



OVERSIGHT HEARING

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST:
A PRIORITY FOR CALIFORNIA. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.**

**Assembly Committee on Human Services
Jim Beall, Jr., Chair**

**State Capitol, Room 437
August 23, 2011
1:30 p.m.**

BACKGROUND BRIEFING PAPER

INTRODUCTION

Enacted in 2009, Assembly Bill 287 (Beall), Chapter 231, Statutes of 2009, included the following legislative findings and declarations:

- Working age people with disabilities are among the most unemployed and underemployed members of society.
- People with developmental disabilities are an important and largely untapped employment resource.
- Research demonstrates that wages and hours worked increase dramatically as individuals move from facility-based to integrated employment, and suggests that other benefits include expanded social relationships, heightened self-determination, and more typical job acquisition and job roles.
- Recent data indicate that, with 13 percent of working age individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities in competitive or supported employment, California ranks 41st when compared with other states.
- Because the likelihood of individuals with developmental disabilities obtaining employment is greater if they move directly from school to work, education programs should prepare transition age students for employment in community settings.
- Increasing integrated and gainful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities requires collaboration and cooperation by state and local agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Department of Developmental Services and regional centers, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Rehabilitation, the State Department of Education and local school districts, and the Employment Development Department.
- The Legislature places a high priority on providing supported employment and other integrated employment opportunities for working-age adults with developmental disabilities.
- In developing the individual program plan pursuant to [the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act], planning teams are encouraged to discuss school-to-work opportunities during individual program plan meetings beginning when a consumer reaches 14 years of age, and regional center representatives are encouraged to inform the consumer, parent, legal guardian, or conservator that the regional center is available, upon request, to participate in the consumer's individualized education plan meetings to discuss transition planning.

AB 287 built on the work begun pursuant to SB 1270 (Chesbro), Chapter 397, Statutes of 2006. Under SB 1270, meetings were held in 2006 to receive public input on ways to expand opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in the areas of employment and

community participation. A resulting 2007 Report to the Legislature and the Governor, prepared by the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (State Council), included recommendations for improvements to the transition services planning process for students and recommended policies and initiatives to expand employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.¹ AB 287 also relied on input received through a series of roundtable discussions and informational hearings on the future of the Lanterman Act conducted by the Assembly Human Services Committee in the summer and fall of 2007.

Employment First Committee

AB 287 required that the State Council establish a standing Employment First Committee. The Employment First Committee must include designees of the State Council members representing the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Rehabilitation, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the university centers for excellence in developmental disabilities, the state protection and advocacy agency, and a member of the State Council's consumer advisory committee. The Employment First Committee is also required to meet and consult, as appropriate, with other state and local agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to, the Employment Development Department, the Association of Regional Center Agencies, supported employment provider organizations, an organized labor organization representing service coordination staff, and consumer family member organizations.

The Employment First Committee's responsibilities include identifying strategies and best practices, and making recommendations for legislative, regulatory, and policy changes, the intended outcome of which is "**a significant increase in the number of people with developmental disabilities who engage in integrated employment, self-employment, and microenterprises, and the number of individuals who earn wages at or above minimum wage.**"

By July 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, the Employment First Committee is required to provide a report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature and the Governor describing its work and recommendations. The first report is required to include a proposed Employment First Policy, as provided in AB 287. Although slightly delayed, the first annual Employment First Committee report was approved by the State Council on July 27, 2011. That "Employment First Report" is the basis of this hearing.²

EMPLOYMENT DATA

As discussed in the Employment First Report, there are not a lot of data, specifically, on the rates of employment for people with developmental disabilities. What data exist, however, show that California and national employment rates for people with disabilities, generally, and for people

¹ *SB 1270 Report on Expanding Opportunities and Choice in California's Day Program Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.* (May 2007) State Council on Developmental Disabilities (http://www.scdd.ca.gov/1270/FinalReport/5-1-07_SB1270_Final_Report.pdf).

² The Employment First Report is available on the State Council's Internet Web site (<http://www.scdd.ca.gov/documents/HQ-EmploymentFirstReport8-9-11.pdf>), and on the Assembly Human Services Committee's Web site with the agenda for this Oversight Hearing (<http://www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/newcomframeset.asp?committee=13>).

with intellectual and developmental disabilities, particularly, are abysmal. The most recent report on state-by-state employment data from the Institute for Community Inclusion notes that "there remains a significant gap in employment rates between people with and without disabilities"³ Nationally, the StateData Report indicates that, in 2009, 68.2% of working-age people (ages 16-64) were employed, compared to 34.9% of people with any disability and 23.9% of people with a cognitive disability.⁴ Comparable figures for California were: 66% of all people employed, compared to 33% of people with any disability and 21.3% of people with a cognitive disability.⁵

Nationally, moreover, the percentage of people served by state intellectual/developmental disabilities agencies (DDS in California), who are in integrated employment has gone down, from a high of 25% in 2001 to only 20% in 2009.⁶ In California, the percentage decreased from 24% in 2001 to only 15% in 2009.⁷

EMPLOYMENT FIRST REPORT: EMPLOYMENT FIRST POLICY

AB 287 directed the State Council, in its first annual report, to propose an Employment First Policy. The goal of the policy and of the strategies and recommendations developed in furtherance of that policy, as noted, is a significant increase in the number of people with developmental disabilities who engage in integrated employment, self-employment, and microenterprises, and the number of individuals who earn wages at or above minimum wage. The Employment First Policy proposed by the State Council is as follows:

**It is the policy of the State of California that integrated competitive employment is the priority outcome for working age individuals with developmental disabilities.
In plain language: Work is for all.**

The Report notes, consistent with AB 287, that "employment," under the proposed policy, includes all income generation activities, such as traditional jobs and owning one's own business.

Employment First

A growing number of states are adopting "employment first" policies—either through statute or administrative policies and practices.⁸ There are currently over 25 states that are focused at some

³ Butterworth, J., Hall, A.C., Smith, F.A., Migliore, A., & Winsor, J. (2011) *StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes*. Boston, MA: Institute for community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston, p. 9; "StateData Report."

⁴ *Id.* at 51.

⁵ *Id.* at 81.

⁶ *Id.* at 53.

⁷ *Id.* at 83.

⁸ See, e.g., *Q&A's on State Employment First Policies* (March 2008), State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) (http://www.seln.org/images/stories/site_documents/dmr%20request%20employment%20policy%203-08rev.pdf); *Establishing a National Employment First Agenda*, (October 2009) APSE (<http://www.apse.org/docs/FINAL%20Employment%20First%20Paper%20101.pdf>).

level on the concept of Employment First—in some cases with a focus specifically on people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and in others a cross-disability focus.⁹ Approximately 10 states have clear public policies in place.¹⁰ There is no universal definition of "employment first"; however, there are guiding principles common to most of these initiatives. Kiernan *et al.* summarize these principles as follows¹¹:

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes the right of individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, to achieve the four goals of disability policy—equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.
- Self-determination and informed consumer choice are essential elements of all programs and options related to employment.
- Work for pay (employment) is a valued activity both for individuals and society. While providing both tangible and intangible benefits, employment helps people achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency, giving purpose, dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment and pride.
- It is presumed that all individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, can achieve competitive integrated employment with appropriate services and supports.
- Full membership in society calls for a role of contributor in society. Contributing most often means employment.
- All individuals, including those with the most significant disabilities, should enjoy every opportunity to be employed in the workforce, pursue careers, advance professionally, and engage actively in the economic marketplace.
- Individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, should be empowered to attain the highest possible wage with benefits consistent with their interests, strengths, priorities, abilities, and capabilities.
- Employment-related training services and supports should be provided to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities to become employed with the primary or preferred outcome of such services competitive integrated employment.
- Employment should include career development over time.
- Based on information from the employment marketplace, employment-related training services and supports should target areas of present and future workforce growth. Input

⁹ Kiernan, E., Hoff, D., Freeze, S., and Mank, D. (2011). Employment First: A beginning not an end. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 49(4), 300.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* at 300-01.

from employers is critical to effectively direct employment-related training and services.

- Service providers are expected to use best, promising, emerging practices with respect to the provision of employment-related services and supports.
- Technical assistance should be available to service providers for the purpose of expanding and improving their capacity to provide employment and training services and supports that will enhance opportunities for competitive integrated employment consistent with best, promising, and emerging practices.
- Supports should be provided for as long as needed, with a focus on use of natural occurring supports as much as possible.
- All systems must be aligned to reach the outcome of competitive integrated employment. The establishment of infrastructures and resource allocation (staff time and funding) reflects the priority of competitive integrated employment.
- Exploitation of workers with disabilities is abhorrent, and workers should enjoy meaningful and effective protections against exploitation.

Reducing unemployment and creating jobs to enable people to earn a living wage is already a state and national priority. Employment First simply recognizes that providing services and supports to enable people with disabilities to earn a living wage is also a legitimate state priority. Employment First embodies the notion that employment should be the first option offered to working-age adults with disabilities, including developmental disabilities.

Kiernan *et al.* note that Employment First also represents sound fiscal and resource management practice:

The looming shortage of workers, the clear indication that competitive integrated employment is more cost-effective, the growing interest among persons with disabilities to work in typical job settings, and the cost of maintaining persons in nonwork settings will only continue to grow and contribute to the justification for Employment First.¹²

Employment First and the Lanterman Act

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Lanterman Act) is California's comprehensive statutory scheme for providing services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.¹³ Independence, productivity, and inclusion are among the core values of the Lanterman Act. The act provides that services and supports should be available "to enable persons with developmental disabilities *to approximate the pattern of everyday living available to people without disabilities of the same age*" and that agencies

¹² *Id.* at 303.

¹³ Welfare & Institutions (W&I) Code § 4500 *et seq.*

serving people with developmental disabilities "shall produce evidence that their services have resulted in consumer or family empowerment and in *more independent, productive, and normal lives for the persons served*."¹⁴ "[T]he Legislature places a high priority on providing opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to be integrated into the mainstream life of their natural communities."¹⁵

The Lanterman Act also places a high value on the right of individuals to make choices in their own lives, "including, but not limited to, where and with whom they live, their relationships with people in their community, the way they spend their time, including education, employment, and leisure, the pursuit of their personal future, and program planning and implementation."¹⁶

The rights of people with developmental disabilities under the Lanterman Act are implemented through the individual program plan (IPP) process. Requirements for the IPP incorporate the overarching goals of inclusion and individual choice. Thus, for example, the Lanterman Act says that development of the IPP must both "*promot[e] community integration, independent, productive and normal lives*" and "*reflect the preferences and choices of the consumer*."¹⁷

In considering the proposed Employment First Policy, the State Council received input from some individuals and organizations expressing concern that by stating that integrated competitive employment "is the priority outcome for working age individuals with developmental disabilities" the policy would undercut the IPP process and weaken the Lanterman Act emphasis on individual choice.

The proposed policy, however, would not change the consumer choice provisions of the Lanterman Act. The policy establishes a *State* priority on putting more people with developmental disabilities into competitive integrated jobs. As the Employment First Report makes clear, the policy has implications that go far beyond the regional center system and DDS—requiring coordination and cooperation among numerous state agencies, private entities, businesses, etc. Creating jobs where people earn a livable wage and reducing unemployment are existing priorities for the general population, at both the state and national levels. **The proposed Employment First Policy, in recognition of the woefully high levels of unemployment and underemployment among people with disabilities, establishes integrated competitive employment as the priority outcome for working age people with developmental disabilities as well. It neither mandates that outcome for any individual nor limits any individual's right to choose other options.**¹⁸

¹⁴ W&I Code § 4501.

