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2017 Wisconsin Act 178: Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes

Department of Workforce Development | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Health Services
Department of Public Instruction

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Executive Summary

Purpose

People in Wisconsin want opportunities to work and be self-sufficient. Wisconsinites with disabilities are no exception. Employment is a primary means for working-aged people to contribute to their communities and is one of the most satisfying and meaningful ways for people to achieve their goals. For people with disabilities, competitive integrated employment (CIE) is 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

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 Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) with DPI or are receiving services through DHS long-term care (LTC) programs for adults, DHS Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS), DHS Mental Health, 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.

DHS Guiding Principles

The Department of Health Services (DHS) has established a list of Guiding Principles for competitive, integrated employment (CIE) that build on the value of full inclusion of people with disabilities served in our long-term care programs.¹ These principles are evidence-based practices that align with the department's vision for the future for people with disabilities in Wisconsin communities. DHS recognizes that each person's path toward CIE involves a person-centered planning process that includes a variety of experiences to build toward successful jobs.

These principles do not limit or impact the provision of allowable services in DHS's long-term care programs, including the provision of pre-vocational services compliant with Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). Instead, this document focuses solely on advancing the goal of CIE as an outcome. These principles will lead our state in providing services and supports that result in CIE.

1. Everyone can work if a job is matched to the individual's unique interests and skills, and they are provided appropriate supports at the right time.
2. Competitive, integrated employment is the first and preferred employment outcome for all working-age youth and adults.
3. Working creates a strong path toward better physical and mental health.
4. Work is a pathway out of poverty, reduces reliance on public benefits, and is cost effective.
5. Work benefits people with disabilities by increasing quality of life, improving self-confidence, bettering social life, and increasing a sense of community.
6. Inclusion in general education and post-secondary courses increases the likelihood that students with disabilities will obtain competitive integrated employment, 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 competitive employment as an adult.
8. Paid competitive integrated employment work experiences during high school increases the likelihood of CIE outcomes.
9. People with disabilities require opportunities to receive comprehensive information about employment services, work incentive benefits counseling, reasonable accommodations, support models, and opportunities to try a variety of competitive integrated employment jobs to make an informed choice about employment.

10. Interagency coordination at the state level with the Department of Health Services, Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Instruction, long-term care agencies, vocational providers, businesses, technical colleges, and school districts, as well as local and regional coordination, is necessary for youth and adults with disabilities to achieve their employment goals.
11. Society as a whole and businesses in all sectors of the economy can benefit from a workforce that includes, and actively engages, people with disabilities.

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DWD-DVR Guiding Principles

1. Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the rights of individuals to live independently, make informed choices and decisions, contribute to society, pursue meaningful careers, and enjoy self-determination and full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society.²
2. Work is a fundamental aspect of adult life for individuals with and without disabilities. It contributes to independence and economic self-sufficiency, provides a sense of purpose and self-esteem, and shapes who we are and how we fit into our community.²
3. 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. Competitive integrated employment includes self-employment and supported employment services, which could include customized employment services. Individual placement and support services, when provided in partnership with mental health services, also provide access to competitive integrated employment. Youth and adults with disabilities must have access to the services they need, including training and other supports, to have meaningful opportunities to achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes.²
4. Implementation of programs, projects, and activities must be based on:
 - Person-centered planning;
 - Respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, pursuit of meaningful careers, and informed choice;
 - Respect for the privacy, confidentiality, and rights of individuals, including the right to effective and meaningful access to services, information, and data; and
 - Reliance on and pursuit of evidence-based, promising, and emerging best practices.
5. Service providers or workers hired by a participant through adult long-term care programs must be approved, and their staff must be qualified to facilitate the achievement of competitive integrated employment outcomes, including supported employment services.
6. State agencies must value and support individual and systemic advocacy and community involvement, including supporting the involvement of an individual's representative, if an individual with a disability requests, desires, or needs such support.

