

Entry to Sheltered Workshops: Upcoming Policy Changes

*Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)
for Individuals and Families*

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Policy Change:

As of July 1, 2015, only those who are already receiving a service in a sheltered workshop may continue. If you are not working in a sheltered workshop at that time, many other employment options are available.

Purpose of this Document:

This document is intended to help you understand both what is happening now in regard to sheltered workshops, and access to employment services after July 1. This F.A.Q. addresses ways people can make informed choices about exploring and pursuing integrated employment.

For the purpose of this F.A.Q., sheltered workshops are facilities in which people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities are employed by provider organizations to perform tasks for pay, often for less than minimum wage. These workers have few or no opportunities to interact with people who do not have disabilities, other than support staff.

Background:

Many changes are happening nationally and in Oregon around services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. One big change involves the philosophy and policy about helping people obtain paid jobs in their communities.

Oregon is an Employment First state and has an Employment First policy. Employment First means with the right job match, planning and support, people can obtain paid jobs in their communities, and advance in their career choices. These jobs are in typical community businesses and with coworkers who do not experience disabilities. This is known as “integrated employment.”

Integrated employment is a priority over work that isolates people from their communities. Oregon is moving away from segregated work settings such as sheltered workshops. Across the country, many states, including Oregon, are focusing on integrated services that support people to be part of their communities.

QUESTION #1: What is happening?

Answer: Starting July 1, 2015, Oregon's Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS) will no longer fund services for new people to enter sheltered workshops. ODDS will continue to offer a variety of employment services to help people pursue integrated jobs in their communities.

QUESTION #2: Who does this affect?

Answer: People who are newly eligible for ODDS services, or people already using services, but not in a sheltered workshop setting.

QUESTION #3: How does this affect me if I am not using ODDS services in a sheltered workshop?

Answer: You will not be able to access employment services in a sheltered workshop after July 1, 2015. However, you will be able to use other available employment services to help you explore and obtain jobs in the community, as well as advance in your career.

QUESTION #4: How does this affect me if I am already using ODDS services in a sheltered workshop?

Answer: If you are already working in a sheltered workshop on July 1, 2015, you can continue to receive services in a sheltered workshop to help you explore or maintain your goals for community employment. More detailed information about this subject is coming soon.

QUESTION #5: What does this mean for me and my family?

Answer: You can talk to your Service Coordinator or Personal Agent anytime about the other employment services available. Your Service Coordinator or Personal Agent should also talk to you about what employment services will best meet your needs and goals. This includes discussing what services are available and what services are available to help you explore or pursue jobs in the community, as well as advance in your career choices.

QUESTION #6: Are there other services available?

Answer: Yes there are many other services. While sheltered workshop services will not be available for some after July 1, there are other choices to help achieve integrated employment or to address other interests you may have to participate in your community. You can talk to your Service Coordinator or Personal Agent about what services are available to help meet your interests and goals.

The services you might ask about include:

- Vocational Rehabilitation services
- Discovery
- Individual Supported Employment
- Small Group Supported Employment
- Employment Path services

QUESTION #7: Where can I get more information?

Answer: You can contact your Service Coordinator or Personal Agent or visit the following websites:

- [ODDS website](#)
- [Employment First website](#)
- [ODDS Facebook](#)
- [Employment First Facebook](#)
- [Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities' Success Stories](#)



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