

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration

EMPLOYMENT WORKS! POLICY

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recognizes that employment is an essential element of quality of life for most individuals, including individuals with a serious mental illness or a developmental disability (DD) including individuals with the most significant disability. Therefore, it is the policy of the MDHHS that:

Each eligible working age individual over 14 years old (to correlate with transition planning and related MDHHS policy 1915(b)/(c) Waiver Program School to Community Transition Planning) and ongoing to the age of their chosen retirement (generally seen as around 65 years old) will be supported to pursue his/her own unique path to work and a career. All individuals will be afforded the opportunity to pursue competitive, integrated work. The MDHHS shall define "competitive employment" and "integrated setting" using the definitions of those terms listed in title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, section 361.

- (11) Competitive employment means work:
 - (i) in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and
 - (ii) for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than, the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

- (33) Integrated setting:
 - (i) with respect to the provision of services, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals; and
 - (ii) with respect to an employment outcome, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other individuals.

Each time a pre-planning meeting is held to prepare for an individual plan of service (IPOS) (at least annually); an individual's options for work will be encouraged as noted in the Person-Center Planning Practice Guideline and will be documented during the pre-planning meeting. After exploration of competitive employment options, it is recognized that some individuals may choose other work options such as Ability One contracts, integrated community group employment, self-employment, transitional employment, volunteering, education/training, or unpaid internships as a means leading to future competitive, integrated work.

In the case of employment for individuals with mental illness, the MDHHS has adopted the evidence-based practice of Individual Placement and Support (IPS). The definition for the outcome of competitive employment for this specific population remains individual jobs that anyone can apply for rather than jobs created specifically for people with disabilities. These jobs pay at least minimum wage, or the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled. Further, the jobs do not have artificial time limits imposed by the social service agency.

This policy shall support individuals with serious mental illness and DDs to receive services and supports to achieve and maintain competitive employment. It is imperative that this Employment Works! Policy be shared and reinforced as an expectation with staff responsible for employment services and outcomes and with all supports coordinators and case managers.

To measure employment outcomes, the MDHHS will compare baseline numbers for all competitive, integrated employment (both individual and group). Additionally, the MDHHS will measure facility-based employment each year. It is expected that the total percentage of individuals competitively employed in integrated settings will increase in integrated employment (both individual and group). It is also expected that as both types of employment increase, the percentage of individuals in facility-based employment will decrease. This policy supports the incentive for increased competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities, as written in the Contract.

Expectations for the MDHHS:

- Establish a permanent state-level staff member who has responsibility for further development and overseeing its implementation of this Employment Works! Policy.
- Provide technical assistance to the field for program implementation and sustainability and to also provide opportunities for training and development.
- Review existing employment data sources and establish a strategy for collecting and sharing accurate employment outcome data with stakeholders.
- Establish specific employment goals for the Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP) and the Community Mental Health Service Provider (CMHSP) system data.
- Strengthen the strategy and agreements with the Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) to improve the consistency of MRS and MCB supports for the PIHP and the CMHSP individuals.
- Encourage and promote the use of best employment practices, including employment practices recognized in the most current Medicaid Provider Manual (MPM) under Supported Employment Services. (Examples include the evidence-based supported employment, customized employment, self-employment, etc.)
- Identify the CMHSPs with best employment outcomes, learn from their successes, and highlight these practices.

- Assist the PIHPs and the CMHSPs in developing expertise in benefits planning.
- Strengthen the role of existing employment working group(s) by establishing a standing employment leadership team.

Expectations for the PIHPs and the CMHSPs:

- Designate a local staff member who shall be responsible for implementation of this Employment Works! Policy. Designate this staff member and an alternate to participate in a standing employment leadership team.
- Provide timely and accurate employment outcome data to the MDHHS to review and determine employment strategies, at least annually.
- Achieve established employment goals/increases.
- Establish strategies and enhance cash match agreements, partnership, plus and/or other strategies with the MRS and MCB to improve consistency of MRS MCB supports for the PIHP and CMHSP consumers.
- Embrace and promote the use of best employment practices, including EBP SE.
- Share local best employment practices across the PIHP and the CMHSP network through conferences, webinars, conference calls, newsletters, cross-agency presentations, etc.
- Designate at least one (preferably two) staff with proven expertise in benefits planning or clear capacity to access timely and accurate information to address immediate employment interests of persons with disabilities.