DPI Guiding Principles

1. Provide a free and appropriate public education to every child protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).³
2. Ensure every child graduates ready for college or a career.³
3. Promote engaged learning that motivates all children to reach their fullest potential.³
4. Sustain a culture of high expectations that promotes excellence and is achieved through intentional relationships with educational and interagency partners.⁴
5. Include students and families in the process of making educational decisions, ensuring students play a vital role in determining their future.⁴
6. Ensure educational environments are accessible, inclusive, and equitable for all students.⁴
7. Support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in transition planning through collaboration with DWD-DVR and DHS. The Post-Secondary Transition Plan and Summary of Performance will be used as tools in this coordinated approach to effective transition planning.⁵
8. Implement consistent policies and procedures around transition planning and services for students with disabilities.⁵
9. Support evidence-based practices for students with disabilities that promote outcomes directly linked to postsecondary education/training, competitive integrated employment, and independent living for working-age individuals with disabilities.⁴
10. Coordinate a network of professionals to assist LEAs in implementing effective transition planning, programming, and services.⁵
11. Share statewide and regional post-school outcomes for students with Individualized Education Program (IEPs).⁶
12. Share data regarding the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with IEPs.⁶

IPS Guiding Principles

DWD-DVR and DHS-Division of Care and Treatment Services (DCTS) adhere and agree to the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) Supported Employment Practice and Principles. 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.

1. **Focus on Competitive Employment:** Agencies providing IPS services are committed to competitive employment as an attainable goal for people with mental health conditions seeking employment. Mainstream education and specialized training may enhance career paths.
2. **Eligibility Based on Client Choice:** People are not excluded on the basis of readiness, diagnoses, symptoms, substance use history, psychiatric hospitalizations, homelessness, level of disability, or legal system involvement.
3. **Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Services:** IPS programs are closely integrated with mental health treatment teams.
4. **Attention to Worker Preferences:** Services are based on each person's preferences and choices, rather than providers' judgments.
5. **Personalized Benefits Counseling:** Employment specialists help people obtain personalized, understandable, and accurate information about their Social Security, Medicaid, and other benefit programs.
6. **Rapid Job Search:** IPS programs use a rapid job search approach to help job seekers obtain jobs directly, rather than providing a lengthy pre-employment assessment, training, and counseling. If further education is part of their plan, IPS specialists assist in these activities as needed.
7. **Systematic Job Development:** Employment specialists systematically visit employers, who are selected based on job seeker preferences, to learn about their business needs and hiring preferences.
8. **Time-Unlimited and Individualized Support:** Job supports are individualized and continue for as long as each worker wants and needs the support.

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. Analyze baseline employment data of people with disabilities to address identified disparities in outcomes and or service delivery.
 - i. Once disparities are identified, share the data with targeted organizations and stakeholders to build awareness that services are available.
 - ii. Identify barriers in service delivery for those underrepresented individuals and generate potential solutions to address them.
- B. Educate employers, school staff, families, advocacy organizations, self-advocacy organizations 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 the employment for people with disabilities.
 - ii. Use the Transition Action Guide (TAG) regional training materials as the basis for education and outreach.
- C. Annually review and update the CIE website.
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/partners/cie/>

2. Align State and local service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase CIE opportunities for people with disabilities.

- A. Develop joint CIE Guiding Principles for future CIE Plans
- B. Publish a web-based Adult Technical Assistance Guide (Adult TAG)
- C. Finalize a strategic 5-year plan to broaden access to IPS and initiate some activities in the plan.
- D. As a result of the supported employment LEAN Value Stream Mapping Process completed in 2022, operationalize interagency sharing of supported employment assessments, and other information that supports individual employment outcomes.

- E. Collaborate with the Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC) to brainstorm transportation solutions for individuals working in CIE.
- F. Continue to develop and provide joint training to educate interagency partners and stakeholders to increase knowledge of CIE.
- G. Investigate and identify innovative strategies and solutions to address Service Provider capacity gaps.
- H. Create a roadmap for future 2024-25 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. Explore adding Vocation Rehabilitation service data and Long-term Care Encounter service data to provide an understanding of what services have the most impact.
 - ii. Explore developing a data sharing agreement to allow DHS-DCTS data to be integrated into the CIE Joint Data System. Initial focus on adding CIE eligible individuals coming through DHS-DCTS programs that may not be included in the current CIE eligible people collected by the CIE-MIS.
 - iii. 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 infographics of CIE data.
 - iv. Modify the CIE MIS adding MCO assignment plan data to allow DHS to leverage the MIS for other reporting needs related to CIE.
- I. CIE MIS migration from current Oracle and BusinessObjects infrastructure to the newer SAS analytics infrastructure at DHS.
 - i. Migration to SAS Analytics is necessary as the current MIS infrastructure is being retired. SAS Analytics to provide more robust statistical analysis capabilities within the CIE MIS.
 - ii. Allows continued development using optimal funding sources.
- J. Provide Career Counseling including Career Pathways promoting the opportunity to pursue technical employment opportunities.

