

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

For Individuals with Intellectual/ Developmental
Disabilities in New Mexico

The Arc NM Director of Public Policy

Pamela Stafford is a sibling of an individual with I/DD. Pamela started her career as a professional with I/DD services in 1995 as a job developer. The majority of her career has been in the provision of community inclusion services including supported employment. She was the first Program Manager of the capacity building initiative at CDD, Partners For Employment. In the last two years she has worked at The Arc NM; first as a guardian and currently as Director of Public Policy.



Why is Employment Important?

Individual Perspective

- Sense of Purpose and Self-worth
- Financial Access
- Integration/Co-workers without disabilities reinforces that disability is one aspect of a person not an entire definition
- Documented correlation between employment and health.

Public Policy Perspective

- Employed individuals with any disability experience mental distress less frequently than those unemployed with a disability (18% to 40%)*
- Tax Payers benefit. For every \$1.00 of taxpayer support to supported employee return an average of \$1.46 in taxes paid and decrease in other benefits.

*Okoro, Strine, MCGuire, Balluz,& Mokdad, 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey

**"The economics of supported employment: What New Data tell us." *Journal of vocational rehabilitation* January 2012, Robert Evert Cimera

Why is Employment Important- Business Perspective

- “The positive impact on the workforce is brought about in two ways: hiring individuals with IDD adds highly motivated people to the workforce (which can lead to increased productivity) and it promotes an inclusive culture that appeals to the talent pool organizations want to attract,” reads the study. “The improved customer satisfaction realized can lead to better sales and customer retention. The enhanced employer brand can translate to a better image in the community.”
- "We studied all the data; we published it," said Lewis, who later wrote a book on his experience, "[No Greatness Without Goodness](#)" (Tyndale House Publishers, 2014). "The performance was the same. The safety was better. [The distribution centers] had better retention; they had less turnover. We also found better culture across the company."

“Hiring People with Disabilities Isn’t Just the right thing to do – Its Good for Business” The Daily Beast April 2017 Elizabeth Picciuto (Study reference by the Institute for Corporate Productivity)

“Employees with Disabilities Can Boost business Success “Business News Daily December 2014, Ashley Smith

A Vision: Changing Expectations for Employment across the Lifespan

Imagine if...

- At Birth instead of a parent being told their new born would never grow up and work, the parents saw individuals with I/DD employed at the hospital
- Toddlers with I/DD were routinely asked what they were going to be when they grew up and were allowed to dream without being told what they would never do.
- In Middle School students with I/DD were integrated in clubs, after school programs, began to volunteer, if soft skills were taught
- In High School students with I/DD were working after school or summer jobs



Individuals with Disabilities, Families and Friends are a Powerful Consumer Force that could begin to frequent only business establishments with an inclusive workplace.

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The Vision for Adults With I/DD in Employment

- In a diverse and open workforce, no one model or approach will work for all individuals.
- Some individuals will work full-time, in “typical” jobs, with career paths and earn prevailing wages
- Some individuals will work in more flexible time shared jobs, or with customized job descriptions based on their individual strengths. Some may only work a few hours
- Some individuals will be business owners
- Some individuals might have home based employment
- Minimum wage exceptions are eliminated.

History

- Sub-minimum wages for individuals with disabilities have been around since the 1930's with several changes over the years.
- The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933-35 set the first productivity based subminimum wage which was adopted again with the FLSA in 1938.
- Sub-minimum wage was originated as a way to encourage businesses to hire physically disabled individuals to work in the competitive manufacturing industries of the time. It was meant to be a training wage.
- Today very few sub-minimum wage employers exist outside of the service delivery system. It is unclear for what community positions individuals are being trained.

Changing the Expectations

- Sub-Minimum Wage rest on the assertion that individuals with developmental disabilities are less productive than the rest of the work force
- Return to the slide on the Business Perception on hiring individuals with developmental disabilities in community employment to see why that isn't true.
- All humans have jobs that are not suited for which makes them less productive and jobs they are suited for which makes them more productive
- Assumptions about what jobs individuals with I/DD can do does take into account that each individual is unique with unique set of strengths and challenges

Protected Environment Myth

- It is natural for families to want to keep vulnerable loved ones safe. Many families seek “sheltered” or protected environments as the best ways to keep love ones protected.
- It is not a fact that protected environments or protective arrangements keep individuals safer. New Mexico shut down their institutions in acknowledgement of the fact. CMS “Final Rule” related to Home and Community Based Services Settings seeks to eliminate settings that have the impact of isolating the individual with disability in acknowledge of this fact
- Integration instead of isolation is the best way to keep people safe.

When People don't know the meaning of money

- They can still learn the monetary value of work
- They still have the benefit of having increased funds for a better quality of life.

Integrated Community Employment

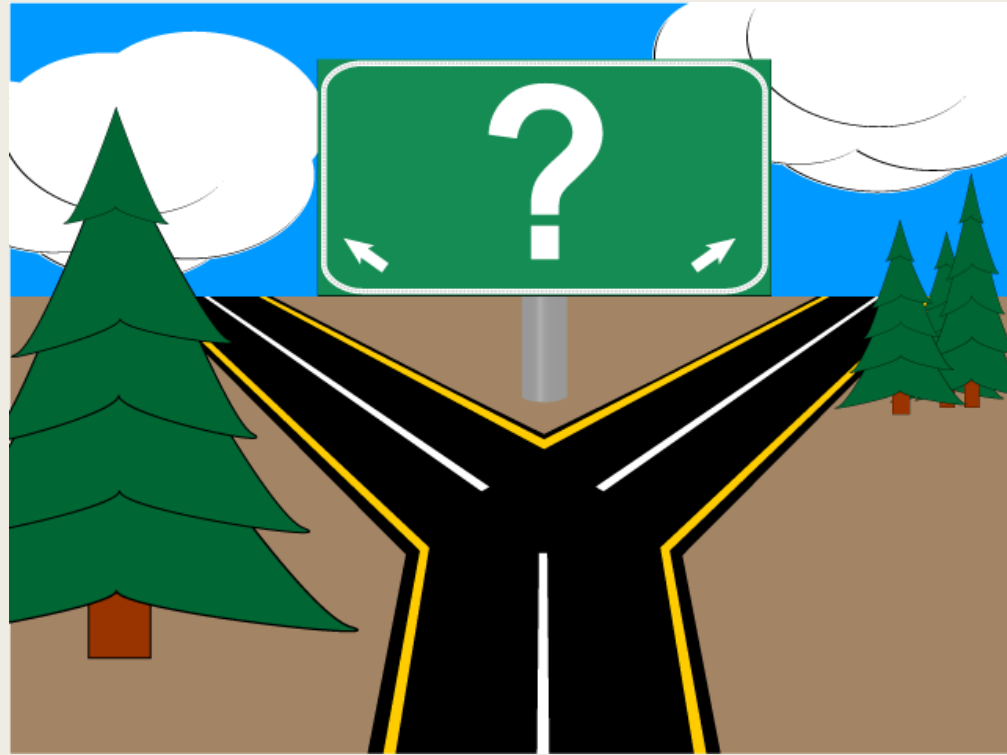
Traditional Labor Market Approach

- Job opening with a traditional job description
- Individuals can do the essential functions of the job with accommodations (which include a job coach)
- Supports to apply for the job/ reasonable accommodation
- Reasonable accommodation including job coaching are required under the ADA

Customized Approaches

- Individualized assessment of an individuals “personal genius” or the strengths they can bring to an employer
- An analysis of the unmet needs of an employment site
- A match between the individual and the job site
- Not required by the ADA since it is not for an existing job
- The fact that it is not required does not mean that it is not beneficial for the company to do so.

How Close is New Mexico to the Vision?
Is it Time to choose a New Path?



Employment Services Number in New Mexico

- Individuals on the waiver between the ages of 22-64 receiving at least one employment services in FY 2018 was 25.97% *
- Unable to track how many are employed. *
- In 2016 percentage of people who were employed with a cognitive disability was 19% **
- Percentage of individuals served by DDSD in integrated employment decreased between 2009 - 2016*
- Percentage of funding to integrated employment served by DDSD decreased from 2009-2016**
- Total number of DVR closures of individuals with cognitive disabilities due to employment decreased from 2009 - 2016

*According to Email response Casey Stone-Romero. DDSD, Community Inclusion Manager 9/4/2019

**State Data The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes

Legacy of Last Two administrations (16 years)

- A VR system on order of selection and high vacancy rates
- DOH Lack of funding to supported employment agencies
- DDSD Lack of support for supported employment outcomes
- Agency Poorly paid and poorly trained direct support staff
- Mid-level to Senior employment personnel moved to other position in the field
- An integrated employment services that is broken and is in need of rebuilding.

Lack of Supported Employment Providers

- 10 counties in New Mexico have no individual supported employment providers under DDS services
- 10 counties in New Mexico have only one individual supported employment providers under DDS Services (no freedom in choice)
- 4 counties have 2 providers
- In counties where there is one provider, often there is one staff working alone in an agency with a lack of leadership that has history and involvement with employment
- Under Centennial Care Community Benefits 0 individuals are provided employment supports

The Good News

- Project Search – An Intern to Work project that begins in an individual’s last year of school. Five sites in New Mexico
- Collaborative Funding efforts toward capacity Building in Partners For Employment at the Center for Development and Disabilities
- DVR has invested in training their staff on customized employment; has required certification of job developer vendors
- New Mexico is not in last place in employment outcomes – traditionally ranks about middle in terms of states
- There has been customized employment efforts in New Mexico through national consultation

Good News and the Reality

- Project Search –An Intern to Work project that begins in an individual last year of school. Five sites in New Mexico *This is a truly great model which will not work for everyone.*
- Collaborative Funding efforts toward capacity Building in Partners For Employment at the Center for Development and Disabilities . *High rates of turn-over of entry level staff (or counties without providers) make capacity building difficult*
- DVR has invested in training their staff on customized employment/ has required certification of job developers vendors *Vacancy in positions make training challenging. 41 individual currently have CESP –not clear how many are active DVR vendors*
- New Mexico is not in last place in employment outcome – traditionally ranks about middle in terms of states *Many states have suffered the same situation of lack of funding*
- There has been customized employment efforts in New Mexico through national consultation *This was an expensive project which resulted in jobs, but due to the turn-over of support agency staff the jobs/ businesses were not sustainable. Have to have sustainable job coaching services before this type of project make sense*

Frank Talk

- Integrated Employment is an expensive service to do right, but done right it repays itself to the tax payer and has immeasurable results for individuals. It is well worth the expense
- Integrated Employment is a less expensive service done poorly, but done poorly it is a service which wastes money with no efficiency and no effective outcomes.

Recommendations for Success

- Increase rates for integrated employment services which assures job developers/ job coaches are earning well above the competitive rates for entry level positions.
- Provide differential rates for customized employment
- Consider capacity building initiatives to providers to get providers in the 20 counties where there is one or fewer providers
- Consider capacity building initiatives to providers who provide customized employment with attention to discovery fidelity
- Stabilize DVR
- Consider a marketing campaign during October Disability Employment Awareness Month 2020 which was encourage employers to hire persons with I/DD and/ or encourage persons to support business with inclusive hiring practices.