



Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities Position Statement on Segregated or Sheltered Employment

What we understand about segregated employment:

- Segregated employment occurs in settings where the majority of workers have disabilities, usually in workshops and enclaves.
- A fiscal year 1998 nationwide study found that the average wage for Vocational Rehabilitation “closed cases” in segregated employment was \$2.54 per hour and \$64.51 per week. Federal minimum wage in 1998 was \$5.15/hour.
- A current informal study in Idaho found that the average 14C wage for an individual with intellectual/developmental disabilities is \$3.75/hour with the federal minimum wage in 2019 at \$7.25/hour.
- In 2019, approximately 285 individuals with developmental disabilities are enrolled in facility-based work services (segregated employment) in Idaho.
- Segregated employment workers are isolated from their communities and have fewer opportunities to develop community integration skills.
- Many individuals remain in segregated employment for extended periods of time and seldom transition to community employment.
- Sheltered workshops have been set up as a type of job training program but people are often taught skills that are not relevant or transferable to traditional work environments¹.
- If planned correctly, job skills training in work services may be consistent with skills needed for community employment if the service is provided in a time-limited way with an integrated community job in mind.
- The United States Supreme Court in its Olmstead decision upheld the “integration mandate “of the Americans with Disabilities Act, requiring public agencies to provide services “in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities”.
- The Attorney General of the United States interprets “the most integrated setting” to mean, “a setting that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible”.

1. *Segregated and Exploited: The Failure of the Disability Service System to Provide Quality Work*, National Disability Rights Network, January 2011.

Our Position:

- The Council agrees with U. S Department of Education regulations that govern state vocational rehabilitation services, in no longer recognizing segregated employment as being an appropriate employment outcome.
- The Council supports use of State General Fund dollars being used for programs that are consistent with integrated employment, federal minimum wage requirements, opportunities to grow and learn within specified time frames and that allow opportunities for choice and achievement of economic self-sufficiency.
- The Council believes that every adult with an intellectual/developmental disability should be supported to explore a variety of work opportunities and make meaningful job choices.