



Employment Initiatives for Persons with Disabilities

February 2, 2012

- Goal: People with disabilities will live safe, healthy, productive, successful, self-determined lives in their homes and communities.
 - This goal is consistent with:
 - The Olmstead principles, and
 - MHDS Redesign goals
- Helping people obtain and maintain competitive community employment is a critical component of this vision.
 - Our Employment Outcome Vision is: *“Employment in the general workforce is the first priority and the expected and preferred outcome in the provision of publically funded services for all working age lowans with disabilities”*
- The Department of Human Services (DHS) is involved with a number of initiatives intended to increase the number of people with disabilities competitively employed including:
 - **State Employment Leadership Network (SELN):** SELN’s mission is to bring states together to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. SELN consultants help Iowa recognize the systemic barriers to employment for persons with disabilities and ways to overcome them.
 - **Medicaid Infrastructure (MIG) Grant:** The purpose of MIG is to assist states with making improvements to their Medicaid programs that support the competitive employment of people with disabilities. MIG currently funds a rate restructuring initiative in collaboration with SELN.
 - **Employment First (“E1st”):** Iowa is 1 of 26 States with a facilitated grassroots initiative emphasizing integrated employment, in its 3rd year in Iowa. E1st includes individuals with disabilities, family members, service providers, state human services and vocational staff, business leaders, and others.
 - **Iowa’s EDI Grant:** DHS was recently awarded a \$103,000 federal grant for technical assistance seminars to help educate mental health administrators on accessing “Ticket to Work” funding and encouraging consumers in self-employment.
 - **Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment:** The Administration on Developmental Disabilities Grant awarded a \$358,000 five year grant to the Developmental Disabilities Council. The grant will bring together the DD Council, the Iowa Department of Education (DE), Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), and DHS to improve systems so that Iowa youth with a developmental disability have fully integrated, and competitive work opportunities. The grant will contract for 6 demonstration projects in an education environment and 3 demonstration projects with community rehabilitation providers.

IME and MHDS’ goal is to unify and coordinate these efforts in conjunction with MHDS Redesign, so demonstrable improvement can be made in the number of persons with disabilities competitively employed in the community. This effort will include the evaluation of any new or innovative approaches that can be adopted to better help achieve the goal.