



# Developmental Disabilities Supports Division

Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment

April 19, 2024

# DDSD Mission and Vision

To serve those with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing a comprehensive system of person-centered community supports so that individuals live the lives they prefer, where they are respected, empowered, and free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

# DDSD Guiding Principles

## To Act With:

- Accountability
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity and honor commitments to each other and persons supported by our waiver programs.
- Collaboration
- Partner with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, internal and external stakeholders to share expertise and ideas to work toward common goals.
- Respect
- Appreciate the dignity, knowledge, and contributions of all persons.
- Transparency
- Promote trust through clear and direct communication with internal and external stakeholders.

## To Be:

- Person-Centered
- Cultivate a safe and trusted system that is designed around individual needs.
- Proactive
- Identify and address risks before they become issues. Prevent isolated issues from becoming systemic.
- Innovative
- Implement creative solutions that anticipate individuals' evolving needs.
- Inclusive
- Work with providers and educate communities in providing services that meet individuals where they are.

# Employment History

Developmental Disabilities Supports Division	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Target	FY24 Quarter
<p><u>Key Measure:</u> Percent of adults between ages twenty-two and sixty-two served on the DD Waiver or Mi Via Waiver who receive employment supports.</p>	28.3%	18.4%	9.75%	9.43%	≥27%	FY24 Q1
						8.6%
						FY24 Q2
						8.5%
						FY24 Q3
						8.5%

# COVID Impact on Employment

- March of 2020 Executive Order issued by the Governor declaring Public Health Emergency in New Mexico.
- Over the course of the pandemic many businesses were forced to reduce their workforce; resulting in many individuals with developmental disabilities losing their jobs.
- Employment numbers dropped dramatically from FY20 (28.3%) to FY24 (8.5%).
- Employment numbers have not yet rebounded.
- DSP Staffing numbers have not yet rebounded.
  - Job Developers
  - Job Coaches
- The pandemic has had lasting impact on employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Many businesses were not able to re-open due to economic struggles, or they were not able to re-open to pre-pandemic employee numbers.
- This resulted in many individuals not being able to return to their jobs.
- Some families and guardians fear for health and safety of loved ones, returning to the workforce.
- DSP Staffing shortages is a state and national concern.
- Need to expand Employment provider agencies across the state.

# Employment First

- DDSD adopted an Employment First Policy in 2016 to establish procedures for supporting working age adults to have access to valued employment opportunities as the preferred service in New Mexico.
- Every person has the right and ability to work given opportunity and access. Access to competitive integrated employment enables the person to engage in community life, control personal resources, increase self-sufficiency, and is a proven method for creating community inclusion, identity, status, and roles.
- Key Strategy in preventing Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation.
- DDSD encourages all to re-focus and bring Employment First back to the forefront of person-centered planning and person-centered discussions.

# Waiver Employment Services

## DD Waiver Community Integrated Employment Support and Services

Community Integrated Employment, Job Maintenance
Community Integrated Employment, Group, Category 1
Community Integrated Employment, Group, Category 2 Extensive Support
Community Integrated Employment, Self-Employment
Community Integrated Employment, Job Aide
Community Integrated Employment, Intensive
Community Integrated Employment, Job Coaching
Community Integrated Employment, Job Development

## Mi Via Waiver Employment Supports and Services

Employment Supports (includes Job Coach)
Job Developer

## Proposed Employment Rate Increases

- Recommended Employment Rate Increases from the PCG Rate Study
- DD Waiver Community Integrated Employment Job Maintenance:
  - Current rate: \$951.66 per month.
  - Recommended rate: \$1,296.20 per month.
  - 36% increase.
- Mi Via Waiver Employment Supports
  - Currently discussing allowing Employment Supports outside of the Individual Budget Allotment.
  - DDSD will be soliciting feedback on this idea.

## Legally Responsible Individuals

- Expanding the DSP workforce to allow LRIs, relatives and guardians to provide Waiver services; to include Employment supports.
- LRI's relatives, and legal guardians must meet DDSD established training requirements by Waiver and Job Classification.
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requires states to implement safeguards upon implementation.

# Employment Training Opportunities



- Partners for Employment (PFE): PFE is a statewide collaborative whose mission is to build capacity by providing training, technical assistance and opportunities for networking and collaboration. PFE works with state agency personnel, supported employment service providers, educators, family members, self-advocates and employers to advance promising practices for inclusive employment throughout New Mexico
- Association for Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE): ACRE trainees can earn a national certificate in employment services, which also signifies a level of expertise and knowledge in the field of employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additionally, ACRE certification moves closer to professionalizing the employment workforce.
- Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP): The CESP credential is designed for job coaches, job developers, transition employment specialists, job placement personnel, and employment specialists/ consultants who serve a wide variety of target audiences including individuals with intellectual/ developmental disabilities, mental health diagnoses, sensory impairments, physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and autism spectrum disorders. Earning the CESP credentialing also shows that DSP have completed a rigorous process to increase their knowledge and skillset specifically related to employment. The CESP certification potentially opens up more job opportunities and fulfills personal and professional career goals.

# Employment Training Opportunities continued...

- Supporting a Vision For Employment: This online course is crafted for case managers and those in similar roles responsible for advising, assisting, and advocating for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities seeking employment. Skill-building is more important than ever in today's work environment. Designed to enhance their career path, learners complete the course, increasing both competencies and capacity to support individuals on an employment journey.
- NM has 50 slots available for this training and next enrollment date starts on 4/22/24 with courses beginning on 4/29/24.
- Please reach out to Frank Gaona, DDSD Statewide Employment Lead [frank.gaona@doh.nm.gov](mailto:frank.gaona@doh.nm.gov) for enrollment information.

# Time to Re-Focus on Employment

- DDSD Want to Work Project
  - Reviewed Case Manager monthly visits notes to determine those individual who stated they “Want to Work”
- January 2023 through March 2024
  - 560 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities identified as “Wanting to Work”
- Referrals to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
  - Per federal regulation, job seekers in need of employment supports must first access funding from DVR prior to being eligible for long term funding through the DD Waiver or Mi Via Waiver
  - Currently 560 individuals who have an employment plan with DVR

# Time to Re-Focus on School to Work Transition

- Re-establish this position within DDS to serve as the primary contact for Partners for Employment Transition activities, including Project Search, School-to-Work Transition Teams (SWTT), and other initiatives in collaboration with agencies who have a role in providing transition supports.
- DDS serves as a resource and a support by connecting families, educators, schools, youth and providers with employment services and resources.
- DDS re-engage with local school districts providing information and resources to school administrators, teachers, families, and students.
  - Go on-site, face to face meetings, attend transition fairs.
  - Be more visible in the local schools.

# Partnerships

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- UNM Partners for Employment
- Parents Reaching Out
- Department of Workforce Solutions
- Supported Employment Leadership Network



Thank You!