

## Position Statement on Employment

### Position Statement

The Arc Minnesota believes that employment should be a top priority for services and supports for working-age individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). We endorse and adopt the “[Minnesota Employment First Policy](#)” as approved by the Minnesota Olmstead Subcabinet on September 29, 2014. Minnesota’s Employment First Policy is highly consistent with core principles advanced by The Arc U.S. and American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) in their shared position statement on employment in 2012.

The Arc Minnesota must be at the forefront, along with school transition programs, post-secondary school programs, and other vocational programs, in educating individuals with I/DD, their families, and their guardians about the possibilities and benefits of integrated competitive employment and about opportunities available to explore employment options. Also, these programs must join with state agencies to reach out to potential employers with training and technical assistance in order to achieve the employment goals of persons with I/DD found in their Person-Centered Plans.

There are multiple pathways for persons with I/DD to be involved in employment, even those with significant disabilities. The Arc Minnesota recognizes the importance of customized employment as one of those pathways. In customized employment, the skills of the worker with I/DD are used to craft the job description rather than trying to fit a person with I/DD into job qualifications written for persons without disabilities. This could widen opportunities for persons with I/DD in the workforce with the help of supportive employers.

### Issue

Minnesota’s Employment First Policy responds directly to The Arc’s Call for Action in the [Family and Individual Needs for Disability Supports](#) (FINDS) national study published in June, 2011. This national survey shared that 85% of Americans with I/DD were not working either full or part-time, with regular employment at competitive wages being an elusive outcome for a majority.

Further, a recent [National Core Indicators \(NCI\) report](#) documented that many Minnesotans with I/DD who do not have a job want to work. It further reported that of the unemployed people who want to work, less than half had a goal to get a job in their service plan.

Minnesota has a high percentage of persons with disabilities who are unemployed. The focus of the Employment First policy is to:

- Increase public expectations about the possibilities of integrated competitive employment.
- Build incentives to make integrated competitive employment a first consideration for individuals with disabilities as they develop their Person-Centered Plan for services and supports.
- Seed innovations in public policies, funding, and practices to make integrated competitive employment an attainable goal for those who choose work.
- Ensure guidance and assistance to all working-age Minnesotans with disabilities and their families to make *an informed choice* regarding the goal of working in the competitive labor force.
- Establish formal agreements among state agencies and interagency work plans to expand opportunities to work in support of Minnesotans with disabilities.

*Approved by The Arc Minnesota Position Statements Task Force - August 17, 2015.*

*Approved by The Arc Minnesota Public Policy Committee - August 19, 2015.*

*Approved by The Arc Minnesota Board of Directors - September 12, 2015.*

*Approved by Delegates at The Arc Minnesota Annual Meeting, October 23, 2015.*