

Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council **Employment Policy**

The Council supports individuals with disabilities being employed just like anyone else, including real jobs with real pay, real benefits, and real employers. “Special” jobs with below-minimum wage, public benefits, and human service providers are not the ideal outcome, based on Council principles, but may be a temporary path to real employment. Volunteerism is in the same category as being supported temporarily as a path to a real job.

- The use of customized employment, including the Discovery process before employment, is critical. The Discovery process should be a reimbursable category under supported employment.
- An Employment First policy with stakeholder buy-in may move Colorado forward in our shared goal of employment.
- A system of accountability that uses consistent definitions of employment in the gathering of data to measure outcomes is critical.
- Gathering of data outside of billing processes is necessary to track outcomes, particularly for individuals who actually succeed in achieving competitive employment.
- The Council supports policy that does not allow students to transition to segregated employment after high school.
- The Council supports the definition of pre-vocational to include short timelines for individuals to transition out of the pre-vocational category to another more appropriate waiver or a real job. Benchmarks of progress on the path to employment should be clearly defined in waiver language as well as in individual support plans.
- The Council supports reasonable reimbursement rates for providers in the supported employment category that would be parallel to those in such states as Washington, which has a very high employment rate.
- The Council does not support the inclusion of enclaves in the definition of supported employment, despite the widespread practice nationally.
- The Council supports the creation of a Business Leadership Network within the state to involve the business community in our efforts to move the state forward.
- The Council supports the concept of least restrictive setting relative to work, which would include the use of Olmstead case principles, the ADA, and the mission of the Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD), in part, as supported by 27.10.(5).
- The Council supports the involvement of individuals with disabilities getting direct work experience in order to make informed decisions around employment.
- The Council supports individuals with disabilities in taking risks that everyone else would in the pursuit of employment, including the possibility of failure on a job.
- Following the principle of normalization and inclusion, the Council supports people working like all other citizens, none of whom have the choice not to contribute to their personal well-being as well as to that of their employer, and community.