

Report from Employment Work Group

Approved by The Arc of PA Board of Directors Jan 29, 2011

BARRIERS

We believe if we first look at what is happening to hamper employment, it will give us guiding principles to suggest a new direction as we go forward. Reform will be an evolution, not a revolution to make sure people are supported on the journey to the future and not harmed by the changes that will be suggested.

Barriers can be categorized in the following ways:

- the person employed
- the business employing them
- the system supporting them (families, providers, school, state)
- the community's support

The person employed may

- Fear losing public benefits
- Worry they will not have healthcare related supports (e.g. taking medications)
- Perceive they are too medically fragile or there may be healthcare related risks (whether actual or not)
- Need Information and awareness (i.e. government incentives; job coaching, etc)
- Need transportation to job site
- Lack quality training opportunities to promote technological and social skills
- Be challenged when it comes to on-line applications (no personal touch)
- Have a light work history and lack experience in an entry level position

The business employing them may

- See people with disabilities as the last resort of hiring
- Resist hiring a person with a disability due to myths/stereotypes or fear of being sued if something goes wrong
- Not be willing to make accommodations for individuals
- Lack the understanding of the benefits to their business by hiring a person with a disability
- Not realize the financial incentives for making accommodations

The system supporting them (families, providers, school, state)

- **Families issues**
 - Difficult to navigate the systems
 - Lack of interagency links
 - Lack of understanding of employment process
 - Fear of losing benefits
- **Support Coordination issues:**
 - Case loads are too high
 - Too much paperwork – takes away from human touch
 - Management is overwhelmed – lack of staff, turnover

- Low salaries
- Lack of infrastructure (services) to clients
- Lack of incentives to locate employment
- Lack of effort in finding natural supports
- Lack of standardized practices to promote employment outcomes
- **System issues**
 - Confusion around eligibility for funding of services and supports for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury, Autism, and Mental Retardation
 - Lack of outreach relationships between school districts, Intermediate Unit and adult job coaching agencies
 - Lack of job experiences aimed at students' needs and wants (with possibility of permanent job placement)
 - Lack of sufficient communication between IEP (Individual Education Plan) transition team and county Supports Coordination
 - Disjointed system (ie school / MHMR)
 - Gap in school transition and vocational preparation
 - The current state of congregate care settings, sub-minimum wage work, and sometimes demeaning adult activities
 - People with intellectual disability in and outside the service system are not encouraged to find employment
 - Travel time and low salaries for job coaches which leads to poor retention
 - School transition process to work needs to be strengthened
 - Low expectations by support persons (ability to take risks)
 - Low expectations on vocational services and adult training facilities to promote employment outcomes
 - No measurement of employment outcomes in the system
 - No development of an employment culture in many areas
 - Providers don't access Ticket to Work and other funding streams that would promote cost benefit of supported employment
 - 2390 regulations don't enforce regulations regarding services leading to employment outcomes
 - 2380 regulations do not require any movement into vocational services and supported employment
 - Utilization of volunteer work and group employment (enclaves, etc) has not led to employment outcomes for people
 - No standardized **EMPLOYMENT FIRST** practices in Pennsylvania regulation.

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices on employment encompasses Adult Training Facilities and Vocational Facilities, supported, and competitive employment. Best practices must be employed regardless of the setting if meaningful work is a goal.

Our findings are consistent with The Arc of The United States position statement on Employment: *"People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities¹ can be competitively employed in their communities. They should be supported to make informed choices about their*

work and careers and have the resources to seek, obtain, and be successful in integrated, community employment.”

