

# OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES

## OREGON POLICY ON: EMPLOYMENT FOR WORKING AGE INDIVIDUALS

### Policy Framework

1. Oregon Revised Statutes identify increased productivity, integration and independence as the desired outcomes resulting from provision of services and supports for adults with developmental disabilities.
2. The Oregon Department of Human Services, in order to implement its mission, has several stated goals. Among the goals are:
  - a. People are living as independently as possible; and
  - b. People are able to support themselves and their families.
3. It is important for Oregon that working age adults, including individuals with developmental disabilities:
  - a. Contribute to our economy;
  - b. Become part of our workforce; and
  - c. Become as self-sufficient as possible.
4. Individuals with developmental disabilities have a right to the opportunity for meaningful work and:
  - a. A vast majority want to pursue employment opportunities; and
  - b. Meaningful work can be accomplished regardless of disability; and
  - c. Partnerships, vision, and creativity are necessary to overcome perceived or real barriers to employment.
5. The benefits of meaningful work have significance and importance to all working age adults, including individuals with developmental disabilities. Benefits include the:
  - a. Ability to earn and keep meaningful wages;
  - b. Development and expansion of relationships;
  - c. Identity as a contributing member to one's community;
  - d. Increase in personal self-esteem; and
  - e. Pursuit of desired lifestyles.

## **Policy Statement**

In order to achieve the intent outlined in the framework of this policy, employment opportunities in fully integrated work settings shall be the first and priority option explored in the service planning for working age adults with developmental disabilities. While all options are important and valued, integrated employment is more valued than non-employment, segregated employment, facility-based employment, or day habilitation in terms of employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

For those who successfully achieve the goal of employment in an integrated setting, future service planning must focus on maintaining employment as well as the consideration of additional career or advancement opportunities. For those not yet achieving employment, annual service planning must include and reflect employment opportunities as the first and priority service option explored.

## **Key Procedures and Principles:**

Implementation of this policy shall be based on the following procedures and principles:

1. Employment services shall be specifically addressed in the Individual Support Plan;
2. Employment services shall be considered and provided using person-centered planning concepts, based on informed choice, and consistent with the philosophy of self-determination;
3. Minimum or competitive wages and benefits shall be the goal of integrated employment;
4. All natural as well as paid supports will be considered in service planning; and
5. Employment supports will be provided outside of the individual's living environment unless necessary for a self-employment plan or for the individual's medical or safety needs.

This policy statement will be accompanied by a more thorough implementation statement that further details definitions, desired outcomes, and operational procedures.