

MARCH 2015

## **EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

### **ISSUE:**

Survival Coalition supports integrated employment at competitive wages as the first and preferred outcome of public programs for people with disabilities. Survival's position on employment is based on data showing that employment for people with disabilities improves health, social and economic benefits, and reduces reliance on public benefits, impacting the entire state.

### **BACKGROUND:**

People with disabilities can and do work and contribute in their communities. Yet, the employment rate for people with disabilities in Wisconsin is less than a third of the general population. More than 80% of long-term care dollars that supports Wisconsin residents during the day go toward programs and facilities not integrated employment supports. Nothing in the proposed biennial budget supports a change in funding priority that could lead to higher employment rates for people with disabilities. Wisconsin can do better. Other states have seen employment rates for people with disabilities go up with the right public policies. Research has shown that it is more cost-effective and outcomes are better when public supports are provided in integrated settings.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Commit staff and funding to expand and improve employment service provider quality and capacity to help people with disabilities find and keep integrated employment.
- Change service provider payments to make sure integrated employment is rewarded.
- Require employment performance targets in state programs that support people with disabilities to show continuous improvement.
- Develop a business-to-business technical mentoring in which businesses wanting to hire people with disabilities can connect with more experienced businesses that are already doing it.
- Increase statewide funding for programs that result in improved integrated employment outcomes, such as corporate initiatives (e.g. Walgreens, Project SEARCH).
- Initiate a statewide effort within departments to hire people with disabilities in state government jobs.

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[www.survivalcoalitionwi.org](http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org)

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Investing in People with Disabilities**