

Supported and Customized Employment

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Content

- Current status of national employment outcomes
- Current status of employment outcomes in Western North Carolina
- Overview of supported employment
- Overview of customized
- Best practices of supported and customized employment

The Reality

- Individuals with disabilities are least likely to participate in employment after exiting high school



(Griffin, Hammis, Geary, & Sullivan, 2008; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2006)

National Status of Employment

- 67% of general population employed after high school vs. 57% of youth with disabilities
- 31% of youth with developmental disabilities reported having paid employment vs. 64% of youth with learning disabilities

(Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009)

WNC Status of Employment (2002)

- 42.5% of adults with developmental disabilities were unemployed in the seven Western counties of North Carolina

Roenigk, D. (2002). Client Profile Statistical Report for Smoky Mountain Area Program.

Cost Comparisons (2002)

- 118,000 in supported employment
- 126,000 in sheltered workshops
- Additional 365,000 in adult daycare or extended sheltered workshop programs
- \$108 million (\$912.25 per person) in supported employment
- \$488 million (\$1,010.35 per person) for sheltered workshops

(Rusch & Braddock, 2004)

Overview of Supported Employment

- Assists individuals to become competitively employed in integrated work settings
- More cost effective than sheltered workshops
- Greater job satisfaction and services of job coaches
- Higher wages, integration, on-going support, and increased benefits for individuals with disabilities

(Cimera, 2006; Johnson, 2004; Test, Carver, Ewers, Haddad, & Person, 2000; Wehman & Revell, 1997)

Supported Employment

- Competitive work in integrated work settings
- Individuals working toward competitive work
- Based on the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals
- For individuals with intellectual disabilities where competitive employment has not typically occurred

(Section 36[a] of the Rehabilitation Act)

Supported Employment Services

- Ongoing support services to help maintain employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities
- Provided to assist eligible individuals to achieve competitive employment
- Based on needs of an eligible individual from an individualized plan for employment (IPE)

(Section 36[a] of the Rehabilitation Act)

Customized Employment

- For individuals with the most significant disabilities who do not fare well in competitive work contexts even with support.
- Results from an individualized, person-centered process.
- Results in a customized job that will meet the needs that the individual has for employment, the conditions necessary for his/her success, and the needs that the business has for valued, contributing employees.
- Differs from Supported Employment which aims to successfully place job seekers within the context of competitive hiring processes and then to provide supports as needed to maintain employment.
- Can only be successful if the job seeker is treated as an individual who is free to make choices about his/her life's direction; is afforded respect and dignity; is assumed to have competencies; and is provided with high quality employment opportunities and services.

(ICF INTERNATIONAL, nd)

Customized Employment Process

- **Discovery** - Gathering information from the job seeker and the CE support team to determine the job seeker's interests, skills, and preferences related to potential employment that guide the development of a customized job.
- **Job Search Planning** - Using the information learned about an individual job seeker in Discovery to develop a plan toward a meaningful employment and to determine a list of potential employers.
- **Job Development/Negotiation** - Working collaboratively with the individual and the employer to negotiate a customized job, including the provision of supports, and the terms of employment that will match the individual's interests and skills, conditions necessary for success, specific contributions and will fill the unmet needs of an employer.
- **Post-Placement Support** - Setting up on-going post-placement supports and monitoring the employment relationship to ensure satisfaction of both the individual and the employer.

(ICF INTERNATIONAL, nd)

Benefits of Customized Employment

- Natural supports
- Employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Career advancements
- Competitive wages
- Increased job satisfaction
- Social capital
- More cost effective

Core Values of Supported and Customized Employment

- Everyone is capable to do and have a job
- Occurs within local labor markets in community businesses
- Career satisfaction and self-regulation
- Equal wages of coworkers – not sub-minimum wage
- Viewed based on abilities, strengths, and interests

(Wehman, Revell, & Brooke, 2003)

Best Practices from the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE)

- Choice
- Control
- Careers
- Full inclusion
- Long-term supports
- Community and business supports
- Total quality management
- Assistive technology
- Person centered planning

Recommended Practices

- Provide authentic vocational/preference assessments and instruction
- Teach skills in a variety of integrated settings
- Teach self-determination and independence
- Provide opportunities for meaningful natural supports
- Provide opportunities for integrated employment experiences no later than age 14
- Teach employee about etiquette and work ethic

