

OPWDD Employment Services Directors Meeting

February 24, 2026

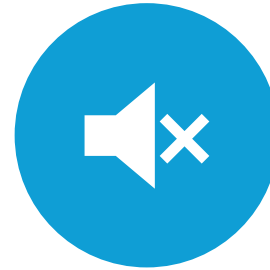
Welcome



3 HOUR BILLABLE
SESSION



INNOVATIONS
CREDITS



PLEASE MUTE
YOUR LINE



UTILIZE CHAT FOR
QUESTIONS

Capturing Attendance

This session will run from 1:00 – 4:00 and you need to stay for the full session to receive credit.

Attendees must be registered with Eleversity for this session to receive credit.

If you are sharing a device, be sure to add the names of all attendees to the chat box to receive credit.

If you are using a phone and you do not have a name displayed, you will not receive credit.

Agenda

Employment First Initiatives

Steps to Employment

Career Specific Vocational Training (CSVT)

Employment Tracking System

Customized Employment

Leadership Conference

Employment First Initiatives

Executive Order 40

Employment First Overview

- Employment First is a national systems change framework centered on the premise that all people, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and community life.
- In practice, this means that CIE is considered as the first option and preferred outcome in the planning and delivery of services and supports to New Yorkers with disabilities who are of working age.
- NYS now has an Employment First (E1st) Executive Order that includes concrete agency responsibilities, funding, and a dedicated staffing infrastructure.
- E1st is not a new program or project, it's how we do business from now on.
- E1st implementation is not limited to employment programs, it encompasses our entire public health system for people with disabilities.

Office of the Chief Disability Officer

The Office of the Chief Disability Officer (CDO) was established in February 2022 to:

- break down silos between state agencies that provide services to people with disabilities,
- improve diversity, equity, and inclusion for people with disabilities,
- push for progress on state-wide accessibility issues,
- provide a disability perspective on policy proposals, legislation, state agency operations, and
- diligently connect with communities and advocates on a wide spectrum of disability issues.

The CDO is collaborating with state agencies to evaluate current practices and formulate a plan designed to remove barriers and adopt practices, procedures and rules to ensure that CIE is considered as the first option and preferred outcome in the planning and delivery of disability services.

CDO staff supporting Employment First include:

- Kim Hill Ridley, Chief Disability Officer
- Andy Sink, Employment First Director
- Elizabeth Fisher, Employment First Chief Data Strategist
- Whitney Malone, Employment First Business Liaison

State Agencies With Primary Responsibility for Executive Order 40

1. Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
2. Department of Health
3. Office of Mental Health
4. Office for Addiction Services and Supports
5. Office for Children and Family Services
6. Department of Labor
7. Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
8. State Education Department (ACCES-VR and Office of Special Education)

OPWDD E1st Update

Timeline	Activity
June 2025	OPWDD leadership attend the first official E1st task force meeting
June 2025	E1st overview for OPWDD regional field office directors
July 2025	E1st overview for OPWDD leadership
September 2025	OPWDD submits E1st Self-Assessment to CDO
October 2025	E1st overview for OPWDD internal unit and division representatives
November 2025 - Present	Individual E1st meetings with OPWDD unit and division representatives
February 2026	Monthly E1st meetings with Commissioner Baer and Executive Deputy Commissioner Barbuto commence
March 31, 2026	Internal leadership review of E1st Implementation Plan
April 30, 2026	OPWDD E1st Implementation Plan due to CDO

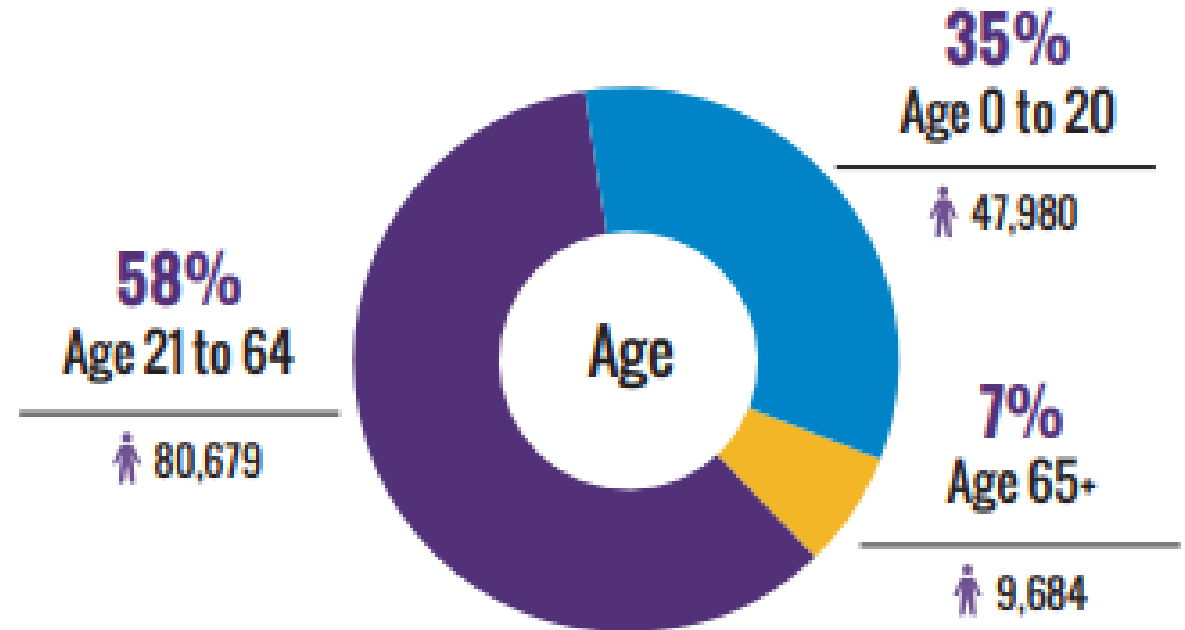
Current State (2024 Data)

OPWDD oversees and operates a system of supports that serves over 135,000 people with developmental disabilities.