¹⁵ W&I Code § 4688.

¹⁶ W&I Code § 4502(j). *See also, e.g.*, W&I Code §§ 4501, 4502.1, 4512(b).

¹⁷ W&I Code § 4646(a).

¹⁸ It is important to distinguish between employment first policies, such as proposed in the State Council's Employment First Report, and employment *only* policies that require that employment be the only service option considered with exceptions made only for individuals for whom employment is not appropriate. Employment first policies require that employment be the first or preferred service option considered for service recipients but—

Notably, the Lanterman Act, enacted four decades ago, establishes a similarly strong priority for integrated community living.¹⁹ This priority has not eliminated institutions or community-based segregated living arrangements. It has, however, significantly increased the range and availability of integrated living options—e.g., through the provision of independent living and supported living services, and creation of innovative living arrangements, including family homes and family teaching homes—for those individuals with developmental disabilities who choose those options through the IPP process. As such, this priority has enhanced rather than diminished choice.

Research on consumer choices with respect to work, moreover, suggests that a significant percentage of individuals in sheltered workshops would choose competitive employment.²⁰ An individual cannot be said to have chosen a segregated option unless and until he or she has first been offered an integrated option and that option has been rejected. Acquiescence and choices based on incomplete information are not informed choices. The main point about Employment First is that integrated employment options are the first options offered, prior to segregated employment or other non-employment options.²¹

Employment First and Olmstead

The United States Supreme Court's landmark decision in the *Olmstead* case established that unnecessary segregation in institutions of people with disabilities constitutes discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and that the ADA's "integration mandate" may require placement of people with disabilities in community settings rather than in institutions.²² Writing for the Court majority, Justice Ginsburg referred to the greater social harm caused by unnecessary segregation, stating that it "perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life."²³

The Supreme Court's reasoning was not limited to segregation in institutions. The focus was on "unjustified isolation." Segregation is unwarranted when the individual can handle and benefit from community settings, does not oppose such treatment, and integrated placement can be

consistent with the Lanterman Act—individuals do not have to meet exclusion criteria in order to choose a service option other than employment. See, SELN Q&A, *supra*, n. 8.

¹⁹ As stated by the California Supreme Court: "The purpose of the statutory scheme is twofold: to prevent or minimize the institutionalization of developmentally disabled persons and their dislocation from family and community ([W&I Code] §§ 4501, 4509, 4685), and to enable them to approximate the pattern of everyday living of nondisabled persons of the same age and to lead more independent and productive lives in the community ([W&I Code] §§ 4501, 4750-4751)." *Ass'n for Retarded Citizens-California v. DDS* (1985) 38 Cal.3d 384, 388.

²⁰ E.g., Migliore, A., Mank, D., Grossi, T. & Rogan, P. (2007), Integrated employment or sheltered workshops: Preferences of adults with intellectual disabilities, their families, and staff, 26 *Vocational Rehabilitation* 5, 12 (finding 74% of the 210 people surveyed from 19 workshops would prefer or be interested in competitive employment).

²¹ See, Kiernan *et al.*, *supra*, n. 9, at 300.

²² *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999) 527 U.S. 581, 587.

²³ *Id.* at 600.

reasonably accommodated, taking into account the state's resources and the needs of others with disabilities.²⁴

Since *Olmstead*, the integration mandate has been applied mainly to cases involving access to living arrangements in community-based rather than institutional settings—not only state institutions but also nursing homes and large congregate "community-based" settings that function like institutions. *Olmstead* has also been used to challenge regulations and policies, including state budget cuts, that effectively force people with disabilities living in the community to move to institutions to get the services they need.

Recently, legal scholars and court cases have begun to focus on application of the ADA integration mandate and *Olmstead* to employment and segregated work settings.²⁵ The focus has been on the sheltered workshop model versus the supported employment model. Sheltered workshops, or center-based work, are segregated work environments. They often pay sub-minimum wages and participants may not have access to benefits, such as unemployment benefits when they are laid off. Supported employment provides individualized supports for people with disabilities to join the regular workforce at actual jobs where they receive competitive wages. The services are often phased out over time as the employee becomes less reliant on coaching or other supports.

