




# Employment Defined

A guide to the basics of employment for people with disabilities





## Employment

Employment refers to work done by an individual *in exchange for wages or salary*. It can take various forms, including full-time, part-time, temporary, or permanent positions.

-  **Hired by the Employer:** The individual is directly employed by the company, not through a third party or sub-contractor.
-  **Regular Employee Status:** The individual is considered a regular employee, with the same rights, benefits, and responsibilities as other employees.
-  **Meaningful Work:** The job duties align with the business's needs and contribute to the company's success, ensuring the work is valued and purposeful.

## Employment First

Employment First is a *national movement and guiding principle* that starts with the belief that employment should be the first and preferred option for all people, including those with disabilities. It means that when planning for the future, everyone—regardless of their disability—is presumed capable of working in a competitive and integrated job setting.

-  **First Option:** Employment is considered the primary goal for all individuals.
-  **Presumption of Ability:** It assumes that every person, with the right support, can work in a job.
-  **Focus on Competitive Integrated Employment:** The expectation is that people will work in regular jobs alongside people without disabilities, earning a competitive wage.
-  **Shift in Mindset:** Employment First represents a shift from anticipating job readiness to placing greater emphasis on securing successful, long-term employment.

# What is the outcome of Employment First?

## Competitive Integrated Employment

Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) refers to work performed by individuals with disabilities in an environment where they earn wages (at least minimum wage) and wages are comparable to the wages of those without disabilities who are performing similar tasks. The work occurs in settings where employees work alongside other employees without disabilities.

### DEFINITIONS



**Competitive:** Work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis where an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid to others performing similar work.



**Integrated:** Work is located within a community setting where most people do not have disabilities.



**Self-Employment:** Self-employment occurs when an individual owns and operates their own business, providing goods or services directly to customers. This form of employment allows the individual to have control over their work, schedule, and business decisions, and it can be tailored to their strengths, interests, and abilities. Self-employment can range from small home-based businesses to larger entrepreneurial ventures.





# How is Competitive Integrated Employment achieved?



## Employment Service Models

Approaches that have been **researched and proven effective** in helping individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain employment. These are integrated and community-based employment services.

### Traditional Employment

Traditional employment involves searching and applying directly to employers, participating in interviews, and, if selected, are hired.

Components:

- **Job Search:** Using job boards or company websites and leveraging connects for job leads.
- **Apply:** Submitting tailored documents or online forms then interviewing for jobs.
- **Job Offer:** Discussing salary and terms and onboarding with the company.

### Supported Employment

This model provides ongoing, individualized support to help individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment through support from job coaches and can be long-term if necessary.

Components:

- **Assessment:** Understanding the job seeker's skills, interest, and strengths.
- **Job Search & Development:** Search and create job opportunities that align with the job seeker.
- **Initial Job Training:** Train and orient the employee to learn tasks and workplace culture for their role.
- **Follow Along Supports:** Continuous support as needed to help maintain employment.

### Customized Employment

A form of supported employment, this model is tailored to the unique strengths, interests, and needs of the individual. It involves negotiating job duties and work conditions that align with both the job seeker's abilities and the employer's needs.

Components:

- **Discovery Process:** An in-depth exploration of the individual's strengths, needs, and preferences.
- **Job Carving/Task Reassignment:** Modifying existing jobs or creating new ones based on the individual's strengths.
- **Employer Negotiation:** Engaging employers to match the job seeker's abilities with business needs.

# What is not considered employment?

## Pre-Employment

Pre-employment refers to the activities, services, and processes that occur **before an individual secures a job**. These activities are designed to prepare individuals, particularly those with disabilities or other barriers to employment, for entering competitive integrated employment.

Pre-Employment may be paid or unpaid.

- ✓ **Career Exploration:** Assisting individuals in understanding different career options and identifying jobs that align with their interests, strengths, and goals.
- ✓ **Skills Training:** Providing training in specific job-related skills, such as computer skills, communication, or technical abilities, that are necessary for the workplace.
- ✓ **Job Readiness:** Offering workshops or courses that teach essential employment skills, such as resume writing, interviewing techniques, and workplace etiquette.
- ✓ **Internships/Work Experiences:** Opportunities for individuals to gain hands-on experience in a work environment, often serving as a bridge to full-time employment.
- ✓ **Skills Development:** Focusing on the development of interpersonal skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and time management, which are critical for success in the workplace.
- ✓ **Support Services:** Providing additional support, such as counseling, transportation assistance, or help with job search strategies, to overcome barriers to employment.



## EXAMPLES OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT

**Group Supported (GSE) or Enclave Employment:** Employment in a community-based setting where a small group of individuals with disabilities work together with the support of a job coach or supervisor. This is a temporary, pre-employment strategy designed to offer individuals with disabilities the training, skill development, and social support needed to prepare for competitive integrated employment.

*e.g. janitorial crew, landscaping team*

**Transitional Employment:** Typically, short-term employment that serves as a bridge to gain experience, develop skills, and transition into competitive integrated employment.

*e.g. Work-Based Learning programs internships or apprenticeships, Summer Work Program, volunteer work*

**Center-Based Employment (CBE), Sheltered Workshop, or Facility-Based Employment:** Employment provided in a segregated setting, often referred to as sheltered workshops, where individuals with disabilities work alongside other individuals with disabilities. The focus is often on providing work experience and wages are often below minimum wage.

This should not be a permanent setting. Nationally, other states have eliminated this as a pre-employment option.

*e.g. sheltered workshop, assembling items*



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