More than 58% of people are of working age. In 2024, employment supports were provided for approximately 14,000 people.

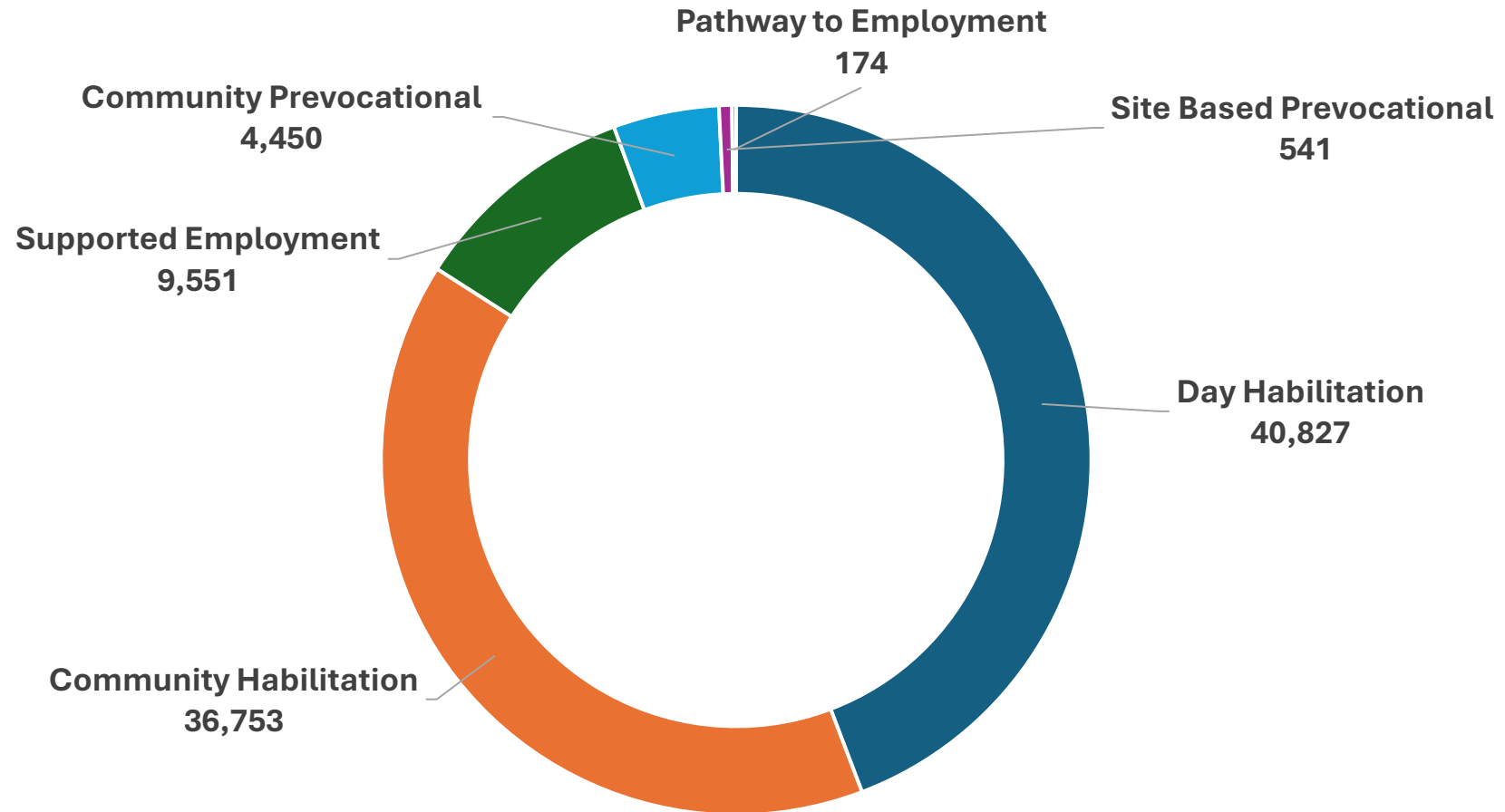
As New York makes Employment First its priority, OPWDD anticipates growth in the number of people with developmental disabilities seeking employment.

