

Employment First in Michigan Stakeholders Group

The State of Michigan has established Employment First as a policy priority. This document outlines the vision, mission, values, and key objectives of this policy.

Vision Statement

All individuals with disabilities in Michigan will realize their fullest employment potential through the achievement of individual, competitive integrated employment outcomes that meet the talent demands of Michigan businesses.

Mission Statement

The purpose of Employment First is to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency, promoting individual, competitive integrated employment through a collaborative, seamless service model that benefits dual customers: talent with disabilities and Michigan businesses.

Values

Employment First partners believe that employment:

- Results in independence and economic self-sufficiency;
- Enhances purpose, dignity, self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, and pride;
- Creates inclusion in other community activities;
- Enriches local communities by creating partnerships with businesses that encourage a diverse workforce, economic growth, and community inclusion; and,
- Elevates individuals with disabilities as a viable, skilled source of talent with a place in Michigan's economy.

Objectives

The objectives of Employment First are:

- To build collaborative capacity among public and private sector service providers through intentional resource direction and program design;
- To create a strategic and measurable approach to accelerate the pace of systems transformation, including provider transformation and rate restructuring to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes;
- Address a timeline to phase out the use and issuance of certificates in Michigan under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act;
- To clarify state and local agency roles and strengthen collaboration in order to braid and sequence resources, resulting in accessible, seamless, and non-duplicative services;
- To sustain and expand investments by state agencies, the business community, and additional stakeholders, by joint efforts and coordinated

services, to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities through seamless transition from school to work;

- To promote and enhance the capabilities of support networks to assist individuals in their career journey and engage the business community to effectively assess their talent management and labor market needs;
- To utilize collaborative relationships with businesses to strengthen the opportunity for competitive integrated employment outcomes that benefit both individuals with disabilities and the employer, and ultimately the community as a whole;
- To establish a common virtual space for business community resources to highlight additional available assistance and streamline the process for the business community to find the resources they want and need to better recruit, employ, and retain talent with disabilities;
- To prepare and connect individuals with disabilities with Michigan businesses as a key, viable talent pool;
- To effectively educate employers about the advantages of hiring from this underutilized, often underestimated talent pool;
- To develop and utilize a shared communication strategy for all stakeholders inclusive of persons receiving employment services and their families so that individuals are aware of the benefits coordination and planning options available to enable competitive integrated employment as well as the full array of competitive integrated employment options;
- To foster innovation in program design and service delivery across agencies utilizing evidence-based practices;
- To further leverage innovation at the local level, with an eye toward scalability and sustainability;
- To collect service and outcome data in a consistent and useful manner among all stakeholders;
- To collaborate with individuals with disabilities to determine and explore clear competitive integrated employment goals;
- To help individuals with disabilities become educated about the competitive integrated job market;
- To help individuals with disabilities find the best job match possible and maximize their qualifications as a viable part of the talent pool; and,
- To develop action items through collaborative workgroups that will advance implementation of Employment First.