



## **DDC Employment Position Paper**

### **General / Philosophy/Values**

All people should be encouraged and supported in developing to their full potential. People with disabilities should have the same expectations as those without disabilities of pursuing and securing employment that is fulfilling to them. Society benefits when people are employed and when the workforce is diverse.

Particular attention must be paid to those with disabilities who are members of minority groups, because they face discrimination on two fronts. All services and supports must be provided in a culturally competent manner with specific attention to the needs of minority communities.

People with disabilities have the right to equal access to productive employment in a job they have chosen with wages and benefits on a par with people without disabilities. They have the right to opportunities for growth and advancement. Workers with disabilities must have access to the supports and accommodations they need to be successful and must not be threatened with loss of benefits or other rights because of their disability.

People with disabilities should have the opportunity to work with their non-disabled peers. To increase inclusion, employment should be in actual business and industry sites, rather than in segregated, sheltered programs. Technical assistance should be offered to providers of facility-based vocational services and adult training facilities on becoming providers of employment supports within the community. Opportunities for integrated employment and job

training should not be inhibited by the perceived need to maintain programs that provide non-vocational supports.

### **Principles for Success**

- ***Attitudes and Information:*** Resources must be focused on providing information and changing attitudes of employers, co-workers, family members and people with disabilities themselves. People with disabilities and family members must be aware of all the options available to them so they can make an informed choice. It is particularly important to reach parents of young children, so that they are aware of the full range of vocational options available. Employers and employees must be made aware of the incentives and supports available to them such as tax credits, I CAN, PASS, Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, etc. To ensure greater participation and support from employers, more effort must be put into getting their participation in the planning and implementation stages of the development of employment systems. Providers and residential staff must be prepared to support employment choices by accommodating individuals' varied shifts, transportation needs, etc.
- ***Career Options:*** People should be offered an array of job options with opportunities for growth and advancement. This array should include such options as: competitive employment, supported employment, small business, and self-employment opportunities. Flexibility should be maximized, ensuring the availability of job redefinition and redesign, career building and career ladders, telecommuting, flexible work time, etc.
- ***Support Services:*** Workers must have access to supports including but not limited to: accommodations in the work place; assistive technology; accessible public transportation; hiring a support person, such as a job coach or an attendant. Public funding should be adequate to provide needed

supports. Supports provided should be based on individual need and preference. Supports may be provided at the work site, in transportation to or from the work site, or in the employee's home. The residential services system must be designed and funded to support people's vocational choices.

- ***Lifespan:*** Career exploration and planning must begin at an early age and be available throughout the person's lifespan, through school-to-work transition and retirement. In addition, people must be supported through voluntary job or career changes or layoffs. Lifelong educational opportunities should be promoted.
- ***Interagency Collaboration:*** At the state and local level, agencies must work together to provide employment services and supports. This includes both agencies that specialize in serving those with disabilities and generic employment agencies. Programs designed to move people from welfare to work must interface with programs serving people with disabilities. This requires cooperation between government and private agencies and among government agencies, including benefit issuing agencies, educational agencies, transportation agencies, etc. Agreements must be reached about areas of authority and payment responsibility.