The ADA does not prohibit segregated services that operate to the benefit of people with disabilities, including sheltered workshops.²⁶ However, people with disabilities must have the choice to participate in integrated vocational services, and their "choice" of sheltered workshops cannot be made on the basis that no other vocational services are available to them.²⁷ On the other hand, the ADA does not require that states pay for segregated employment programs. The State of Vermont, for example, closed its last sheltered workshop for people with developmental disabilities in 2002.²⁸

In *Olmstead*, the Supreme Court said that a state could demonstrate that it was meeting its obligation for complying with the integration mandate "if, for example, the State were to demonstrate that it had a comprehensive, effectively working plan for placing qualified persons with mental disabilities in less restrictive settings, and a waiting list that moved at a reasonable pace not controlled by the State's endeavors to keep its institutions fully populated."²⁹

What would an *Olmstead* plan look like in the context of employment services?

Presumably, the State would have to demonstrate that it created and implemented an efficiently-operating plan to transition disabled individuals served in sheltered

²⁴ *Id.* at 587.

²⁵ See, Stefan, S. (Spring 2010), Beyond residential segregation: The application of *Olmstead* to segregated employment settings. 26 *Ga. St. U.L. Rev.* 875.

²⁶ *Id.* at 878, 924-25.

²⁷ *Id.* at 925.

²⁸ Silewski, J., Working together to convert the last sheltered workshop in Vermont to individualized supports. Institute for Community Inclusion (http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=201; last visited August 4, 2011).

²⁹ 527 U.S. at 605-06.

workshops who qualified for supported employment and desired supported employment services into such services; in addition, the state would have to show it did not keep people in sheltered workshops merely to keep them full.³⁰

The integration mandate states a very clear expectation that services will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of people with disabilities.

Under the ADA, integrated service is the rule, and segregated service is the exception. But for people with mental disabilities seeking vocational services, the norm in many states remains a sheltered and segregated setting that bears no relationship to how non-disabled people perform actual work in the real world. Just as adult homes resembled institutions more than people's homes, sheltered workshops are a vestige of institutional days. People with disabilities do not need to be sheltered from the world; they need to be welcomed into it.³¹

The concept of Employment First is consistent with the integration mandate of the ADA. As under the ADA, Employment First means that integrated employment is the rule ("the priority outcome"), segregated employment is the exception. **An Employment First policy, such as proposed in the Employment First Report, would establish an expectation and a priority that would serve as a guiding principle for development and implementation of a California Olmstead plan for employment.**

EMPLOYMENT FIRST REPORT: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Employment First Report identifies goals and objectives, including recommendations on policies, procedures and practices to promote an employment first approach and document outcomes to measure success.

The report describes the roles and responsibilities of State and local agencies in enhancing employment of people with developmental disabilities, including the California Department of Education (CDE), the Employment Development Department (EDD), the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and the Department of Health Care Services.

Recommended strategies for implementing employment first in California are grouped into categories: Education and transition; getting a job; keeping and supporting a job; employers; and, indirect supports and services that support the ability to work. The goals within each category are listed below. The specific recommended strategies under each goal are described in the Employment First Report.

³⁰ Stefan, *supra*, n.25 at 930.

³¹ *Id.* at 935.

A. Education and transition

Goals:

- Increase interagency collaboration and efficiently provide services and supports through the use of blended funding.
- Publicize successful transition programs.
- Prepare students with developmental disabilities for work and create more opportunities for integrated competitive employment.
- Ensure regional centers have the expertise needed to successfully transition students into postsecondary education and/or integrated competitive employment.
- Eliminate delays in finding jobs.
- Increase expectations regarding employment for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Discuss employment at individual transition program (ITP) meetings.
- Make transition planning more accessible to students and their families.
- Leverage employment opportunities and trends.

