

South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council

Employment Policy Position

Approved by Council October 13, 2015

In South Carolina, people with intellectual, developmental, and related disabilities remain the most underemployed citizens of the State. The unemployment rate for South Carolinians with disabilities is 80% higher than the unemployment rate for all South Carolinians¹. Furthermore, Individuals with a disability who work earn significantly less than workers with no disability and continue to live in poverty². Working people with disabilities experience a poverty rate 46% higher than workers with no disabilities³.

People with developmental disabilities value work as a measure of self-reliance, community assimilation, dignity, and economic output. The South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council affirms the following policy priorities for serving South Carolinians with developmental disabilities:

- Implement Employment First practices that lead to meaningful employment in integrated community settings for all working age South Carolinians who desire to work. Employment is the preferred service option and outcome.
- Provide post-secondary transition services to students in schools to prepare students looking forward to entering the community work force. These services should include career exploration and, when possible, community-based work experiences. Younger South Carolinians consider a range of choices while preparing for their post-school lives including vocational training, career education, and higher education opportunities.
- Address barriers to employment to enhance access to the workplace through an array of individualized, reasonable accommodations to gain and maintain community employment.

¹ United States Census Bureau, American FactFinder. "C18120: Employment Status by Disability Status." 2013 American Community Survey. Accessed September 22, 2014 at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.
United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. "LASST450000000000003: South Carolina Statewide Unemployment Rate, Seasonally Adjusted." 2013-2014 Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Accessed September 22, 2014 at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/dsrv/>.

² United States Census Bureau, American FactFinder. "B18140: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (In 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Disability Status by Sex for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings." 2013 American Community Survey. Accessed September 22, 2014 at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

³ United States Census Bureau, American FactFinder. "S1811: Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population by Disability Status." 2013 American Community Survey. Accessed September 22, 2014 at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

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- Encourage self-determined career paths that recognize an individual's highest potential, including self-employment, job retention, career advancement, and retirement plans.
- Disseminate information regarding employment initiatives to individuals and their family members to assist stakeholders to make informed decisions. Informed business leaders, agencies, and organizations work together more efficiently to provide resources and supports.
- Favor access to public assistance benefits such as Medicaid programs during employment because these programs are essential to people's well-being and extend the success of individuals, families, businesses, and communities.
- Eliminate any real or perceived disincentives to employment for citizens with disabilities.