategies in partnership with the Napa-Solano Building Trades Council to improve access to apprenticeship programs for individuals with disabilities as part of its DEA grant. They are currently piloting common case management approaches as part of the AB 1111 (Berman) grant with a local community-based organization's employment services for individuals with mental health conditions. Partners leverage and collaborate on services such as disability advocacy, benefits counseling, job coaching, transportation assistance, and other supportive services provided by DOR and community-based organizations in the area.

Southeast Los Angeles (SELACO)

The Southeast Los Angeles (SELACO) plan includes a good breakdown of partner responsibilities and a focus on employer outreach for opportunities. In 2019-20 and in partnership with Long Beach Community College (LBCC), SELACO Workforce Development Board (WDB) piloted a project designed to support young adults (18-24 years of age) with autism to train and prepare to receive on-the-job training as

Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machinists. The project demonstrated exciting potential for successful completion however, due to COVID, was placed on hold until LBCC could reopen courses that required hands on training.

Tulare

The Tulare plan was raised as a best practice by a California Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) partner for its strong use of leveraging and braiding resources. The board has developed detailed guidelines for oversight and monitoring of contractors to ensure compliance with the requirements of applicable federal disability nondiscrimination law and includes a Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure Guide. It has two programs with shared consumers between DOR and the WIOA Title I Adult and Youth Programs: Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS), which serves youth and provides students with disabilities with job readiness training and work experience in a career pathway, matching their interests and career goals; and the DEA program, which focuses on providing competitive integrated employment (CIE) positions for adults.

Verdugo

The Verdugo local plan has noticeably more references to disabilities than any other local plan. While Verdugo has served people with disabilities for many years, the strategic focus on I/DD began six years ago with the examination of the demographic data, the increasing rates of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and their partners' commitment to develop career pathways for this underserved population. Through the Verdugo Computer Numerical Control Machinist Academy for students with intellectual disabilities, founded in Glendale in 2015, Verdugo has a proven co-enrollment strategy. This model was shared with six other local boards and used as the foundation for developing a strategic co-enrollment process for the region. Another innovative program they utilize is their work experience (WEX) program through STEPS. The STEPS project provides job preparation training, including job exploration, workplace readiness skills training, and work-based learning experiences through summer work experience, to students.

Additional Important Resources

- *California Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint*
- The CIE Toolkit
- Career research resources
- The Employment Development Department Toolbox for Job Seekers
- California Career Zone

- Career One Stop
- Social Security Work Incentives
- Ticket to Work
- The Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS)
- Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)
- Student-Earned Income (SEIE)
- Savings Plan incentives
- CalABLE – California Achieving a Better Life Experience (Savings Plan)
- SSI, SSDI, and Medi-Cal Information and Supports
- Disability Benefits 101 (DB 101)
- Entrepreneurship
- Respectability
- Making accessible forms
- National Resources

The California *Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint*

The CIE Toolkit is designed to provide tools and resources on CIE services and supports available to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, and employment service providers.

<https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/cie/cie-toolkit/>

Career Research Resources

The Employment Development Department Toolbox for Job Seekers

The Toolbox for Job Seekers provides tools and resources for California's job seekers to assist in their job search, career exploration, and training needs.

https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/Toolbox_for_Job_Seekers.htm

California Career Zone

This website offers interactive questionnaires that assess an individual's interests, research career choices, explore industry sectors, and more.

<https://www.cacareerzone.org/>

Career One Stop: Partner of America's Job Center of California (AJCC)

State and local organizations work together to offer employment and job training services at no cost through AJCC locations. AJCC career counselors help job seekers identify interests, assess skills, and locate in-demand jobs and training.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/>

Social Security Work Incentives

Ticket to Work

The Ticket to Work program is a federal program that helps Social Security beneficiaries with a disability achieve their employment goals. The program offers beneficiaries (aged 18 to 64) who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) services to help them become employed. These services can include vocational rehabilitation, training, referrals, job coaching, counseling, and placement services. The Ticket to Work program pays for services to help you find paid work - it is not linked to special jobs for Social Security beneficiaries. The services provided through the Ticket to Work program help you to find and apply for jobs that already exist in the marketplace.

https://ca.db101.org/ca/programs/work_benefits/ttw/program.htm

Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS)

The Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) is another Social Security Administration (SSA) work incentive program (WIP) that provides a way to save money without the savings affecting an individual's benefits, as long as the money is spent toward the individual's job goal. For example, a person could save money for:

- Assistive technology
- Starting a business
- A car

Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) - Ticket to Work - Social Security (ssa.gov)

Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE) lets SSA subtract the cost of services or items that a person needs to work from that person's reported earned income. For example, wheelchairs, medication, specialized transportation, and more.

Impairment-Related Work Expenses - Ticket to Work - Social Security (ssa.gov)

Student-Earned Income (SEI) is for any student that receives SSI, is under the age of 22 and still in high school, college, or job training to prepare for work. It lets a student earn up to \$2,040 a month, without lowering the student's SSI check.

<https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/studentEIE.html>

Savings Plan Incentives

CalABLE: California Achieving a Better Life Experience (Savings Plan)

CalABLE is a savings and investment plan offered by the state of California to individuals with disabilities. Eligible individuals, family, friends, and employers can contribute up to \$16,000 a year without affecting the account beneficiary's disability benefits. For more information go to: <https://www.calable.ca.gov/>

Several other states have ABLE account programs; you can have an ABLE account in another state. Each program is a little different and may better fit a person's needs. For more information on the ABLE National, Resource Center go to: <http://www.ablenrc.org/>

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medi-Cal Information and Supports

Disability Benefits 101 (DB 101)

Disability Benefits 101 (DB 101) helps workers and job seekers understand the connections between work and benefits such as SSI, SSDI, and Medi-Cal. DB 101 provides:

- Information about benefits programs, answers to frequently asked questions, and how to avoid common pitfalls.
- Calculators tailored for the individual that helps the user plan and set goals for work.
- Experts: DB 101's "Get Expert Help" connects you to a real person who can help with any benefits questions.

<https://ca.db101.org/>

Entrepreneurship

Respectability - This toolkit provides an inventory of existing materials, advice, and guides for those job seekers with disabilities ready to become self-employed, launch a new enterprise, or develop their entrepreneurial skills.

<https://www.respectability.org/resources/job-seekers-disabilities/entrepreneurship/>

Making Accessible Forms

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

<https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/DocumentAccessibility>

National Resources

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

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