



Competitive Integrated Employment Engagement and White Paper

System Gap Addressed

Why is NCCDD funding this initiative?

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) contracted with i2i Center for Integrated Health to engage the I/DD community and stakeholders in dialogue and visioning for North Carolina's transition to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) from Adult Vocational Development Programs (ADVPs). The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced in January 2022 that it had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC) and the Center for Public Representation (CPR) to make this transition. There are significant questions in the I/DD community about these changes.

What Competitive Integrated Employment?

Competitive Integrated Employment is a national initiative with a set of guiding principles that the federal government is using to encourage inclusive employment for individuals with disabilities. Through federal legislation and policy, the federal government is prompting States to create plans of action that will move the State toward Competitive Integrated Employment principles, policies and processes. Governor Cooper has issued an Executive Order outlining the Employment First initiative. In addition, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has developed a Five-Year Strategic Plan to transition our State to Competitive Integrated Employment. Disability Rights North Carolina has played a key role in prompting North Carolina to align with the federal and national movement to Competitive Integrated Employment. Some communities in North Carolina have been developing innovative models of integrated employment and vocational programming. There are many perspectives on how North Carolina should proceed with this transition, the timing and important considerations.

Initiative Major Goals and Objectives

The i2i Center for Integrative Health interviewed individuals representing all stakeholders in the Competitive Integrated Employment discussion. Once the interviews were completed, a free information session was held, open to all and presenting an opportunity for participants to hear from stakeholders, providers, and state leaders. The information session also included a "leveling the knowledge" component and a portion around the national perspective and lessons learned from other States to ensure that all participants have the same basic understanding of the intent behind Competitive Integrated Employment.

Achievements and Outcomes to Date

Key themes that arose from the interviews:

General Concepts:

- There is a general willingness to move to CIE
- More education is needed for all stakeholders.
- Home and Community-Based Setting rules encourage CIE
- North Carolina should use examples/peer models
- Funding is not sufficient to offer community-based choices that meet the continuum of needs
- North Carolina should focus on a transition plan and implementation that aligns with Medicaid Transformation

Addressing Needs of Individuals with Intellectual-Developmental Disability Diagnoses:

- A top priority should be around offering choice that is meaningful to the individual service-user.
- Flexibility within the framework of CIE in North Carolina is required to fit individual needs.
- Key considerations for making CIE successful include:

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Achievements and Outcomes to Date (continued)

- Access to transportation to employment
- Address health equity issues around access to services
- Include provisions that ensure the safety of individuals in employment settings

Workforce and Employer Capacity Issues:

- There is concern that there are not enough employers in some areas of the State
- Benefits counseling must be robust so that individuals can be certain of how hours and wages in employment will impact their benefits
- The State must ensure that employers are trained in integrated programming and employment
- Additional discussion is needed on the future of ADVPs as a part of the service system

How can I get involved?

Contact Ann Rodriguez at i2i Center for Integrated Health at ann@i2icenter.org

Who is the contractor?



i2icenter.org

Who can I contact for questions?

Grant Administrator: Ann Rodriguez, MHA, Executive Director, ann@i2icenter.org

NCCDD: Tamira White, Systems Change Manager, tamira.white@dhhs.nc.gov

Additional Resources

[Click here](#) to download a copy of the **CIE White Paper**