WISCONSIN ACT 178

Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes









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Executive Summary

Purpose

People in Wisconsin want opportunities to work and be self-sufficient. Wisconsinites with disabilities are no exception.

Competitive integrated employment (CIE) is work performed on a full-time or part-time basis. CIE must be compensated no less than the applicable state or local minimum wage (or the customary wage), or for self-employment, yield income comparable to person without disabilities doing similar tasks. The individual should be eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees while working at a location typically found in the community where the employee with a disability interacts with other people in non-supervisory roles who do not have disabilities in a position that presents opportunities for advancement. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amended the Rehabilitation Act Title IV in 2014 to include this definition. For people with disabilities, an important pathway to self-sufficiency and a fulfilling life, and is an opportunity to contribute to their communities and achieve other personal goals.

The Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Health Services (DHS), and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) have a long history of interagency collaboration in serving individuals with disabilities. Effective interagency collaboration is based on a shared vision, common goals, and mutual benefit for collaborative stakeholders and people with disabilities. In response to 2017 Wisconsin Act 178, DWD-DVR, DHS, and DPI have reaffirmed their commitment to work together to improve the lives of youth and adults with disabilities by increasing CIE outcomes.

Scope

The 2017 Wisconsin Act 178 requires DWD-DVR, DHS, and DPI to collaborate, with the input of stakeholders, in the development of a joint plan to increase CIE. This plan establishes performance improvement targets describing specific coordination methods to ensure programs, policies, and procedures support CIE. The departments will update the plan at least biennially.

As part of the plan, the departments have developed three performance improvement targets and cross-agency objectives to implement collaboratively to improve CIE outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities in the state. Per Act 178 requirements, to measure plan impact the three departments will provide an annual CIE Report on: 1) plan implementation; 2) barriers to implementation; and 3) data on CIE for working age individuals with disabilities receiving public services outside their home.

More specifically, data will be provided for all working-age individuals with disabilities who have Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) with local educational agencies (LEAs) monitored by DPI or are receiving services through DHS long-term care (LTC) programs for adults, DHS Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS), DHS Individual Placement and Supports (IPS), DVR, or Youth Apprenticeship (YA).

Mission and Shared Vision

Mission: To advance collaboration, cooperation, and communication between DHS, DWD-DVR, and DPI to increase CIE.

Vision: Empower individuals with disabilities to prepare for, participate in, and advance in CIE.

CIE Joint Guiding Principles

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Department of Health Services (DHS) Division of Medicaid Services (DMS) and Division of Care and Treatment Services (DCTS), and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) have agreed upon collaborative CIE Guiding Principles. These principles build on the agencies' philosophies and practices of person-centered planning, informed choice, respect for privacy, dignity and self-determination, and full CIE inclusion of people with disabilities served by the three departments. The principles are based on evidence-based research for collaboration and cooperation for best practice of CIE.

The collaborative CIE Joint Guiding Principles below provide the foundation of evidence-based practices and fundamental reasons for the departments to work together to provide essential services and supports that result in the best CIE outcomes for the individuals served.

- 1. CIE is the first and preferred employment outcome for all youth and adults.
- 2. Individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, can achieve employment that is high-quality, competitive, and integrated when provided the necessary services and supports at the right time.
- 3. Employment is a social determinant of health for all individuals, including those with disabilities.
- 4. CIE provides increased personal income, improves self-reliance, reduces dependence on public benefits, and is cost effective.
- 5. CIE benefits individuals with disabilities by increasing quality of life and sense of community, as well as improving self-confidence and social life.
- 6. Inclusion in general education and post-secondary education and training increases the likelihood that students with disabilities will obtain CIE, require fewer supports, and earn higher wages.
- 7. For a child with disabilities, expectations of work from parents, teachers, and others are a strong predictor of future CIE as an adult.
- 8. Paid work experiences for students during high school increases the likelihood of being competitively employed post high school.
- 9. To make an informed choice about CIE, individuals with disabilities require opportunities to receive comprehensive information about:
 - CIE services, including a range of individualized support models.
 - Work incentive benefits counseling.
 - Reasonable accommodations.
 - Opportunities to try a variety of CIE jobs.
- 10. Maintaining good health into and throughout adulthood interagency service coordination with intentional relationships between partners at the state and local level is necessary for youth and adults with disabilities to achieve their CIE goals.