B. Getting a job

Goals:

- Provide sufficient supports to assist people to locate and obtain employment.
- Supported employment providers have expertise and resources needed to support individuals with developmental disabilities to locate and obtain integrated competitive employment.
- Regional centers and DOR promote and facilitate the integrated competitive employment of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Support the desires and efforts of individuals with developmental disabilities to transition from segregated employment settings and/or settings with subminimum wages to integrated competitive employment.
- Support the desires and efforts of individuals with developmental disabilities to create their own businesses.

C. Keeping and supporting a job

Goals:

- Supported employment providers have the expertise and support required to support people.
- Assure individuals with developmental disabilities have supports required to allow them to travel to their jobs.
- Ensure people have the necessary supports required to keep their jobs.

D. Employers

Goals:

- Educate employers regarding the business advantages and value added to their workforce in hiring individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Increase the number of individuals with developmental disabilities that are employed in integrated competitive jobs.
- Increase the number of individuals with developmental disabilities employed by the State of California.

E. Indirect supports and services that support the ability to work

Goals:

- Individuals with disabilities understand the impact of work on their public benefits.
- Make public benefits more flexible to support working individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Report also sets outcome goals and target dates related to, for example, percentage increases in the number of people with developmental disabilities who will be employed in State government, in integrated competitive employment, and in microenterprise businesses; the percentage increase in the number of individuals who will transition to post-secondary education; and, the percentage of people receiving services in sheltered workshops who will transition to integrated employment. It also establishes a goal that all working age adults with developmental disabilities will have employment discussed at their IPP meetings by the end of 2014.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST REPORT: NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Employment First Report recommends that "[t]he first step to making 'employment first' a reality in California is to **incorporate the Employment First Policy into California statute**"

and "require that all state agencies that serve individuals with developmental disabilities (DDS, DOR, EDD, CDE, etc.) adhere to its tenets, while respecting an individual's right to make choices about their own life."

The Report also emphasizes the importance of a **coordinated data collection and data reporting** system by those agencies that collect and retain data on the status of individuals with developmental disabilities. Coordinated data tracking is necessary to accurately measure progress toward the employment first goal.

Other strategies for immediate legislative or regulatory action:

- Ensure that self-directed services and individual choice budgeting are available as an option to all individuals with developmental disabilities—to enable people to secure the resources, services, and support that best meet their needs.
- In order to provide individuals needed support to obtain integrated competitive employment, allow day programs, on an individual, time-limited basis, to convert group day service rates to a 1-to-1 hourly service for an individual who is actively seeking integrated competitive employment so they can receive necessary supports at no additional costs to the service system.
- Amend Section 4692 of the W&I Code to exempt, on an individual basis, services that support individuals in integrated competitive employment from reductions that impact their potential for success in their jobs.
- Amend existing regulations that prohibit a resident from being unsupervised for a limited period of time in a licensed community care facility when that person is employed in integrated competitive employment.
- Require government contractors to ensure at least 0.5% of their workforce includes individuals with developmental disabilities.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this hearing is to provide information on the current status of employment of people with developmental disabilities, nationally and in California, including the national employment first movement.³² It is an opportunity for the State Council to present the findings and recommendations of its first annual Employment First Report, which addresses systemic and practical barriers to, and describes goals and strategies for increasing competitive integrated employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Other presenters will include representatives of key State departments and regional centers—DDS, DOR, EDD, and the Association of Regional Center Agencies—who will provide an update on current state activities and initiatives, including collaborative activities, related to employment of people with

³² Scheduled to testify is William E. Kiernan, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Community Inclusion (University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) and Research Professor in the Graduate College of Education and the McCormack School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

developmental disabilities. Presenters also include stakeholders, including consumers, consumer advocates, and providers of integrated employment services and supports. Presenters will be asked for their ideas and recommendations on steps that can be taken now to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, despite difficult fiscal times.