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, and integrated school-based enterprises.
- B. Train educators and practitioners that typically do not interact with students with disabilities about supporting students with disabilities to reach their employment goals.
 - a. Provide technical assistance and education to CTE teachers and school counselors about including students with disabilities in CTE coursework and experiences.
- C. Encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities in career planning and discovery experiences before they enter high school through training and technical assistance to school staff.
https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/acp/pdf/2022_08_Chart_CBLE_Guide.pdf
- D. Showcase examples of collaboration between transition stakeholders representing all three agencies.

Agency-specific Competitive Integrated Employment Initiatives Table

The following table contains activities for each Department to support opportunities and increased participation in CIE for common individuals.

State Fiscal Years 2024-25 Agency Specific Competitive Integrated Employment Initiatives
<i>DWD-DVR Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality employment outcomes for DVR consumers by increasing the average wage earned per hour. • Focus on equitable experiences for underrepresented consumers by increasing the number of underrepresented consumers with new IPEs, access to education/training services, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and successful employment outcomes. • Increase the number of consumers achieving Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) by them participating in training programs that lead to quality employment outcomes. Examples of training programs that qualify for MSG's include Project SEARCH, on the job training programs, vocational training programs, and technical diploma training programs.
<i>DHS Activities</i>
<p>Division of Medicaid Services (DMS) Adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish DMS CIE data • Develop and Publish DMS CIE Trainings • Update Family Care Service Definitions for 2025 Waiver Renewal

DMS Children's Waiver

- Explore pilot of IPS model for youth with IDD in conjunction with DCTS.
- Publish myths verses facts impact on benefits when transitioning or while working.
- Look at youth CIE data to identify and target gaps in employment.

DCTS Behavioral Health

- Begin working with our ForwardHealth Field Representatives to train counties, providers, and other partners on billing best practices for IPS.
- Create outline for IPS data report using new data fields.
- Increase average fidelity scores across IPS sites.

DPI Activities

- Commit to investing in the Transition Improvement Grant in order 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 (CCoTs).
- Collaborate with Career and Technical Education partners to increase engagement of students with IEPs in Career Pathways, Youth Apprenticeship, and Academic and Career Planning.

Appendix A

Citations and References

1. DHS Guiding Principles for Competitive Integrated Employment for People with Disabilities in Long-term Care, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01786.pdf>.
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3. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701.
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5. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. 2020. *Interagency Agreement*.
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8. Butterworth, J., Christensen, J., & Flippo, K. 2017. Partnerships in Employment: Building strong coalitions to facilitate systems change for youth and young adults. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 47, 265-276.
9. Honeycutt, T., Gionfriddo, B., & Livermore, G. 2018. *Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE): PROMISE Programs' Use of Effective Transition Practices in Servicing Youth with Disabilities*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research.
10. Guentherman, M., Hartman, E., Schlegelmilch, A., Brinck, E.A., & Anderson, C.A. (2020). Building a management information system with inter-agency data sharing to improve data-based decision making across systems: Experiences from Wisconsin PROMISE. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0034355220962182>

11. Tucker, K., Feng, H., Gruman, C., & Crossen, L. 2017. Improving competitive integrated employment for youth and young adults with disabilities: Findings from an evaluation of eight Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Projects. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 47, 277-294.
12. Joint Communication on Resource Leveraging & Service Coordination to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/ten-07-22>

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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.

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.

Lean Principles

Lean Principles are used for continuous improvement based on the fundamental idea of respect for people and defines the value for a specific service or product from the customer's perspective. Using a process called value stream mapping, a group of stakeholders identifies process steps and non-value activities can be targeted for removal or revision. Processes can be redesigned to allow customer services and information to flow through a new process without interruption.

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.

Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Project

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) 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.