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# Competitive Integrated Employment: Valuing All Perspectives

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## A little about the izi Center for Integrative Health:

- We VALUE all perspectives in policy and legislative formation, discussion and implementation.
- We believe that good outcomes are only achieved when policies and operations are crafted with the lived experience perspective.
- We have learned that it takes intentional work to bring all perspectives to the table and translate policy and legislative issues into what it is important to each perspective represented.
- We hold two conferences each year and work on projects throughout the year.
- We use an Equi-Voice Collaborative Model that we have developed to conduct our projects.

# Agenda

- **Competitive Integrated Employment Overview**
  - **Highlighting the Lived Experience Perspective**
- **Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components**
  - **Highlighting the Lived Experience Perspective**



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# Competitive Integrated Employment Overview

# Competitive Integrated Employment Federal Definition

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines competitive integrated employment (CIE) as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is:

- Compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid by the employer to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience;
- Receiving the same level of benefits provided to other employees without disabilities in similar positions;
- At a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities; and
- Presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions.

# Competitive Integrated Employment State Definition

- Working in the community alongside other employees without disabilities.
- Earning at least minimum wage.
- Getting the same workplace benefits and opportunities as other employees doing the same job

The NC Department of Health and Human Services initiative is

*Inclusion Works!*

# Inclusion Works

NC Department of Health and Human Services is using a five-year Strategic Plan to promote and expand Competitive Integrated Employment in North Carolina. The Strategic Plan includes:

- Completing employment assessments with people engaged in services in ADVP settings.
- Providing individuals with I/DD the resources needed to make an informed choice about CIE.
- Completing Career Development Plans for all individuals receiving services in ADVP settings since January 1, 2020.
- Making guidance, education, technical assistance, and other resources available to providers.
- Establishing core competency training and training requirements for providers.
- Ensuring collaboration between key DHHS agencies.
- Establishing a clear pathway to employment for people with I/DD.



# Adult Developmental Vocational Program Services

- Day/night service which provides organized developmental activities for individuals with Intellectual-Developmental Disabilities to prepare to live and work as independently as possible.
- Employee is not living at the service setting
- Most employees in the organization have a disability
- Employee may be paid but payment can be less than minimum wage with a 14C certificate

*What will ADVP look like in the future?*

*H323, SL2023-115, passed in the NC General Assembly, "The Department of Health and Human Services shall not enact policy that reduces or eliminates services provided at Adult Developmental and Vocational Programs (ADVP) or Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) without (i) fully following procedures regarding stakeholder notification and input and (ii) appropriately funding a robust array of services that reflect choice.*

"



# Innovation in Medicaid and Vocational Rehabilitation to Support Individuals with I/DD

- In Lieu of Services (ILOS) are services that have been approved by the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to be medically appropriate and cost-effective substitutes for covered services or setting under the State Medicaid Plan.
- Innovation through an ILOS for employment and day services are being developed throughout the State.
- [1915i services](#) including Supported Employment that are an entitlement
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services [Project SPARK pilot](#)

# Highlight the Perspective of an Individual with Lived Experience

# Highlight the Perspective of an Individual with Lived Experience

- We've come a long way in North Carolina
- Valuing what each person can do if given the opportunity
- Taking into consideration the unique needs of each individual
- Impact on benefits

# Valuing All Perspectives: The i2i Center work on Competitive Integrated Employment

[NC Transition to  
Competitive  
Integrated  
Employment:  
Valuing All  
Perspectives](#)

**PRODUCTS**

**PRODUCTS**

Part One:

- White Paper and Executive Summary
- Information Session Slides
- Information Session Questions and Answers Sheet

Part Two:

- Competitive Integrated Employment Resource Guide
- Participant 12-Month Goals Compiled and Provided to Key Leaders

# *Discovery Interviews with Valuable Perspectives:*

Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disability (I/DD) Diagnoses

Family Members of Individuals with I/DD Diagnoses

Providers through their statewide organizations:

- NCARF
- NC Providers Council
- NC-APSE

Disability Rights of North Carolina/Center for Public Representation

NC Department of Health and Human Services

Leadership

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Office of Employment and Inclusion

Division of Health Benefits

# Themes from Interviews:

## General Concepts

- There is a general willingness to move to CIE
- More Education for all Stakeholders
- HCBS Rules
- Need for Examples/Peer Models
- Funding
- Need for Implementation and Transition Plan that fits with Medicaid Transformation

## Addressing Needs of Individuals with IDD Diagnoses

- Choice
- Flexibility
- Transportation
- Health Equity
- Safety

## Workforce and Employer Capacity Issues

- Capacity
- Benefits Counseling
- Integrated Programming/Employment
- Future of ADVPs



# 12-Month Goals Identified at Summit: Topic Areas

- **Policy and Funding for Competitive Integrated Employment**
  - Funding for providers to transform service models.
  - Separate concepts of 14(c) & ADVP not always a pair
  - State funding to match all federal funds
  - Don't tear down workshops before there's something better and place to go to
  - Providing funds to ADVPs/ subminimum wage employers (in addition to the SPARK pilot sites) to transition to pay participant's at least minimum wage. Funds can be used to support hiring and training job coaches for individuals that need an individual job coach.
  - Communication at home supportive living staff increases
- **Train Providers of Supported Employment and Tailored Care Managers**
  - Consider the creation of a Supported Employment training all providers should utilize across the state for Direct Support Workers so there is consistency amongst job coaches.
  - Ensure adequate training of MCO staff (care managers) so they can properly educate their members of the SE