People by Age Group*

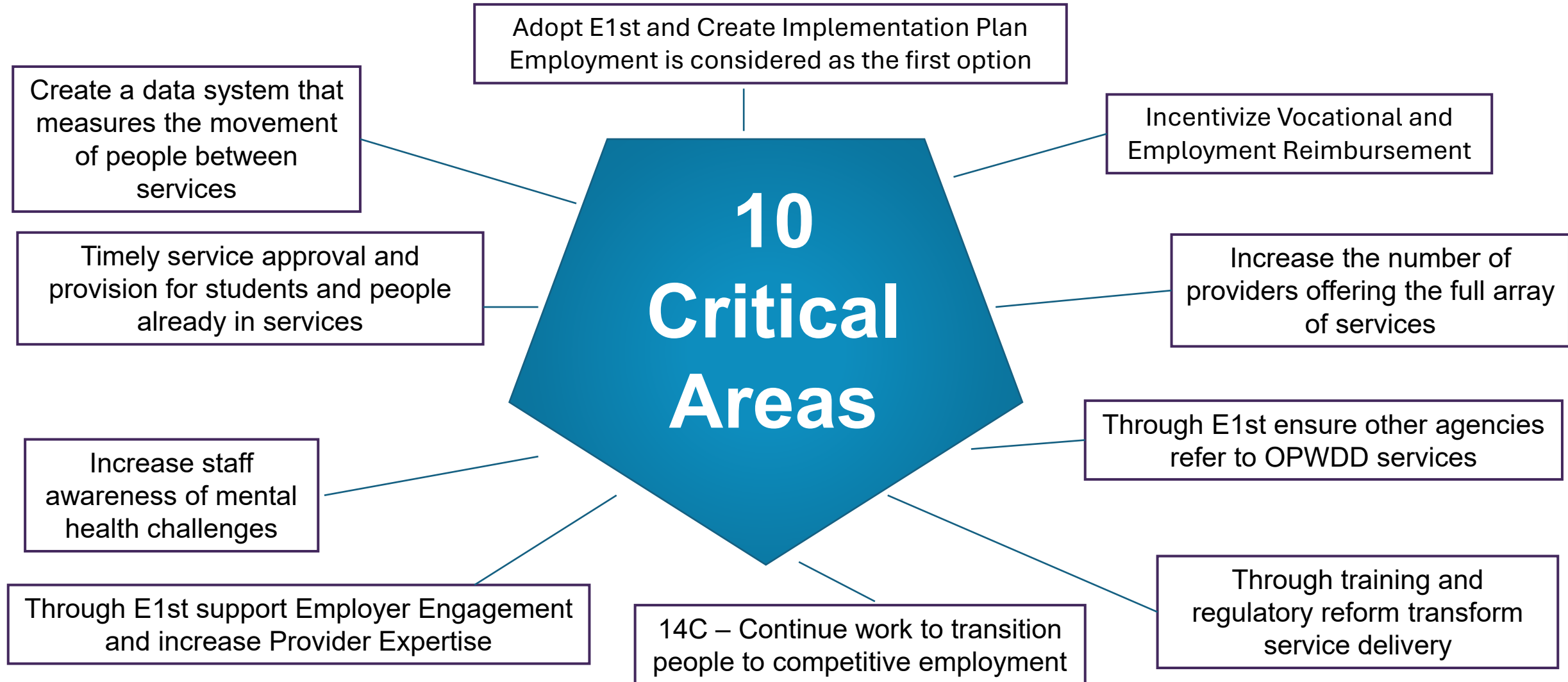


https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2026/01/by-the-numbers-1_13_2026_final_acc.pdf

Number of People Utilizing EMCA Aligned Services in 2024



OPWDD CRITICAL AREAS TO INCREASE COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT



EMCA Initiatives

Critical Area	Why?	Activity
Increase the Number of Providers Offering the Full Array of Services	To increase opportunities for movement, transition and combining services. Choice of provider.	Letter of Intent (LOI) Process
Increase Provider Expertise and Transform Service Delivery	Develop capacity within the service system to offer meaningful community engagement and career planning options. Align people interested in competitive integrated employment (CIE) with employment and vocational services.	Day Habilitation Training Pathway to Employment Career, Vocational and Transition Plan

Community Engagement and Career Planning for Day Habilitation Professionals

- OPWDD has developed a Day Habilitation training for staff and managers through OPWDD's training provider, Eleversity. The training is titled, "*Community Engagement and Career Planning*"
- For DSPs: this training explores how Day Habilitation services can foster community engagement and career planning & learn to structure activities that promote independence, self-advocacy, and skill development
- For Managers: this training helps to develop strategies and structure activities to build skills, increase community engagement, explore careers, and leverage a variety of OPWDD services to support person-centered outcomes
- A new training was added, Training Skills for Community Participation: From Classroom to Community with trainer, Kim Osmani.

Day Hab Training Overview

1. The training covers topics such as:
 - How to teach skills such as communication and safety skills
 - How to reinforce learning in community settings, etc.
 - How people can explore careers
 - Strategies to promote independence
 - Strategies for community engagement
2. The training also introduces attendees on specific Day Habilitation skills training modules, titled, “**Skills for Community Engagement**”. Each module contains several lessons. The trainers will also briefly cover how to adapt the lessons to people with varying levels of skills
3. A Day Habilitation **Community Skills Assessment** is also available. Trainers discuss how to implement the assessment, purpose of the assessment and follow up steps.

Day Habilitation Training Outcomes

Reporting Period

May 30, 2025 – December 23, 2025

45 trainings provided by Eleversity

975 Day Habilitation Staff Trained

578 DSPs | 397 Managers

79% Response Rate to Day Habilitation Training Poll

Day Habilitation Training Poll Takeaways

Q1: 24% of respondents indicate that the *Skills Training for Community Engagement Modules & Community Skills Assessment* was most helpful.

Q2: 43% of respondents indicate the *Skills Training for Community Engagement Modules & Community Skills Assessment* tools will be utilized in Day Habilitation.

Q3: 30% of respondents “very confident” integrating concepts learned.
20% of respondents “already integrating” concepts learned.

Pathway to Employment

Pathway to Employment is a time-limited, person-centered, comprehensive career and vocational planning and support service.

The goal of this service is to help people develop a vocational plan with an identified career path to obtain competitive integrated employment (CIE) in the future.

The outcome of Pathway to Employment is a career, vocational and transition plan which includes the next steps for achieving CIE.