- 11. Society as a whole and businesses in all sectors of the economy can benefit from a workforce that includes, and actively engages, individuals with disabilities.
- 12. Individual agency data collection and collaborative data sharing leads to meaningful analysis and valuable insights. Those combined data sets enable state departments to make informed, databased decisions, and measure the effectiveness of a specific practice.

Performance Improvement

Targets and Cross-Agency Objectives

- 1. Increase awareness that work is possible for people with disabilities by promoting CIE opportunities using targeted outreach and education.
 - A. Set and measure agency performance targets to increase CIE including youth engagement.
 - B. Continue to analyze baseline employment data of people with disabilities to address identified disparities in outcomes and or service delivery.
 - i. Share data with key organizations and partners to build awareness that services are available to support people working in CIE.
 - ii. Continue to identify additional barriers in service delivery for underrepresented individuals and generate potential solutions to address those barriers.
 - C. Educate employers, families, advocacy and self-advocacy organizations, school, Managed Care Organization, IRIS Consulting Agency, and ADRC staff that CIE is possible with collaboration and relationship building.
 - i. Use infographics and relevant CIE data to educate and gather input on barriers and solutions impacting employment for people with disabilities.
 - D. Use the updated Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) for adults as regional training materials as the basis for education and outreach.
 - E. Annually review and update the CIE website: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/partners/cie
 - **F.** Research methods to measure the benefit of employment for people with disabilities to state and local systems, return on investment, as well as the quality of life for people with disabilities.
- 2. Align state and local service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase CIE opportunities for people with disabilities.
 - A. Develop and implement a strategic plan to broaden access to IPS including implementing new IPS sites in each year of the joint plan.
 - B. Explore the creation of a transportation resource page on the CIE website.
 - C. Research options for service provider training and credentials.

- D. Conduct an analysis of service provider costs to provide supported employment services to DVR/DHS consumers to inform future fee schedule considerations.
- E. Identify and conduct outreach to other provider industries (e.g., direct care, mental health, youth justice, unhoused, etc.) to gauge interest in providing employment services to our CIE target groups.
- F. Conduct outreach to current employment service providers to expand their service area.
- G. Research expansion of the Dane County Supported Employment Provider Coalition model to increase collaboration between partners who support people in CIE.
- H. Follow the roadmap for 2026-2027 CIE-MIS data development work to add additional data elements. The current CIE-MIS has been developed to a point where robust enough data exists to start performing target analyses to understand what works to improve employment outcomes. Adding additional data will help provide a more complete picture of individuals working towards or in CIE.
 - i. Continue exploring and developing key performance indicators and build the data system to support reporting by those indicators. This may include a public facing dashboard and info graphics of CIE data.
- I. Revise the Youth Transition Action Guide (YTAG) to include additional roles (e.g. school nurses, mental health professionals, etc.) in the transition from school to employment for youth with disabilities.
- 3. Prepare students for careers by participating in K-12 career pathways that include a sequence of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and work-based learning experiences while connecting them to support services both during and after high school.
 - A. Promote work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities including youth apprenticeship, co-ops, temporary work experiences, Project SEARCH, Career Pathways, and integrated school-based enterprises.
 - B. Train Career and Technical Education (CTE) educators about supporting students with disabilities to reach their employment goals.
 - i. Provide² technical assistance and education to CTE teachers about including students with disabilities in CTE coursework and experiences.
 - ii. Promote examples of inclusion of students with disabilities in CTE coursework to CTE educators.

¹The Project SEARCH program is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. A total of 93% of the Project SEARCH program is financed with federal funds, and 7% is funded by other sources.

²DPI staff members providing technical assistance to CTE teachers and school counselors is supported by the U.S. Department of Education IDEA federal funds. A total of 100% of DPI staff members from the Special Education Team are financed with federal funds.

