



**Regional Center of the East Bay**  
**Employment First Policy Proposal**  
Approved by the Board of Directors on 10/25/2021

**POLICY**

Regional Center of the East Bay supports the value of work in integrated community settings. Therefore, competitive, integrated employment will be the first option considered by planning teams for every working age individual that we serve.

This Employment First Policy and the activities of the planning team will first honor and respect the rights of the people we serve to make individual informed choices when considering the option of competitive integrated employment.

**PRACTICES**

The individual program planning team is required to discuss and assist any individual served who is 16 years or older in obtaining meaningful, integrated, and competitive employment. Once the required services and supports are determined based on individual choice, the IPP team will draft the individual's service plan with goals to assist the individual in obtaining employment. All appropriate services and supports will be explored, including but not limited to: programs through Local Educational Agencies, the Department of Education, the Department of Rehabilitation, self-employment, supported employment, internships, apprenticeships, technical or vocational training, and competitive employment. For individuals requiring more assistance or support, the planning team may consider adult day programs, and other services funded through the Regional Center.

As a matter of policy and practice, RCEB will partner with other intellectual and developmental disability community stakeholder organizations to work effectively with public and private employers to develop successful employment opportunities for the individuals we serve.

We will internalize this policy throughout our organization:

- Case management will support this message and will assist in identifying community employment resources available.
- Resource Development efforts and energies will emphasize employment options in new program offerings.
- Management will embrace this policy, understand the impacts and ramifications of RCEB operations, and commit support towards implementation.
- Accounting and Administration will reflect data on costs and savings.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Consumers have the opportunity and support to work in employment settings that are meaningful to them, that are valued by the community, and in which they are appropriately compensated.

Consumers have the right to make individual informed decisions about all aspects of their lives.

Consumers live, work, learn, and recreate in settings that maximize opportunities to be with people other than paid staff.

## **DEFINITIONS**

- *Meaningful, integrated, and competitive employment* means a job at a workplace among both individuals with and without disabilities that is full or part-time at or above minimum wage or the standard compensation for their position, with equal benefits and opportunities for advancement as other employees.

## **AUTHORITY**

### California Welfare and Institutions Code

4646.5 (a)(4) When developing an individual program plan for a transition age youth or working age adult, the planning team shall consider the Employment First Policy described in Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 4868).

4851 (o) "Integrated work" means the engagement of an employee with a disability in work in a setting typically found in the community in which individuals interact with individuals without disabilities other than those who are providing services to those individuals, to the same extent that individuals without disabilities in comparable positions interact with other persons.

4868 (d)(1) "Competitive employment" means work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

4869 (a)(1) In furtherance of the purposes of this division to make services and supports available to enable persons with developmental disabilities to approximate the pattern of everyday living available to people without disabilities of the same age, to support the integration of persons with developmental disabilities into the mainstream life of the community, and to bring about more independent, productive, and normal lives for the persons served, it is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment shall be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This policy shall be known as the

Employment First Policy.

(2) Implementation of the policy shall be consistent with, and shall not infringe upon, the rights established pursuant to this division, including the right of people with developmental disabilities to make informed choices with respect to services and supports through the individual program planning process.

(3) Integrated competitive employment is intended to be the first option considered by planning teams for working age individuals, but individuals may choose goals other than integrated competitive employment.

(4) Postsecondary education, technical or vocational training, and internship programs may be considered as a means to achieve integrated competitive employment or career advancement.

(5) This chapter shall not be construed to expand the existing entitlement to services for persons with developmental disabilities described in this division.

(6) This chapter shall not alleviate schools of their responsibility to provide transition services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

(a) (1) In furtherance of the purposes of this division to make services and supports available to enable persons with developmental disabilities to approximate the pattern of everyday living available to people without disabilities of the same age, to support the integration of persons with developmental disabilities into the mainstream life of the community, and to bring about more independent, productive, and normal lives for the persons served, it is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment shall be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This policy shall be known as the Employment First Policy.

(b) The State Council on Developmental Disabilities shall develop an informational brochure about the Employment First Policy, translate the brochure into various languages, and post the brochure on its Internet Web site.

(c) Regional centers shall provide consumers 16 years of age or older, and, when appropriate, their parents, legal guardians, conservators, or authorized representative with information, in an understandable form, about the Employment First Policy, options for integrated competitive employment, and services and supports, including postsecondary education, that are available to enable the consumer to transition from school to work, and to achieve the outcomes of obtaining and maintaining integrated competitive employment.

(d) The department may request information from regional centers on current and planned activities related to the Employment First Policy. A contract between the department and a regional center shall include performance objectives relating to implementation of the Employment First Policy, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 4629.