To be eligible for Pathway to Employment services, people must:

- (i) require habilitative services including employment-related learning, volunteer and vocational experiences;
- (ii) express an interest in preparing for competitive integrated employment or self-employment and have this identified in their Life Plan;
- (iii) be enrolled in the Home and Community-based Services (HCBS) Waiver;
- (iv) and not have met or exceeded the lifetime total of Pathway to Employment service hours cap

Candidates for Pathway to Employment

Enrolled in day habilitation program

Transitioning from school

Expressed an interest in competitive employment

Talked about starting their own business

Has a goal related to employment on their Life Plan

Enrolled in prevocational services

Limited vocational experiences

Experienced challenges with job retention

Worked in group employment for many years, increased independence

Previously created career plan needs to be updated / re-evaluated

Many more...

Current Pathway to Employment Capacity

Region	# of Active Providers	# of Providers In Development (LOI Process Underway)
1 – Western NY and Finger Lakes	3	1
2 – Broome, CNY and Sunmount	2	2
3 – Capital, Taconic and Hudson Valley	8	0
4 – Metro, Brooklyn, Bernard Fineson and Staten Island	5	1
5 – Long Island	4	1

Already have a code?

If your agency is interested in providing Pathway to Employment services, contact your Regional Liaison

Steps to Employment

OPWDD Website

What is the Steps to Employment Initiative?

- OPWDD recently updated its website in response to a recommendation made by the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council (DDAC), self-advocates and other key stakeholders. The DDAC family members, self-advocates, provider representatives and consultants provided guidance on the design and content to make Steps to Employment a family and self-advocate friendly guide.
- The website redesign and corresponding marketing materials are written in plain language and aimed at people with disabilities seeking employment.
- Steps to Employment will be rolled out to various audiences such as self-advocates, families, Care Managers, providers, schools, etc.
- Steps to Employment is part of OPWDD's Employment First initiative. Employment is considered the first and preferred option for all people receiving supports.

Types of Services

Live, work and take part in your community with the help of OPWDD supports and services

[PERSONAL STORIES →](#)

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services>

Types of Services

MEETING YOUR NEEDS

Employment

If you have a goal to work in the community and need assistance in learning skills or help on the job, OPWDD offers several employment services that may meet your needs.

GET WORK SKILLS

Day Services

If a job is not the right path for you, but you want to be more independent and be an active member of your community, OPWDD offers day habilitation services that provide personal, social and vocational supports.

PLAN YOUR DAY

Housing

OPWDD can help provide supports for you to live in your family home or in another home in your community on your own or with others so you can be as independent as possible.

LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY



What Does Your Employment Path Look Like?

Steps to Employment

Employment is a relationship between a business or organization and an employee, where both parties benefit. Being employed can help improve your self-esteem, generate happiness, and bring a sense of independence, purpose and community.

In many ways, the employment path is the same for people with developmental disabilities as it is for anyone seeking a job—no one has the same exact experience.

The employment pages are designed to help you think about where you are in the path and help you get the right experiences and information to pursue the type of job you want.

There are some key steps to finding employment that apply to all job seekers. These "Steps to Employment" can help you determine where you are on your path and if specific supports or resources are right for you. In addition to OPWDD and other state resources, there are additional resources to help you along the steps.

Steps to Employment

On this page

Steps to Employment
Overview

Step 1: Goals

Step 2: Identify Your Skills

Step 3: Choosing the Right
Work for You

Step 4: Benefits &
Financial Planning to Help
You Work

Step 5: Getting a New Job
and Learning New Tasks

Discuss Your Steps

Steps to Employment Overview

If you want to work or build a career, there are some things to think about as you set out to find the right job for you. These steps to employment are intended to help you think about your job goals, what skills and experience you have, whether you could benefit from an internship or apprenticeship, and how to go about finding and learning a new job.

If you think you could benefit from any of the programs and services mentioned in the steps below, be sure to contact your Care Manager to discuss the next steps. **Your Care Manager will know which programs and services you can choose from in your area.**

Steps to Employment

Step 1: Goals

Before you get started, ask yourself what you are looking for in a job and what is most important to you.

Why do you want to work?

Are you able and willing to travel and how will you get there?

How will you get there?

Are you looking for specific days and times?

Do you want to work most days or just a few days?

How much money do you need or want to earn?

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with other people?

Do you like to work inside or outside?

Are there any places you've been or jobs you've seen others doing that you think you would like to do?

Are there tasks that you like or jobs you have tried that help you choose the type of work you want to do?

Do you like routine in your work or a variety of tasks?

Do you know the answers to these questions? If yes, the next step is identifying your skills.

If you need to explore these questions more, you may benefit from a service like [Pathway to Employment](#) or [Community Based Prevocational Services](#), which can help you discover your interests.

Steps to Employment

Step 2: Identify Your Skills

If you are confident with your job goals, it's important to think about how the skills you have or may need will help you reach your goals. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

What types of skills do you have that you could use in a job?

Have you had a volunteer or paid job before that you liked and were good at?

Are there tasks you do at home that you could do at a job? Examples: cleaning, answering phones, organizing things, cooking

Do you know your top 3 skills?

Have you tried working several hours at a time? How long can you work?

Have you tried different types of jobs to learn your skills and interests?

If you can answer the above questions, the next step is to begin the information-gathering process that includes looking at different work settings.

If you need help to identify your skills and interests, you may benefit from a service like [Pathway to Employment](#) or [Community Based Prevocational Services](#)

Steps to Employment

Step 3: Choosing the Right Work for You

Once you have determined what your goals and skills are, you should ask yourself if there is a specific job or task you would like to do.