As described in “[Supported Employment: A Customer-Driven Approach](#),” **Best Practices** in Supported Employment ¹ are:

- 1) Choice
- 2) Control
- 3) Careers
- 4) Full Inclusion
- 5) Long term Supports
- 6) Community & Business Supports
- 7) Total Quality Management
- 8) Assistive Technology
- 9) Person-Centered Planning

Four features for successful community employment

- 1) organizational services developed for persons with significant disabilities
- 2) development of a customer-driven approach to services
- 3) assisting customers in accessing meaningful employment outcomes
- 4) maximizing the integration and community participation for customer ⁽²⁾

Additional Resources:

1. Supported Employment Competencies, by Dale Dileo

These competencies are based on the work of APSE’s (Advancing Employment. Connecting People. www.apse.org) various workgroups on certification, quality indicators, and competencies; involving the volunteer efforts of several people: Karen Flippo, Pat Rogan, Tammara Geary, Debra Martin Luecking, Pat Keul, Tom Harrison, Brenda Harvey, Dale Dutton, Renee Drouet, Bob Niemiec, Rebecca McDonald, Sue Killam, Linda Quinn, Dale DiLeo, Rob Hoffman, and the New Jersey APSE Chapter.

[Supported Employment Competencies PDF](#)

2. APSE Supported Employment Quality Indicators

These quality indicators have been developed through the efforts of several people who have volunteered, at various times, to be part of APSE's Quality Indicators Work Groups: Karen Flippo, Pat Keul, Tom Harrison, Debra Martin Petty, Brenda Harvey, Dale Dutton, Renee Drouet, Bob Niemiec, Rebecca McDonald, Sue Killam, Pat Rogan, Tammara Geary, Linda Quinn, Dale DiLeo, Rob Hoffman, and the New Jersey APSE Chapter. This final version was compiled by Pat Rogan in March 2000.

National APSE is the largest professional advocacy organization in the country representing supported employment (SE) and the individuals served in SE. Supported Employment has grown significantly in the past decade, involving approximately 150,000 individuals with disabilities. This document represents an effort by national APSE to articulate quality indicators of individualized and integrated Supported Employment. These quality indicators were designed to complement APSE's Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment. **[Quality Indicators PDF](#)**

3. Employment/Transition to Work

- **Office of Disability Employment Policy** - The web site includes PCEPD (President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities <http://www.icdri.org/Employment/pcepd.htm>) publications, press releases, general information on the Committee, and contact information for state liaison organizations.
- **Cornell University Employment & Disability Institute** - Resources and information on employment of people with disabilities.
- **Employment Support Institute** - Helping people make better decisions about employment options and policies.
- **The Transition Research Institute at the University of Illinois** - Headquarters for the National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities, promotes the inclusion of youth with disabilities in the national school-to-work efforts.
- **Virginia Commonwealth University** - Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Support.

DEFINITION OF EMPLOYMENT (AND WHAT IT IS NOT)

Question: are “work” and “employment” the same all the time (if employment requires compensation)? Employment is always work, but work isn't always employment. An internship or a volunteer job can be “work”, but perhaps it's not employment. Volunteerism is not employment even though it's a good thing to do.

Governor Ridge made a statement “There's dignity in all work.” He used to hear opponents of reform suggest there weren't jobs, or “good jobs”, and it wasn't right to force folks to take jobs “flipping burgers”, etc. The key word, of course, is the word “work”. It must be “work” for it to carry the dignity part of the statement. “Work” is something one does that has value to another party. It may or may not result in cash or in-kind compensation. (e.g., volunteerism, internship, etc.). Work isn't something one does just to kill time during the day. So, in the context of this disability debate, there is dignity in all work, as long as it's work.

While people commonly participate in volunteer activities and hobbies that are unpaid or less than fully compensated, these activities typically are not sufficient to provide the participants with an adequate and stable means of economic support.

Therefore Employment is performing work (physical or intellectual toil, exertion or effort) to legally produce goods or services for another person or entity that results in the worker being paid compensation by the consumer of the goods or services or by some third party on behalf of the consumer.

- Compensation for employment is comparable to the fair market economic value of the goods or services produced by the worker.
- Performing work of duration, quality and/or quantity that typically would not be produced by workers not receiving compensation. In some cases workers may receive payment in kind or compensation of intangible value; for example students may engage in unpaid internships for the purpose of gaining valuable real-world work experience in their field of interest. These unpaid employment episodes are typically of limited duration.

^{1,2} (**Chapter 1: Supported Employment: A Customer-Driven Approach (PDF)**) by Vicki Brooke, Paul Wehman, Katherine Inge, & Wendy Parent