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Oct. 2, 2020

To: ODDS Staff and Stakeholders

From: Lilia Teninty, Director, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) and Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Subject: End of ODDS-funded Sheltered Workshop Services

September 2020 marked the end of ODDS-funded sheltered workshop services in Oregon. We want to recognize the tremendous effort by self-advocates, families, providers, case management entities and others to make this happen during the past decade. These efforts have resulted most recently in Oregon being recognized by the [U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#) as a leader in eliminating subminimum wage and in transitioning to integrated employment.

Oregon's service system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) is one that is centered on community-based supports. When Oregon adopted the Employment First policy in 2008, we set a goal 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, we have seen an entire statewide system pull 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. 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. People with I/DD are working in offices and stores, delivering goods, acting in plays, and participating in the fullness of community life. We have more than 90 [success stories](#), [videos](#), and [podcasts](#) highlighting the amazing work happening statewide by individuals, businesses, providers, staff and case managers in community employment services.

COVID-19 and other crises this year have challenged everyone. Even during these times, many people with I/DD continue to work and many employers, who have not yet been able to re-open, have persisted for months to keep jobs available for their employees with I/DD. This is a testament to the value people with I/DD bring to the workforce. It is no easy feat to transform an entire service system the way Oregon has done. It shows that when we work together, we can achieve the changes that self-advocates have worked tirelessly for.

Thank you all for your continued commitment to serving people with I/DD and their families, and for your efforts to make Oregon a leader in community-based supports and services.

Sincerely,

Lilia and Acacia

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