Are there friends, neighbors, and family members you can talk to who work and who might be able to tell you about the jobs they do and where they work?

Do you know people in the community doing the types of jobs that interest you?

Are you comfortable talking to businesses about jobs?

Do you know how much you want to work and how much you want to earn?

Do you know where and how you will get to work?

Can you complete a job application?

Do you have the identification needed to apply for a job, such as a state-issued ID and a Social Security card?

If you've answered yes to these questions, your next step is benefits and financial planning to help learn how earning money will impact your benefits.

If you need help learning these steps, you might benefit from a service like [OPWDD's Employment Training Program](#), [ACCES-VR](#), or [Supported Employment](#).

Step 4: Benefits & Financial Planning to Help You Work

Once you have an idea of how many hours and the pay you may earn, you will want to learn how your income may affect your benefits and your living expenses. With some planning, you may be able to keep some benefits and work.

How will wages affect my benefits, including my SSI, SSDF, SNAP, Medicaid, public housing and childcare?

What is the most I can earn and keep my benefits?

How can I pay for things I need to help me work?

How can I manage my money to cover my expenses?

Services that may help you answer these questions are Pathway to Employment, Community Based Prevocational Services, [OPWDD's Employment Training Program](#) and [Supported Employment](#). Other resources include [New York Employment Service System \(NYESS\)](#) to connect to a benefits advisor or the [Social Security Administration](#) to read about incentives to work and keep your benefits.

See our [Benefits Development Resource Toolkit](#) for more information.

Step 5: Getting a New Job and Learning New Tasks

The final steps to getting a job include searching for a job and getting employed. They can include the following tasks:

- Searching for jobs

- Meeting with businesses to learn about their employment needs

- Filling out an Employment Application

- Reaching out to people you know for personal references (Most jobs like you to have three references)

- Interviewing for a job

- Learning a new job once hired

- Developing good relationships with bosses, coworkers and customers

If you need help with any of the above steps, you may benefit from OPWDD services like the [Employment Training Program](#) and [Supported Employment](#). Some people learn and get jobs through NYS ACCES-VR then transition to OPWDD services for on-the-job supports as needed, too.

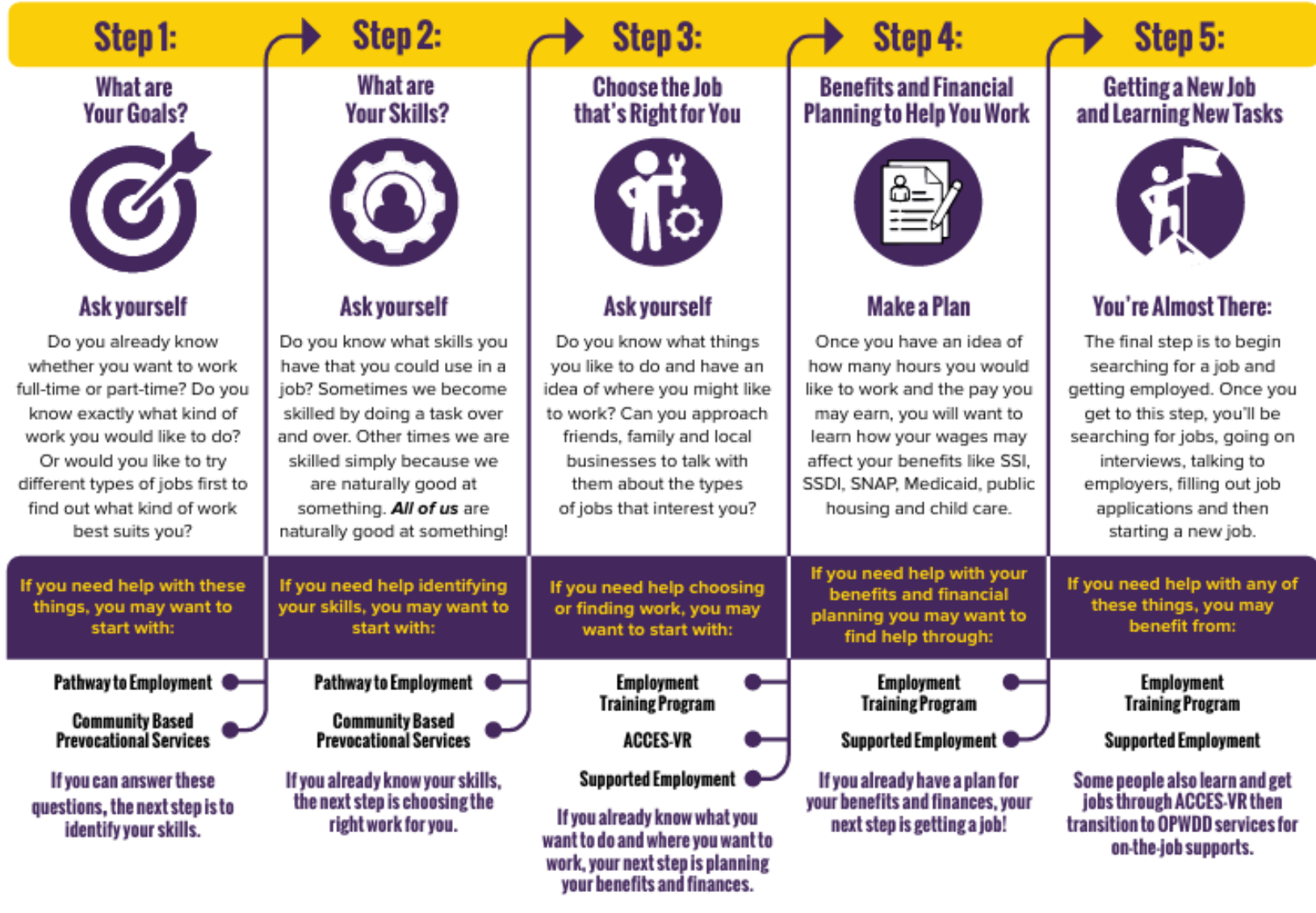
Additionally, if you wish to advance in your job or get a new job these services can also help you in your continued employment journey.

