

Iworkwesucceed.org

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Employment First: Outcomes and Successes Report

When people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) work in their communities, everyone succeeds. With the right job and supports, everyone can work.



John works 28 hours per week for Providence on the e-learning team. When COVID-19 hit, John shifted from working in the office to working from home.

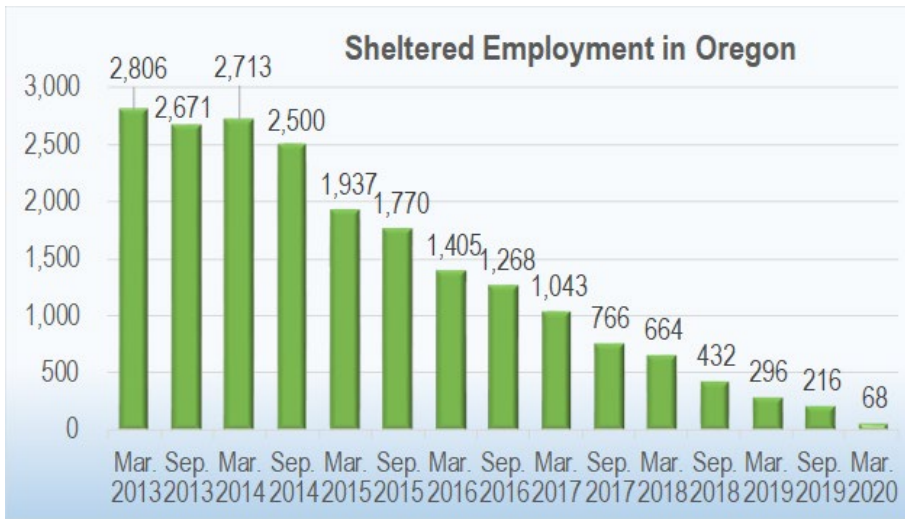
Oregon's Employment First initiative is a collaboration between the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), along with stakeholders and local teams.

In 2020, Oregon's system for employment services for people with I/DD was challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and wildfires. Policies and procedures shifted to allow for remote services for the first time, including virtual intakes for Vocational Rehabilitation and remote job coaching. Because of these challenges, this year's

Outcomes & Successes Report from Employment First will focus on how ODDS providers, case management entities and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors shifted rapidly to focus on supporting people with I/DD with creativity during unprecedented times.

About this document: This report will highlight some of the outcomes and successes achieved toward the goal of increasing community jobs for Oregonians with I/DD. All the numbers included in this report are from the Fall 2020 Lane Settlement Data Report and other reports on ODDS clients for State Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020).

ODDS Ends Sheltered Workshop Services



September 2020 marked the end of ODDS-funded sheltered workshop services in Oregon. Sheltered workshops are facilities where people work mainly with other people with disabilities, often making less than minimum wage.

This transition happened because of tremendous efforts by self-advocates, families, providers, case management

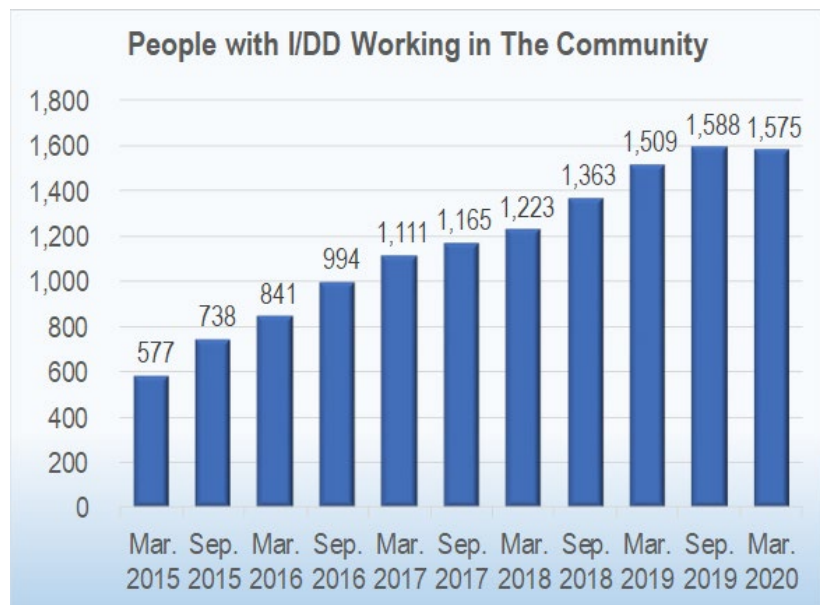
entities and others to make this happen during the past decade.

