

COMMUNITY vs. FACILITY:



Are Work Settings Important?

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

A historical look

Employment for individuals living in Michigan with disabilities, has typically meant:

- ✓ Large, congregate, facility based settings
- ✓ Fitting individuals into existing slots
- ✓ Little focus on talents, strengths & individual interests



The economics of supported employment: what new data tells us

Cimera, R.E. (2012). *The economics of supported employment*. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 28, 109-112.

This paper reviews the literature on the economics of supported employment before and after 2000.

Important findings:

- ✓ Individuals with disabilities fare better financially from working in the community than in sheltered workshops.
- ✓ This is especially true given that the relative wages earned by supported employees have increased 31.2% since the 1980s.
- ✓ Wages earned by sheltered employees have decreased 40.6% during the same period.
- ✓ Supported employment appears to be more cost-effective than sheltered workshops over the entire “employment cycle” and returns a net benefit to taxpayers.

The cost-trends: what new data tells us

Cimera, R.E. (2008). *The cost-trends of supported versus sheltered employment*. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 28, 15-20.

This study investigated the cost-trends of supported and sheltered employees with disabilities as they completed one “employment cycle” (i.e., from the point they entered their programs to the point when they changed their jobs, left their program, or otherwise stopped receiving services). Data indicate that the cumulative costs generated by supported employees are much lower than for sheltered employees (\$6,618 versus \$19,388).

- ✓ Further, the cost-trend of supported employees was downward while the cost-trend of sheltered employees was slightly upward
- ✓ Costs of supported employment declines as workshop costs have increased

Research conclusions

The way to work: how to facilitate work experiences for youth in transition; Richard G. Luecking.-1st ed.; Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co., 2009.

Research is showing that recent federal and state policy changes are increasing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. This happens by increasing the economic capacity, providing higher wages and better job satisfaction for individuals with disabilities. Most people would say that employment is a central part of their adult lives. This is no different for individuals with disabilities. Equal opportunities for individual, integrated jobs making minimum wage or more is a dream central to the majority of Michiganders.

For information or questions contact the Developmental Disabilities Council at: (517) 335-3158, or on the web at: www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil