



# Employment First Policy

## **Background**

California's Employment First Policy was signed into law on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. California was the 12<sup>th</sup> state to have an Employment First policy in law.

## **Policy Statement**

Integrated Competitive Employment (a job at a workplace among people with and without disabilities) is the first and preferred choice considered for every working aged individual supported by VMRC.

## **Discussion**

It is now California's highest priority to make integrated employment a real choice for people with developmental disabilities. Historically, many people with developmental disabilities have been held back by low or negative expectations from all sectors of the community. Looking at employment options first can, and will increase expectations.

This policy agrees with the Lanterman Act principle that people with developmental disabilities must have an opportunity to explore and achieve their full potential, including the right to learn from actual experience.

As always, the Individual Program Plan (IPP) process is the key to helping a person learn, think, and decide if employment is right for them and if so, identify and offer the supports needed.

Only by talking about employment as an option and a normal part of adult life, rather than the exception, can more people be employed. Individuals, families, teachers, and other professionals at all levels are the front line in promoting, supporting and establishing the VMRC Employment First Policy. It is important that everyone involved advocates, educates, and informs people about this policy in order to achieve this outcome.

This policy recognizes school-sponsored work experience, post-secondary training, and volunteerism as important stepping stones to employment that make use of a person's interests and their potential.

The first option to consider in the Individual Program Plan (IPP) is integrated competitive employment. VMRC must promote the philosophy that integrated work at regular pay is a real option and discuss available services, supports, and barriers in an effort to help individuals become employed.

### **Measures of Success**

1. VMRC will assess the number and percentage of working aged adults with developmental disabilities who have jobs and document how long they have been working.
2. VMRC will increase the number of working aged adults moving from day programs and work-activity programs into integrated employment each year.
3. VMRC will survey to find out if employed people with developmental disabilities become a natural and accepted part of the workforce and within limits of reasonable accommodations, are treated no differently than their co-workers.
4. VMRC will use follow up surveys to document achievement of students following graduation regarding their employment status.
5. VMRC consumers ages 14 and above ***may*** have one or more specific vocational and employment objectives in their IPP or a written plan on how to overcome any identified barriers to employment.
6. VMRC will document from survey data consumer progress such as increased salary, promotion, or increased work hours.