Download the Steps to Employment Guide

Steps to Employment

If you want to work, there are some easy steps you can take to find the right job for you.

These steps to employment are meant to help you figure out your job goals, your work skills and experiences, what kind of work is right for you, how wages may affect your finances and benefits and how to go about finding and learning a new job.



Congratulations on completing the five steps towards employment!

If you need help advancing in your job or getting a different job, OPWDD employment services will continue to be available to you.



Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

On this page

OPWDD Employment Training and Supports

Pathway to Employment

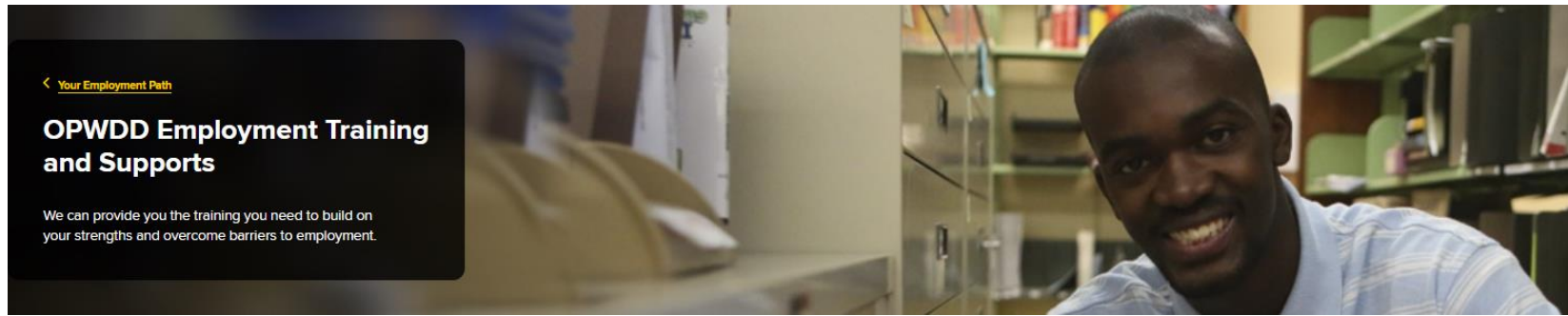
Community Based Prevocational Services

Employment Training Program

Supported Employment

Career Specific Vocational Training

Resources



OPWDD Employment Training and Supports

If you are interested in getting a job, programs provided by OPWDD can offer an introduction to career planning or an internship that could lead to a job in a community business, with on-the-job supports once you find a job.

The programs listed below are available to anyone who receives OPWDD services, has a Care Manager and is enrolled in the Home and Community Based Services Waiver. They may be used separately or together to help you reach your goals and take part in your community.

Contact your Care Manager to take part in any of these programs.

Your Employment Path

As an Employment First state, New York is committed to ensuring working-aged people with disabilities can get jobs and be paid fairly for their work.

[EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORIES](#) →

Employment Services

[LEARN MORE](#) →



PATHWAY TO
EMPLOYMENT



PREVOCATIONAL
SERVICES



EMPLOYMENT
TRAINING PROGRAM



SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/your-employment-path>

Resources (Flyers)

[Getting a Job and Participating in Your Community \(Multiple Languages\)](#)

[Employment Training Program Flyer \(Multiple Languages\)](#)

[Employment Training Program for Students Flyer \(Multiple Languages\)](#)

[Employment Training Program for Employers Flyer \(Multiple Languages\)](#)



Employment Success Story



With the help of OPWDD's employment programs including pre-vocational training, Supported Employment and, finally, the Employment Training Program, Cory (pictured) developed his skills and made his way to permanent employment.

Read Cory's Story

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/news/corys-journey-job-training-real-employment>

Read More Stories

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/employing-ability>

Other State Employment Programs and Services



Adult Career & Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR)

ACCES-VR is a program through the State Education Department that assists people...



New York Employment Services System (NYESS)

The New York Employment Services System (NYESS) provides people of all abilities...



New York State Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities...

The New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (SCION) is an...



New York State Department of Labor (DOL) Career Centers

Find a Career Center location near you, operated by the Department of Labor, to...

Other State Employment Programs and Services



[Council on Developmental Disabilities \(CDD\) Employment Resource...](#)

The New York State Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD) developed an...



[New York State Office of the Chief Disability Officer](#)

The Chief Disability Officer works to counter all forms of discrimination, like...



[New York State Industries for the Disabled \(NYSID\)](#)

NYSID is a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance employment and...

