



People with developmental disabilities benefit from paid community employment in more ways than just income.



▼ employment benefits

## BENEFITS OF EMPLOYMENT

The Employment First initiative promotes integration and interaction within the work community, doing jobs you choose, at the same pay as other people without disabilities, doing the same job.

### What Employment Options Are Available?

- Competitive Employment
- Self-Employment
- Supported Employment
- Work Activity Program (WAP)

### Thinking About Work?

It can be a lot of work to get a job. But with the right help, people can get a job and be paid well. A person should consider:

- What am I good at?
- What do I like to do?
- What kind of workplace would be best for me?
- What kind of support will I need to succeed?

People usually try out small jobs or volunteer to see what they like.



“With initiative and the right supports and opportunities, people with developmental disabilities can work. They can succeed at a job, earn decent pay, meet people on the job, and be more a part of their community.”



## How to Find Work

- Ask your Service Coordinator how the regional center can help you prepare for work, find a job, succeed on the job, or start your own business
- Work with your team at school to create goals around job skills, and volunteer or paid work
- Volunteer for different jobs to learn what you like doing
- Talk to friends and family about your goals
- Explore work training programs at adult school or college
- Ask about employment supports at your Planning Team Meetings
- Explore getting employment support from the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). Your Service Coordinator can help get you started with DOR

## Employment and Your Individual Program Plan (IPP)

When you plan with your service coordinator around employment opportunities, the first option that will be considered is competitive employment. Your Service Coordinator can help you find resources in the community to support your employment goals.

## Supported Employment

Supported employment is paid work that is integrated in the community for individuals with developmental disabilities. Supports could include job development, transportation training, and specialized job training. Job development takes into account the needs, interests, talents and skills of the person as well as the needs of the employer. The adult, his or her Service Coordinator, and other members of the Planning Team work together to determine if Supported Employment is the right option. The Department of Rehabilitation may also participate. The team creates an agreement about the supports that might be most helpful for success on the job, if needed, Supported Employment services can be provided in individual or group settings.

▼  
**thinking about work**

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## ▼ types of employment

### **Competitive Employment**

Competitive Employment is work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting. A person is paid at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by people who are not disabled.

### **Self-Employment**

Self-employment is being your own boss. It means you can make your own money directly from customers, clients or other organizations instead of being an employee of a business. Self-employment options include micro-enterprises. A micro-enterprise is a small business owned by an individual formed around the person's interest and developed based on market needs. Supports may be provided to help develop a thorough, self-sufficient business plan. Anyone interested in a micro-enterprise needs to have the money necessary to start and operate the business. Learn the rules that apply to small businesses by reading Title 17 (sections 7136.8).

### **Work Activity Programs (WAP)**

Work Activity Programs are services provided through the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) that include paid work, work adjustment and supportive services. These programs may take place in non-integrated settings or pay wages below minimum wage.

The California Employment First Policy and the U.S. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 are making changes to state work activity programs, to promote job training in integrated settings, that pay the same wages as other people doing the same job, provide opportunities for advancement, and lead to economic self-sufficiency. Talk with your service coordinator about options for integrated, competitive training and employment in the community.

It is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment shall be given the highest priority...regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This means that we have a commitment to making integrated, competitive employment a real choice.



**other options**

## Options Other Than Employment

If employment isn't right for you, talk to your Service Coordinator about other options.

## Getting Help from Your Family Members

- Talk to your family about the type of work that you might like
- Ask your family to help you explore training options in the community such as Adult Education or college
- Invite your family members to your IEP & IPP meetings

## For Family Members to Consider

- Talk to your family member who's seeking a job
- Find out what type of work interests them
- Help prepare them for work or higher education
- Participate in their IEP and IPP meetings
- Partner with the regional center to take an active role in planning
- Consider your contacts in the community as you brainstorm about possible work options including volunteering or micro-enterprise options
- Ask about new programs being developed through Adult Education and Community Colleges

## Is College Right for You?

Talk to your Service Coordinator to find out if a local program can help you reach your education or employment goals.

## California's Employment First Policy

Being employed at a typical workplace and working together with people in your community has become a possibility that is now supported by state law. California's Employment First policy was signed into law in October, 2013, by Governor Brown. [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)