These efforts have resulted in Oregon being recognized in 2020 by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights as a leader in eliminating subminimum wage and in transitioning to integrated employment.

When Oregon adopted the Employment First policy in 2008, the goal was set that every person with I/DD – regardless of the severity of their disability – can work in the community and will have access to the appropriate supports. Momentum continued with the Governor’s first Executive Order on Employment First in 2013, which charged ODDS, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Oregon Department of Education, to collaborate to change our entire service system to produce improved employment outcomes. Further Executive Orders, along with the Lane v. Brown Settlement Agreement and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) regulations, continued to move Oregon’s system away from facility-based employment services to community-based integrated employment.

Since then, the entire statewide system pulled together as providers transformed their business model from one focused on large facilities to one where job developers and job coaches support people in community workplaces. Services Coordinators, Personal Agents and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors worked closely with people with I/DD and their families to identify good job matches. Since 2015, the number of people with I/DD working in community employment has tripled. And 1,023 people in the sheltered workshop class have obtained community jobs. We have also seen a culture shift – as people who were sometimes once written off as “unemployable” have shown the tremendous value they have to the workforce if they are given a chance. It shows that when we work together, we can achieve the changes that self-advocates have worked tirelessly for.

ODDS Outcomes



Sometimes when a person with I/DD starts a new job, they might need help from a job coach. A job coach is someone who supports the person at his or her job. This might include things like creating visual aids, making checklists, or making sure the person knows how to communicate with their supervisor and coworkers.

When someone is working with the help of a job coach, this is called Supported Employment. According to data from ODDS, 1,575 people were working in community jobs

with supports in March 2020, three times the number in 2015.

On average, people working in jobs with supports are making \$12.31 per hour.

In March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Oregon, ODDS shifted policies to allow remote case management services, as well as remote one-on-one employment services, such as job coaching. Providers and case management entities had to quickly adapt to support people remotely, and find creative ways to help battle isolation during the stay-at-home order. ODDS published a [COVID-19 web page](#) with resources and information for people with I/DD and their families, case management entities, and providers. There is also a [Youtube playlist](#) with helpful videos.

ODDS, with support from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, provided three rounds of contingency funding for employment and day support activity providers hit hard by the pandemic. ODDS continues to strive for provider sustainability while also supporting people with I/DD to be safe and healthy.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Supports



(Left to right) Job Developer Darcy McCullough with provider Home Life, Taran Tyler, employee at Palm Harbor Homes in the Albany area, and VR counselor Kelly Noble.

When people with I/DD are seeking work, they often start by going to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). A VR counselor helps a person find a good job fit by doing an assessment and writing a plan for the person. The person and their team, including the VR counselor, chooses a job developer who works with the person to go out in the community and find a good job match.

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, VR shifted to virtual intakes for the first time in the program's 100-year history. Since mid-March, more than 300 people with I/DD have applied for VR services and 243 people with I/DD closed successfully with a job.

VR partners with the Oregon Department of Education on many programs, including the Transition Technical Assistance Network, or TTAN. TTAN just developed a new website with many resources for transition-age youth, including information about Pre-Employment Transition Services, educator resources, and much more. The website is: <https://sites.google.com/lblesd.k12.or.us/pre-etseducatorresources/home>.

Transition Network Facilitators and Pre-ETS Support staff work across the VR and Education systems and are embedded in regional Education Service Districts (ESDs). This team is working to improve Oregon's systems of designing and delivering employment services for students with disabilities.

In Oregon, many young people enter what are called "transition programs," or programs designed to help a person transition from school to the adult workforce.

Oregon also has the [Youth Transition Program](#) (YTP), which serves more than 1,850 students with disabilities (not just those who experience I/DD) in 120 school districts in Oregon. YTP helps prepare students for a community job after school, or for college or another technical program.

Innovative Projects at Oregon Employment First



Oregon DHS Employment First is engaged in many innovative projects aimed at increasing provider capacity as well as building supports and services for people with I/DD. Some of the projects include:

Impact Oregon

Impact Oregon is a new website that connects job seekers with jobs in the intellectual and developmental disabilities field. Jobs in the field include positions that provide direct care and/or services to

people who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability, as well as administrative or management positions.

The website, ImpactOregon.careers, will launch in early 2021. ODDS providers, case management entities and state staff will be able to post jobs for free on the site. The goal of the website is to increase Oregon’s provider capacity and the public visibility of careers in the developmental disabilities field.

This Employment First Outcomes and Successes report is available online with links accessible at the Employment First website under “Documents and Publications” at: <http://iworkwesucceed.org>