# 12-Month Goals Identified at Summit: Topic Areas

- **Educating Employers Around the State and Building Employment Opportunities**
  - Create FAQ sheet to provide to potential employers educating on labor laws/ benefits of Supported Employment
  - Fund provider transformation funds to help shape employers who are competitive but not inclusive. Help provide training on how to make those employers continue to pay at least minimum wage but hire both individuals with and without disabilities.
  - Educate employers about employed people with disabilities
  - Lunch and invite employers to Windmills training
  - Peer employers can share their success stories.
  - Use rural “sheltered workshops” to house, micro enterprises, form like a co-op
- **Strengthening Components of Supported Employment**
  - Job and Benefits Coaching
  - Increase Employment Supports
  - Building Workforce Competency
  - Interface with Individuals with IDD Around CIE
- **Address Social Determinants of Health that Impact Employment**
  - Address SDoHs that negatively impact employment for individuals w/IDD – ie, transportation, language barriers
  - Promote more transportation options.
  - Support for transportation (ex: lyft or mileage) and companion
  - Recognition/ funding of transportation as a stand- alone, life-long services (if needed)

NC Transition to  
Competitive  
Integrated  
Employment:  
Valuing All  
Perspectives

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Brought different perspectives together
- Provided opportunities for networking across stakeholders
- Encouraged and supported the teamwork with NC DHHS
- Increased resources for people to use on Competitive Integrated Employment

# Highlight the Perspective of an Individual with Lived Experience

# Highlight the Perspective of an Individual with Lived Experience

- Scenarios that happen every day
- Focusing on the impact of respect, inclusion and decision making
- Room for individuals to change their goals

# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model

# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components

- **Identification of Facilitator:** An identified neutral convener can steward the process and ensure an environment that values all perspectives.
  - The facilitator is responsible for finding the commonalities across stakeholders to develop an agenda.
  - The facilitator will also have the knowledge of why each stakeholder is interested in participating in the process and should design agendas that meet the why for each stakeholder.
  - The facilitator does not have any preconceived ideas of action steps or outcomes and allows the final products to be driven organically by the group.
  - The facilitator does keep the discussion moving toward action items, outcomes, and products.



# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components

- **Discovery Meetings:** Pre-convening conversations between the facilitator and the varying stakeholders give each stakeholder an opportunity to identify their goals in participation, to articulate their challenges, and to begin the trust in this process. The facilitator can assist in each Discovery Meeting by asking questions that help that stakeholder:
  - Determine what they hope to gain from the convening and identify what they bring to the discussion.
  - Articulate the Topics
  - Identify Challenges and Opportunities
  - Identify other Key Partners
  - Identify Key Resources

# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components

- **Assisting People with Lived Experience, Parents, Caregivers, Youth in Participation:** Ensuring discussions are driven by individuals with lived experience, including self-advocates and families, may take some additional preparatory work to ensure that particular stakeholders come to the convening confident that their perspective is valued and that they can be a part of a discussion that is often geared toward day-to-day operations and policies. This additional work may be a personal contact with the individual, additional background information to help the person understand the current challenge, interpreters to assist individuals when English is not their first language, and an additional personal contact when the convening is over.

# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components

- **Inviting Partners:** The Discovery Meetings will help to build the partners list of invitees to the convening. There are certainly times when a Discovery Meeting isn't needed to know that someone is a stakeholder who should participate in the convening. That stakeholder still needs some background information, the goal of the convening and the invitation to have their valuable expertise in the discussion.

# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components

- **Holding the Convening to Identify Action Plans:**
  - **Leveling the Knowledge:** It is paramount that each stakeholder has a basic level of understanding about the topic of discussion. To ensure that is the case, and that everyone has gotten the same information, the convening should begin with a “leveling the knowledge” portion that reviews the topic and current status.
  - **Intentional Introductions:** Time should be allotted during the convening for each stakeholder to introduce themselves and their reason for participation in the convening. An attendance list with contact information should be developed and shared with each stakeholder after the convening to facilitate further connections.
  - **Framing the Issue:** The facilitator or a key stakeholder can frame the issue for the discussion. This goes beyond “leveling the knowledge” to what that stakeholder has experienced or understands about the issue.
  - **Discussion:** The facilitator will broaden the framing of the issue and provide opportunities for all stakeholders to provide their thoughts. There are times when this may even require asking a stakeholder directly for their thoughts.
  - **Identification of Action Steps:** The facilitator or a designated stakeholder should take notes of action steps as they are identified. The facilitator can use this to sum up the work during the convening and ensure that it has been captured correctly by involving all participants. The action steps may use existing mechanisms, and groups and should include timeframes for completion.

# Equi-Voice Collaborative Model Components

- **Developing Resources:** Stakeholders have stated that a key driver for participation is learning about new resources that other partners bring to the discussion. The facilitator or a designated stakeholder should compile the resources that stakeholders bring or talk about during the convening (preferably with links to the materials) to send out to the group after the convening.

# Highlight the Perspective of an Individual with Lived Experience

# Highlight the Perspective of an Individual with Lived Experience

- The benefit of goals that are individualized on reimbursement, seamless service delivery, better outcomes
- The benefit of legislators and key policy leaders understanding the lived experience perspective



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