

Employment for People with Disabilities

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in 2014, improved services for disabled individuals to help them find and obtain competitive integrated employment.¹

In Idaho, our current rate of integrated employment for persons with intellectual disabilities is 10 percent versus 18.8 percent nationally, as ranked by the University of Massachusetts at Boston Institute for Community Inclusion.²

What is Integrated Employment?

- Integrated employment³ refers to jobs held by people with disabilities who perform work in typical workplace environments with coworkers who do not have disabilities.
- The wages earned by the person with a disability are consistent with those earned by other workers in the community who do not have disabilities and perform the same or similar work.
- Employees with disabilities must have the same opportunities as those without disabilities in the same position to interact with other employees, customers and vendors. This must be a normal part of the duties of the job and occur throughout the work site.

What do the regulations⁴ say?

W211

- The comprehensive functional assessment must take into consideration the client's age (for example, child, young adult, elderly person) and the implications for active treatment at each stage, as applicable.

W211

- Assessments address areas and active treatment needs which are relevant to the person's chronological age.
- The individual is given opportunities to participate in age-appropriate activities to assess the person's functioning in those activities or settings.

W215

- The comprehensive functional assessment must identify the client's needs for services without regard to the actual availability of the services needed.

W225

- The comprehensive functional assessment must include as applicable, vocational skills.
- Vocational development refers to work interests, work skills, work attitudes, work-related behaviors, and present and future employment options. Vocational assessments are conducted in appropriate environments.

W247

- The Individualized Program Plan must include opportunities for client choice and self-management.

W247

- Individuals are provided opportunities for choice, encouraged and taught to make choices, and to exercise control over themselves and their environment.
- Choices can be made by all individuals. The type of choices the person makes may vary from very simple to more complex, depending upon individual abilities.

Where do I start?

Four Key Stages to Employment

There are four key stages to employment⁵:

1. Assessment and Needs Analysis;
2. Job Development & Job Search;
3. Employment with Job Coach Support; and
4. Ongoing Support.

Assessment and Needs Analysis

The Job Coach will carry out a Needs Assessment with the job seeker to identify skills, interests and ambitions, with a view to identifying the type of work one would like to do.

Assessment and Needs Analysis

This phase may also include updating resumes and writing cover letters. It may also include work experience for job sampling/testing purposes.

Job Development & Job Search

The Job Coach offers supports in identifying suitable job options where one's skills, interests and talents match the requirements of the job.

This involves but is not limited to arranging mock interviews; searching for jobs in newspapers, on the internet, and at recruitment agencies; and by visiting possible employers (job shadowing).

Job Development & Job Search

Depending upon the disability and individual preferences surrounding one's diagnosis, the job coach and job seeker may engage in conversation about the merits of disclosing one's disability to potential employers.

Remember...

Unauthorized disclosure without the specific informed consent of the individual is not allowed (W112) and consent is obtained prior to the release of any individual information (W113).

Employment with Job Coach Support

The Job Coach⁶ supports the new employee in becoming and remaining a competent worker. The various tasks involved in the job are examined and accommodations are requested, if required.

Help is given to develop technical and social skills, again, only if required. Supports may take place both on and off-site.

Ongoing Support

The amount of support often will decrease over time as the employee adapts to the job and the workplace. Job retention and integration are essential features of Supported Employment.

Help is offered to the participant to facilitate communication on the job; for example, ask questions, ask for time off, inquire about task enlargement, training, or promotion.

Customized Employment

One alternative is customized employment.⁷

Customized employment means individualizing the relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both.

It is based on a determination of the strengths and interests of the person with a disability, and the needs of the employer.

Customized Employment

It may include employment developed through job carving, self-employment, or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability.

Customized Employment

Customized employment assumes the provision of reasonable accommodations and supports necessary for the individual to perform the functions of a job that is individually negotiated and developed.

Customized Employment

Customized employment works because it is person-centered, and driven by the interests, strengths and conditions for success of each individual.

It is real work for real pay in integrated settings. It is not based solely on job development techniques to secure existing work through a competitive employment process.

Customized Employment

A customized job is a set of tasks that differ from the employer's standard job descriptions but are based on actual tasks that are found in the workplace and meet the unmet needs of the employer.

Customized Employment

Practitioners and innovators in customized employment accomplish customized job descriptions through job carving, negotiated job descriptions, and job descriptions specifically created to meet the employer's unmet needs.

Customized Employment

Customized employment begins with the assumption that job seekers are ready for work, and have a valuable contribution to make that are based on their unique skills, interests and preferences.

Additional Resources

The following resources provide a vision towards achieving best practices in vocational and employment services.

Vocational Research Institute

- Their comprehensive career assessment measures both aptitude and interest, and aids in the career and educational planning process.⁵

Creative Employment Opportunities

- Creative Employment Opportunities, Inc. assists individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining community employment.⁸

Think College

- Provides college options for people with intellectual disabilities.⁹

References

¹ National Association of Workforce Boards. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act resources. Retrieved from https://www.nawb.org/wioa_resources.asp

² The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes Through 2016. (2018). University of Massachusetts at Boston Institute for the Institute for Community Inclusion. Report retrieved from https://www.thinkwork.org/sites/default/files/files/statedata2018_web_F.pdf

³ An Overview of Competitive Integrated Employment. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-competitive-employment-2161744>

⁴ *State Operations Manual Appendix J - Guidance to Surveyors: Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities*. Retrieved from https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/som107ap_j_intermcare.pdf

References

⁵ Comprehensive Career Assessment Measures were retrieved from <http://www.vri.org/products/careerscope-v10/benefits>

⁶ Definitions were retrieved from <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/the-role-of-a-job-coach/>

⁷ Customized employment was retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/CustomizedEmployment.htm>

⁸ Creative Employment Opportunities was retrieved from <http://www.ceomke.com>

⁹ Think College was retrieved from <http://www.thinkcollege.net>

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questions to
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