EmployAbility



Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities



Changing Hearts, Minds and Systems Through Story Telling

EmployAbility Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqHQnEh8k9E>

OPWDD News & Publications - <https://opwdd.ny.gov/news/news-publications>

Your Employment Path - <https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/your-employment-path>

Recent Employment Success Stories:

- **Cory's Journey from Job Training to Real Employment** dated 10/27/25
 - <https://opwdd.ny.gov/news/corys-journey-job-training-real-employment>
- **Aaron's Successful Journey Through Pathway to Employment** dated 10/14/25
 - <https://opwdd.ny.gov/news/aarons-successful-journey-through-pathway-employment-0>
- **Patrica's 2025 Personal Success Award from the Resource Center** dated 12/31/25
 - https://www.linkedin.com/posts/after-trying-a-few-paid-internships-through-share-7412251821739544576-faNv?utm_source=social_share_send&utm_medium=ios_app&rcm=ACoAAAKPGJoB0xo3H1K7Ed0iBL8P_9jIIOuefY&utm_campaign=share_via

Career Specific Vocational Training

CSV

CSVT Outcomes

April 1, 2023 – September 30, 2025

467 people have participated in CSVT

75+ CSVT classes have been offered

CSVT class completion rate is 75%

91% of CSVT participants recommended for employment

96 new job placements

CSVT Contract Amendment and Extension

OPWDD's contract amendment and extension was approved!

What does this mean?

1. All contracts are extended until March 31, 2027.
2. Grantees may offer additional class topics.
3. Funding is being reallocated based on contract utilization.
4. Up to 10% of the budget each year may be used for costs associated with implementing additional CSVT curricula.
5. Grantees may add or expand subcontracting opportunities.

Access CNY

Training topic(s): Janitorial, Food Services, Retail and Hospitality

Resources:

<https://www.accesscny.org/services/career-skills-training/>

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/create-career-plan-and-get-training-work>

<https://eiversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>

Contact:

David Devendorf

David.Devendorf@accesscny.org | (315) 218-0856

AHRC NYC

Training topic(s): Environmental Services and Food Services

Resources:

JanitorialTraining@GoodwillNY.org

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/create-career-plan-and-get-training-work>

<https://eiversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>

Contact:

Francklin Morose

Francklin.Morose@ahrcnyc.org | (914) 351-6329

Community Services for Every1, Inc.

Training topic(s): Hospitality, Janitorial and Retail

Resources:

www.csevery1.com

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/create-career-plan-and-get-training-work>

<https://eleversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>

Contact:

Arnecia Delk

adelk@csevery1.com | (716) 566-4701 ext. 201

FREE

Training topic(s): Custodial, Office Skills and Food Services

Resources:

CommunityServicesIntake@FamilyRes.org

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/create-career-plan-and-get-training-work>

<https://eiversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>

Contact:

John Gallagher

Jgallagher@FamilyRes.org | (516) 402-8688

Jawonio, Inc.

Training topic(s): Retail and Janitorial

Resources:

<https://jawonio.org/vocational-trainings/>

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/create-career-plan-and-get-training-work>

<https://eiversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>

Contact:

Courtney Burnham

Courtney.Burnham@jawonio.org | (845) 906-9692

Upstate Caring Partners, Inc. (UCP)

Training topic(s): Food Services, Janitorial, Hospitality and Retail

Resources:

<https://www.upstatecp.org/vocational/#base>

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/create-career-plan-and-get-training-work>

<https://eiversity.org/resources/opwdd-innovations-resources/>

Contact:

Dawn Gentile

Dawn.Gentile@upstatecp.org | (315) 725-2181

Employment Tracking System

Employment Tracking System Reminder

- Make sure you have identified backup staff who have access to ETS.
- Email supported.employment.data@opwdd.ny.gov if you have questions concerning User Access Request (UAR) forms and/or ETS.

Employment Tracking System Updates

1. Minimum Wage Increase
2. Primary Mode of Transportation
3. Funding Source Used to Obtain Job
4. Provider Agency Paid through Subcontract
5. Self-Employment
6. Employment Training Program



Next steps: Please check your ETS data and make corrections for the Q4 (January - March 2026) submission.

ETS Information Session

- Planned for Spring/Summer 2026.
- Email will be sent with details ahead of time.
- Directors, Managers and Staff Entering Data should attend.
- Session will include:
 - Latest ETS updates, improvements and changes.
 - Followed by training session for new staff.

Minimum Wage Increase

Please review and update wages, if applicable.

General Minimum Wage Rate Schedule	01/01/2026
NYC – Big Employers (of 11 or more)	\$17.00
NYC – Small Employers (10 or less)	\$17.00
Long Island & Westchester	\$17.00
Remainder of NY State Workers	\$16.00

Source: <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-states-minimum-wage/new-york-states-minimum-wage>

For additional information, check: <https://dol.ny.gov/minimum-wage>

Primary Mode of Transportation

+Primary Mode Of Transportation

Select Primary Mode Of Transportation

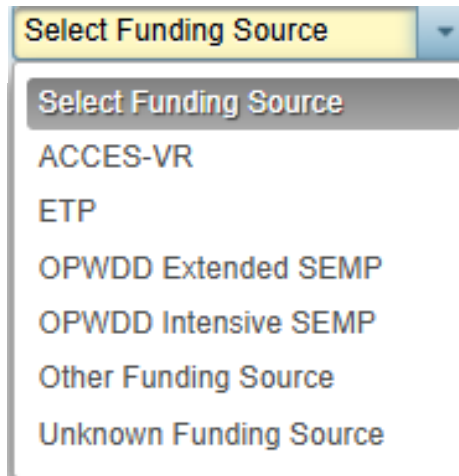
Choose the option the person uses most frequently to get to work.

