

Employment Policy: North Carolina and Beyond



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Opportunities and Challenges

- ❖ Individuals with disabilities have the highest (80%) rate of unemployment and are an untapped source of qualified candidates
- ❖ Employment contributes to the state economy and can reduce individual poverty and dependency on systems
- ❖ Services have shifted away from employment and job supports to non-work services that do not assist participants in accessing a productive career path and meaningful work in the community
- ❖ A total of 30 states have legislation, a formal policy directive, or other official state mandate addressing employment as a priority outcome

Federal Employment Policy

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Executive Order 13548
- Section 503 of Rehabilitation Act
- National Governor's Association: *A Better Bottom Line*
- Home and Community Based Settings – HCBS Rules
- Americans With Disabilities Act



WIOA-Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

- ❖ Definitions for competitive integrated employment, customized employment, supported employment
- ❖ Allocate 15% of a state's VR allotment to transition services for youth with disabilities
- ❖ Changes in performance measures to include entering and retaining employment wages, education, skills and training, and serving employers
- ❖ Agreements between state VR and state Medicaid systems and I/DD agencies
- ❖ Prohibit individuals age 24 and younger from working jobs that pay less than the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour unless they first try vocational rehabilitation services

Presidential Executive Order (13548)

- ❖ Executive Order to make the federal government a model employer of persons with disabilities
- ❖ Model recruitment and hiring strategies for agencies seeking to increase their employment of people with disabilities
- ❖ Coordinating employment counseling to help match the career aspirations of individuals with disabilities to the needs of the agency
- ❖ Holds agencies accountable for their hiring practices

Section 503 of Rehabilitation Act

- ❖ The Department of Labor new rule to strengthen requirements outlined in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ❖ Require federal contractors and subcontractors to set a hiring goal of 7% of their workforces people with disabilities.
- ❖ Contractors must take specific action for recruitment, training, record keeping, and policy dissemination

National Governors Association:

A Better Bottom Line

- ❖ *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities*
Supported by Governor Jack Markell, (Delaware) and Governor Scott Walker (Wisconsin)
- ❖ Provides governors and other state policymakers with policy options to assess the environment in their state and implement strategies to support persons with disabilities
- ❖ Emphasis is on people who have significant I/DD and may need supports like job coaches and personal attendants
- ❖ Governors, businesses, disability leaders and other thought leaders convene throughout the year to share ideas that support this population

Home and Community Based Standards

- ❖ Recent changes to CMS rules require that individuals receiving Home and Community Based Services have:
 - ❖ opportunities to seek employment
 - ❖ work in competitive integrated settings
 - ❖ engage in community life
 - ❖ control personal resources
- ❖ States now working on new State Plan Amendments

North Carolina

Employment First Steering Committee

- ❖ Emerged from National Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) with goal to double the employment rate for individuals with disabilities
- ❖ A North Carolina state team of more than 30 members across disability groups to:
 - ❖ discuss services
 - ❖ strengthen the broad-based collaborative effort between the state divisions, advocates, organizations, stakeholders, consumers and families
 - ❖ be a central group for ideas, issues, and initiatives on employment
- ❖ Employment First Statement of Principles supported by over 50 state and local organizations and individuals who agree to work towards the goals of Employment First

North Carolina

State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)

- ❖ Cross-state cooperative of state and developmental disability agencies that are committed to improving employment outcomes for adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities
- ❖ *SELN* membership promotes new connections within and across states --
 - ❖ collaborative relationships among states
 - ❖ learn from their experiences of other service systems
 - ❖ share costs, use data and maximize resources

Benefits to Business

- ❖ People with disabilities have equal to or higher performance rates and are less likely to resign and move onto another job
- ❖ Motivate other employees and increase productivity of groups
- ❖ One in five Americans has a disability, representing \$1 trillion in purchase power
- ❖ Increase income and broaden the tax base by putting the 54 million individuals with disabilities to work
- ❖ An untapped talent pool



North Carolina

Business Leadership Network

- ❖ A business-to-business network
- ❖ Supports the business community with information and resources to:
 - ❖ source, hire and promote people with disabilities
 - ❖ to do business with organizations owned and operated by people with disabilities
 - ❖ to market their products and services in an accessible manner to people with disabilities across the State of North Carolina

Governor McCrory Executive Order Equal Opportunity Employment

Confirms North Carolina's commitment to:

- 1) providing equal employment opportunities for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, **disability**, genetic information;
- 2) recognize that effective and efficient government requires the talents, skills, and abilities of all available human resources;
- 3) acknowledge the need for a diverse workforce;
- 4) endorse a positive approach to equal employment;
- 5) support Human Resources practices of state government that are nondiscriminatory and promote confidence in the fairness and integrity of government; and
- 6) the fairness in the State work environment and that employees should be valued for their individual strengths and encouraged to achieve their fullest potential

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities Funded Initiatives

- ❖ **Project SEARCH** To increase competitive employment for persons with I/DD through the internship model
- ❖ **Reaching the Summit of Success** To develop a strategic plan of goals, timelines, and strategies to enable transition to postsecondary educational opportunities and integrated work environments
- ❖ **Learning and Earning After High School** To raise expectations, change attitudes, and provide transition services and resources for students with I/DD, even with those with the most complex disabilities. Unique family focus and reach to middle school.
- ❖ **Stakeholder Engagement Group (SEG)** The only cross-disability group of individuals and family members who identified integrated employment and asset development in their top five desired system outcomes



Questions

Discussion