



## **Employment First Committee Self-Advocate Survey Report**

Integrated Competitive Employment  
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This report is intended to give a self-advocate's perspective on the importance of work and potential barriers people face as they attempt to make the transition to integrated competitive employment.

Self-advocate members of the Employment First Committee asked two questions to forty advocates with developmental disabilities who live in the community. Questions were asked using Facebook, telephone calls and interviews in community settings. Self-advocates shared information about their jobs, if they have one, or what is stopping them from working. This is not a scientific survey.

### **Question #1:**

#### ***Are you currently working in Integrated Competitive Employment?***



The interview information showed ten of the forty (25%) people interviewed with developmental disabilities are working in integrated competitive settings. Out of the ten people working, six did not receive any benefits either because work was part time or wasn't offered. Hourly salary range was \$16-25 per hour for four respondents that included benefits. One person was successfully working in their own micro-enterprise and three people work for minimum wage with no benefits.

## **Question #2:**

### ***If you are not working, what is stopping you?***



The interview information showed thirty respondents (75%) are unemployed. Twelve of the thirty people (40%) reported barriers with the job process (application, providers, training or employer awareness).

Some respondents mentioned employer fear or lack of information about health/workers comp insurance, supervision requirements, potential costs for accommodations.

Of those not working, eleven respondents stated "I get government benefits or I work in a sheltered workshop". Six respondents stated they weren't working because of health & family obligations, transportation issues or are retired.

## **What we learned**



Our small survey showed there are not enough people with developmental disabilities working in integrated competitive jobs. We learned many people are scared about losing benefits if they work or fear they will have a difficult time getting them again if they lose the job.

Some people shared that they were not getting the help needed to find and keep a job. Also, people talked about employers not understanding how we can be an asset to their business and be hard workers.

## **Our suggestions**



We suggest the following to help change the situation:

1. Educate self-advocates about integrated competitive employment.
  - a) How work impacts benefits.
  - b) How to get back on benefits if someone loses a job.
  - c) How much more money people will have to buy things they want.

## 2. Communicate in ways people understand.

- a) Use easy to understand words with pictures.
- b) Teach professionals how to communicate with people in a way they understand.
- c) Make sure providers and regional centers have correct information.
- d) Find the best way to share information with people (examples - schools, support groups, providers).
- e) Share information with parents about work and benefits.

## 3. Educate employers

- a) Communicate facts to employers about hiring people with disabilities.
- b) Show examples of people working in neighborhood places.