



APSE Position Statement on Funding for Employment Supports

It is the position of APSE that maintaining and increasing funding directed toward services for individualized, integrated employment for citizens with disabilities benefits individuals, businesses, communities, and states. Four compelling reasons, each with supporting evidence, serve as the basis for this position. These include: 1) congruence with national policy recommendations and mandates, 2) evidence of increased return on investment, 3) increased health outcomes for people with disabilities, and 4) benefits to businesses that hire fellow citizens with disabilities.

To expand further on this body of evidence:

1. National Policy Recommendations and Mandates

The Center for Medicaid Services currently has federal guidelines and mandates related to employment in place for states drawing upon the waiver-based Medicaid-funded federal/state cost share of services for citizens with disabilities. Such federal guidelines and mandates include requirements for individualized services, community inclusion, self-directed options, and increased integrated employment outcomes through the allocation of funds to disability service providers with a strong emphasis placed on increasing the overall percentage of funds directed to community services. The national Vocational Rehabilitation system has also been very clear about the definition of employment and successful closure for funding in that system. Placing emphasis on integrated employment supports through both funding and policy facilitates congruence with current national policy.

2. Increased Return on Investment for States and Federal Government

It stands to reason that people with disabilities who have jobs will have higher income, pay more taxes, and purchase more goods and services than those who are not employed. Recent research has been able to identify the cost-benefit differential for states to fund integrated employment services rather than services that are not integrated. People with disabilities who have integrated jobs in their communities earn, on average, more than twice what their peers who do not work in integrated settings earn. In addition, people with disabilities in the U.S. have an annual spending power of \$796 billion – more than any ethnic minority group (\$200 billion more than the African American community \$300 billion more than the Hispanic community - and this does not take into account family, friends, and supporters).

3. Increased Health Outcomes and Decreased Health Service Utilization

A number of researchers have identified and confirmed the connection between employment and health outcomes. When people have jobs in the community where they are productive and earning income, they maintain better physical and mental health status. Having increased physical and mental health status leads to decreased utilization of health services, thus reducing cost for publicly funded services in conjunction with having a healthier, more productive society.

4. Direct Benefits to Businesses

Research has been conducted to determine whether or not the average consumer cares whether or not businesses hire citizens with disabilities. It turns out that they do. 20 million of 70 million families in the U.S. have at least one member with a disability (1 out of 10 families raising children have at least 1 child with a disability). National survey data found that over 90% of people reported being “more favorable” or “much more favorable” toward businesses that hire people with disabilities. In conjunction, survey results also indicated that people would patronize a business more frequently or choose it over others if they knew that business had an employee with a disability. Thus, the average consumer would purchase more goods and services from companies that had employees with disabilities, helping such businesses as well as the local community and economy. Plus, with the baby boom generation retiring and tightening immigration laws, people with disabilities are the last untapped labor source in the country (40% higher unemployment of people with disabilities as compared to those without disabilities).