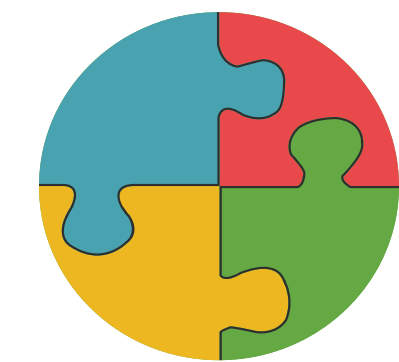


Self-Direction & Competitive Integrated Employment

In December 2019, Applied Self-Direction hosted a webinar with Alison Barkoff from the Center for Public Representation, Rie Kennedy-Lizotte from the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), Evan Nodvin, a self-direction participant, and Andrew Abrams, Evan's job coach and caregiver.

A goal of home and community-based services (HCBS) is to help individuals with disabilities live life like people without disabilities, with supports as needed.

HCBS should provide opportunities for true integration, independence, choice, and self-determination in all aspects of life and offering quality services and supports that meets the individual's needs.



HCBS can fund a range of day services including supported employment services to provide support to someone in a job at or above minimum wage and community-based day/community participation services.

It is important to note that working does not mean losing benefits, instead it can be supplemental to preexisting supports.

Why is Employment Important?

Employment is a national priority, as it is a natural part of the human experience and a civil right.

Competitive integrated employment helps individuals with disabilities by:

- Increasing access to the community
- Building relationships with people without disabilities
- Developing new skills and self-esteem
- Earning money to get out of poverty
- Using fewer Medicaid services
- Having meaningful ways to spend their days



Most people with disabilities say **they want to work**, yet most are still in segregated day programs.

For individuals who want employment, over half have no current goals around acquiring a job. This shows a need for more support in helping individuals understand what they need to be successful. With an increase in opportunities for competitive integrated employment due to federal policy, a need for more individualized support plans will arise. Self-direction can help fill this need!

▼ 15%

of HCBS funding supports competitive integrated employment

Federal & State Policies Are Changing How We View Disability Employment



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2014): Defines and prioritizes competitive integrated employment (CIE) as work at or above minimum wage and with coworkers without disabilities. Additionally, before someone is placed in a sheltered working environment, they must be made aware of what CIE opportunities are available, and what supports they can receive. This limits the use of subminimum wage and acknowledges the necessity for cross-agency collaboration (Medicaid, IDD etc.).

HCBS Settings Rule (2014): All HCBS settings must provide opportunities for CIE and people must be given the choice on “non-disability specific [workplaces]”.

Legislation Ending Subminimum Wage: A bipartisan bill titled Transformation to Competitive Employment Act, has been introduced to end subminimum wage and expand funding for competitive integrated employment. Earlier in 2019 the House passed the Raise the Wage Act, which includes workers with disabilities.

Many state legislatures and city councils have already passed laws ending subminimum wage. All but one state has an initiative in place about improving employment. There is a wide variation in the investments and outcomes throughout the country, and the service delivery system currently falls short of providing those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) the opportunities they demand for CIE, but the growing interest in improving and expanding CIE opportunities is promising.

Informed Choices

Individuals need information about what employment supports are available to them in order to make informed decisions about their best options. People may be able to get supports through the Medicaid/IDD system, vocational rehabilitation, workforce centers or Social Security's Ticket to Work program.



“The most important relationship is one of friendship and trust that Evan and I have been able to foster...the consistent hours have made it possible for Evan and I to not only meet his goals, but exceed them”

- Andrew, Evan's Job Coach and Caregiver