- C. Engage school counselors on strategies that encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities in academic and career planning through training and technical assistance.
- D. Showcase examples of collaboration between transition partners representing all three agencies.
- E. Research and implement services and supports for justice involved youth with disabilities to increase CIE outcomes through the Transforming to Thrive Grant project.

Agency-Specific Competitive Integrated Employment Initiatives Tables

The following tables contain activities for each department in support of the targets and interagency objectives to increase participation in CIE for common individuals.

State Fiscal Years 2024-25 Agency-Specific Competitive Integrated Employment Initiatives

DWD-DVR Activities

- Improve quality employment outcomes for DVR consumers by increasing the average wage earned per hour.
- Focus on equitable service delivery and service expenditures for underserved DVR consumer populations.
- Increase the number of consumers achieving Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) through
 participation in training programs that lead to quality employment outcomes. Examples of
 training programs include on-the-job training programs, vocational training programs, postsecondary training programs, and Project SEARCH.

DHS Activities

Division of Medicaid Services (DMS) Adult Long Term Support Program

- Publish DMS SFY 2020-2025 CIE data.
- Develop and publish new DMS CIE trainings.
- Promote and increase the number of people participating in on-line and in-person DMS CIE trainings.
- Update IRIS Service Definitions for the 2026 Waiver Renewal.
- Collect and analyze service data on the six components of individual supported employment and the CIE Exploration service in the Family Care and IRIS waivers.

DMS Children's Long Term Support Program

 Promote the Career Planning and Discovery option for individuals in CLTS to increase employment readiness in all Wisconsin counties.

- Target employment promotion to geographic areas and disability groups that are underrepresented given current CIE data.
- Promote and train county Support and Service Coordinators on employment readiness using existing options (Career Planning and Discovery) and methods to engage with DVR and DPI to increase the percentage of youth who are accessing employment services.

DCTS Behavioral Health

- Continue ongoing training with Forward Health field representatives' counties, providers, and other partners on billing best practices for IPS.
- Begin analyzing IPS data received from new IPS data survey for quarterly outcomes.
- Increase average fidelity scores across IPS sites.

DPI Activities

- Commit to investing in the 3Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) to provide training and resources to the field that promote increased CIE outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Coordinate the Wisconsin Community on Transition (WiCoT) to support local engagement of transition stakeholders in County Communities on Transition (CCoT).
- ⁴Collaborate with Career and Technical Education partners to increase engagement of students with IEPs in Career Pathways, Youth Apprenticeship, and Academic and Career Planning.

³The Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) is supported by the U.S. Department of Education IDEA discretionary federal funds. A total of 100% of the TIG is financed with federal funds.

⁴ DPI staff members' collaboration with Career and Technical Education partners is supported by the U.S. Department of Education IDEA federal funds. A total of 100% of DPI staff members from the Special Education Team are financed with federal funds.

Appendix A

Citations and References for Guiding Principles

Principle 1

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Appendix B

Definitions

Adult Long-Term Care Waivers

Medicaid programs for adults with disabilities and frail elders that provide long-term care services. Long-Term Care Waivers in Wisconsin include Family Care and Include, Respect, I Self-Direct (IRIS).

Best Practices

A procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results, and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Programs that prepare individuals for a wide range of careers that reflect the contemporary workplace. A high-quality Career and Technical Education program consists of three main components to achieve college and career readiness: academic and technical skills, leadership through CTSOs, and work-based learning

Career Based Learning Experiences

Business-connected experiences and opportunities that allow K-12 students to participate in career awareness, career exploration, or career development.

Career Pathways

A series of connected career and technical courses and training opportunities that flow seamlessly into a post-high school education setting or directly into entry level work for a specific career area.

Common Individuals

In this document, people who are simultaneously served by more than one Department are referred to as common individuals.

Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

Employment consisting of work performed on a full-time or part-time basis; compensated not less than the applicable state or local minimum wage (or the customary wage), or if self- employment yields income, comparable to person without disabilities doing similar tasks; the worker should be eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; the work should be at a location typically found in the community; where the employee with a disability interacts with other people who do not have disabilities, and are not in supervisory roles, and; the job presents opportunities for advancement. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amended the Rehabilitation Act Title IV in 2014 to include this definition.

CIE Disparities

A noticeable and usually a significant difference or dissimilarity in CIE service participation or outcomes.

CIE Management Information System (MIS)

A computerized information processing system designed to support the activities necessary to meet the requirements for security, privacy compliance, and cross agency data analysis as required by Act 178.

County Community on Transition (CCoT)

A regional community that meets regularly to identify issues, barriers, supports, and solutions in assisting students with disabilities in successful transition based on student post-secondary goals related to training or education, employment, and independent living. The keys to CCoT success are sharing the workload; establishing effective communication; and creating new relationships to better work together.

County Waiver Agency (CWA)

An agency responsible for operating the Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Waiver Program. Each county has at least one CWA.

Family Care

A Medicaid long-term care program for frail elders and adults with disabilities. The program provides a wide range of health and long-term care services.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

Include, Respect, I Self-Direct (IRIS)

A Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver for adults choosing to self-direct their long-term support needs.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a model of supported employment for people with serious mental health conditions. IPS supported employment helps people living with mental health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing. Although variations of supported employment exist, IPS refers to the evidence-based practice of supported employment. Mainstream education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths. IPS is based on eight (8) principles.

IRIS Consulting Agency (ICA)

An agency that assists participants and legal representatives in identifying immediate and long-term care needs, developing options to meet those needs, and accessing identified supports and services.

Limited Data Set (LDS)

LDS data is stripped of identifiers from the person while still allowing person-level analysis and trend reporting.

Long-Term Care

Any service or support that an individual may need due to a disability, aging, or a chronic illness that limits the person's ability to complete activities that are part of daily life. These activities include bathing, getting dressed, making meals, going to work, and paying bills.

Managed Care Organization (MCO)

An organization that operates the Family Care program and provides or coordinates services in the Family Care benefit package. MCOs receive a monthly payment per person to manage care for their members, who may be living in their own homes, in group living situations, or in nursing facilities.

Pay for Performance (P4P)

Also known as "value-based purchasing," P4P is a payment model in the healthcare industry that

offers financial incentives to physicians, hospitals, medical groups, and other healthcare providers for meeting certain performance measures.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Any sensitive data used to identify, contact, or locate a specific individual. This includes common identifiers such as full name, date of birth, street or email address, and demographic data, otherwise known as an identity for a person.

Person-Centered Planning

An ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their futures. In person-centered planning, the treatment team focuses on identifying what the individual wants to do and assists the individual in developing skills and managing limitations or barriers.

Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team (START)

A DVR team whose members take the lead on issues related to transition-age youth in their respective areas. START members are a resource for other staff within their Workforce Development Area (WDA) related to services to transition-age youth.

Transition-Age Youth

Individuals between the ages of 14 and 21.

Wisconsin Community on Transition (WiCoT)

A group of key stakeholders that meets to share best practices and impact policies and outcomes for youth with disabilities transitioning to adult life.

Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WINDAC)

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) formed the Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC) in spring 2020 as an advisory forum to discuss transportation mobility, safety, and access for Wisconsin's non-driving populations. Non-driving populations can include aging adults, students, low-income individuals, those with physical, mental, or intellectual/developmental disabilities, and those who prefer not to drive.

Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Project

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) started the WDQI grant program in 2010, with the purpose of supporting the development or expansion of state workforce longitudinal administrative databases. DWD was awarded a WDQI grant in 2019. According to DOL, the knowledge gained through data analytics can help states improve the effectiveness of their programs, identify shifts in the labor market, and design services to better meet their customers' needs.

Work Incentive Benefits Counseling (WIBC)

A process involving an individualized benefits analysis designed to help a member or participant understand the impact of income from employment on their disability benefits, including Medicaid acute/primary and long-term care benefits.

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Department of Workforce Development

201 E. Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53703
608-266-3131 | dwd.wisconsin.gov



