



# TRI-COUNTIES REGIONAL CENTER

Enhancing the Quality of Life for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

## Policies & Guidelines

Policies and Guidelines - 12000

Approved by DDS: 2017 08 04

### **SERVICE POLICY**

#### **EMPLOYMENT FIRST POLICY**

Tri-Counties Regional Center believes all people have the right to enjoy the benefits of meaningful work and with the proper supports, work environment, and a desire to work, everyone is employable. The intended outcome of this policy is to significantly increase the number of people employed in an integrated work environment; including self-employment and micro-enterprises, at a competitive wage.

Competitive and Integrated Employment is defined as:

- Regular or customized employment in the general workforce;
- Where employees with disabilities are included on the payroll of a business or industry;
- Where the assigned employment tasks offer at least minimum or prevailing wages and benefits;
- Where there are ordinary opportunities for integration and interaction with co-workers without disabilities, with customers, and/or with the general public.

Tri-Counties Regional Center strongly supports integrated employment at a competitive wage for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities; we seek to promote public policy:

- That supports the expenditure of public funds to businesses who integrate employees with disabilities with the general workforce;
- That supports the ability of employers to pay employees with disabilities a competitive wage;
- That encourages programs that emphasize moving young adults from the classroom to an integrated and competitive employment environment.

Tri-Counties Regional Center seeks to promote integrated and competitive wage employment alternatives:

- That strengthen existing government tax incentives, and create additional new incentives, for employers to hire employees with disabilities into integrated environments at comparable wages.

- That assist employees with disabilities to find employment in the general workforce in jobs that they choose.

Tri-Counties Regional Center believes the essential elements needed to advance competitive integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities are:

- A fierce commitment to make this happen;
- Guidance and information on resources for self-advocacy, self-determination and informed choice.
- A secondary school education which focuses on the development of functional employability skills, early work experiences, mobility training and a competitive integrated employment goal.
- Frequent and strong collaboration between the regional center, the local education agencies, the Department of Rehabilitation, our community partners, the people we support and families.
- Internship opportunities for skill development for young adults as they transition out of school into the world of work.
- Post-secondary programs that provide support for students in certificate and degree programs to ensure full integration and maximum benefit from the curricula.
- Organized support from the business community.
- Public relations activities designed to showcase successful partnerships with the business community.
- Early support for families to foster and build high expectations for their children.

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