

News Release

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Settlement dismissed in culmination of work to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in community employment

(Portland) – The Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Department of Education announce the end of the Lane v. Brown class action lawsuit. Thursday, the Lane v. Brown settlement was dismissed after finding Oregon in substantial compliance with the settlement agreement. The lawsuit addressed employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The ruling is the culmination of a decade of work from self-advocates, families, providers, case management entities, state workers and others to ensure people with I/DD have more choice and control over their lives.

Lane v. Brown was the first case of its kind when filed in 2012. The plaintiffs claimed that Oregon violated the law by segregating people with I/DD in sheltered workshops that often paid less than minimum wage, and denied supported employment services that would allow people with I/DD to work in community jobs. In 2016, the Lane v. Brown settlement was approved. Thursday's outcome confirms that the goals outlined in the settlement agreement were achieved.

“There has since been significant improvement in employment practices and opportunities for people with I/DD in Oregon. There has also been a culture shift throughout the state with more employers recognizing the value of this population in the workforce,” ODDS Statewide Employment First Coordinator Acacia McGuire Anderson said.

In 2020, an important milestone was the closure of ODDS-funded sheltered workshop services. In 2016, there were 143 people with I/DD in community employment, and that number grew to over 1,500 people in 2021.

“This is a significant milestone, and a great deal has been accomplished as a result of the efforts of many in our services system. However, there is still more work to be done,” ODDS Director Lilia Teninty said. “The state will not stop making progress in this important area.”

“The settlement’s conclusion marks a huge win for people with disabilities in Oregon,” said Keith Ozols, director of Vocational Rehabilitation. “We hear time and time again that being able to work in their communities and earn a living wage means so much to the individuals we serve. Employers, too, appreciate gaining dependable, motivated employees. VR counselors will continue to connect our clients with jobs that fit their interests and fulfill a community need.”

Additional resources:

- [Message about Thursday’s hearing from ODDS, VR and DOE leadership](#) (July 22, 2022)
- [Final Lane v. Brown report to the court](#) (June 2022)
- [Lane v. Brown settlement agreement report](#) (January 2022)
- [Lane v. Brown data report](#) (June 2022)
- [The full Lane v. Brown settlement agreement](#) (2016)

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