- Agency van/car funded by another HCBS Waiver service
- Agency van funded by SEMP
- Drives own vehicle
- Family
- Friend/coworker
- Public Transportation-Ambulatory (van/car)
- Public Transportation (bus/subway)
- Residential staff
- Taxi/Uber/Lyft
- Walk/bike

Funding Source Used to Obtain Job

- Funding Source Used to Obtain Job should not change over time.

+Funding Source Used to Obtain Job



A screenshot of a web form showing a dropdown menu. The dropdown is currently open, displaying a list of funding source options. The text '+Funding Source Used to Obtain Job' is visible to the left of the dropdown. The dropdown menu has a yellow header with the text 'Select Funding Source' and a blue arrow pointing down. The list of options includes: 'Select Funding Source' (highlighted in grey), 'ACCES-VR', 'ETP', 'OPWDD Extended SEMP', 'OPWDD Intensive SEMP', 'Other Funding Source', and 'Unknown Funding Source'.

Select Funding Source
Select Funding Source
ACCES-VR
ETP
OPWDD Extended SEMP
OPWDD Intensive SEMP
Other Funding Source
Unknown Funding Source

Provider Agency Paid through Subcontract

*Name of Business Where Person Physically Works, If Employed

+Paycheck Issued by Which Entity?

Provider Agency Paid through Subcontract

How to enter Business Name in priority of options:

1. **List the primary business location where the person works**

They may change business locations periodically but primarily work at one location.

2. **Agency subsidiary name**

May be best if they work at various businesses but the subcontract is through a subsidiary.

3. **Provider name**

If they work at various businesses and the agency runs the integrated business.

Self-Employment

Examples of Self-Employed jobs from ETS: Uber, Uber Eats, Door Dash, Artist, Equipment Repair, Advocate.

If a person is Self-Employed, choose the Self-Employed option in all of the following categories:

+Job or Self-Employed

+Wage Category

+Paycheck Issued by Which Entity?

Employment Training Program

- *ETP Working at Internship on ETP Payroll* will be changed to Not Employed status.
- No job details required during Internship.
- When the person goes on to the business' payroll they will move to Employed status.
- Less work for providers.



The image shows a screenshot of a dropdown menu. The selected option is "ETP - Working at Internship on ETP Payroll" in red text. The menu is open, showing several other options in blue text: "Employed (works 6 months or more per year)", "Employed and Currently Working Seasonal or Temp.", "ETP - Not in an Internship Yet", "ETP - Working at Internship on ETP Payroll" (highlighted in grey), "Not Employed and Continues to Receive Services", "Not Serving Temporarily", and "Not Serving and In Process of Disenrolling".

Customized Employment

What is Customized Employment?

- Customized Employment (CE) is a flexible, individualized process designed to secure competitive integrated employment for people with significant disabilities by negotiating job duties to match their unique strengths with specific employer needs. It includes personalized job development, customized job descriptions, and ongoing, long-term supports to ensure success.
- Customized Employment begins with Discovery and involves the person and their support team to identify ideal working conditions, their experience and strengths, and other preferences or considerations. The Job Seeker, not the labor market, is the starting point.

What is Customized Employment? continued

- Discovery is useful in developing a deep understanding of the person, is person-centered, and helps the team achieve better employment outcomes.
- Employment professionals learn about businesses' mission, future goals, employee productivity, internal operations, successes and gaps. Businesses are matched with job seekers who can help fill these gaps, increase productivity and/or improve customer service. It's a win-win partnership.
- Examples of Customized Employment may include job carving, job creation, subcontracting, self employment and may be considered an ETP or other service activity.

Customized Employment Video

- Meet Simon Ho, an administrative assistant at a downtown San Francisco law firm.
- Simon, who has autism, handles the firm's mail, filing, and responds to requests from lawyers. These tasks play to many of his strengths.
- The video that follows highlights how Simon found his ideal job through WorkLink, a program that enables people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to work.
- Started by Maryland-based nonprofit TransCen, WorkLink specializes in one-on-one assistance, facilitating ideal matches between employers and job seekers with I/DD and supporting wraparound day services for disabled workers who need them.
- The video, created with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)'s National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) initiative, explains how WorkLink used customized employment strategies to match Simon's specific skills with the law firm's needs.
- His coworkers say Simon's contributions greatly improve office efficiency and productivity.



Why is Customized Employment Important?

**Enter in the chat reasons
why you think
Customized Employment
is important**

Why is Customized Employment Important?

- Customized Employment often leads to increased job satisfaction and improved employment outcomes.
- Employment First will empower more people to seek employment with varying levels of abilities and support needs.
- With agencies providing the full array of services there is an increase in the number of people moving from day and vocational services to employment.
- People with complex disabilities may need a process that differs from typical supported employment.
- Young adults transitioning from school may need part-time or flexible options to support vocational and career development.
- People have varied interests and may want flexible or creative employment options.

How can SEMP/ETP Fund Customized Employment?

Customized Employment Activity	SEMP Allowable Service (may not be limited to these examples)
Discovery (ETP)	(i) vocational assessment, person-centered employment planning and job-related experiential learning;
Meeting with the person and support team	(xiii) communication with the individual, family or other members of the individual's circle of support to discuss and address employment-related issues, such as management of benefits or challenges the individual may have in the work environment;
Developing a job development/job match plan.	(i) vocational assessment, person-centered employment planning and job related experiential learning; (iii) job development, analysis, customization, and carving, including negotiation and creating potential jobs with prospective employers on behalf of an individual or group of individuals;
Negotiating with businesses	(iii) job development, analysis, customization, and carving, including negotiation and creating potential jobs with prospective employers on behalf of an individual or group of individuals;

How can SEMP/ETP Fund Customized Employment?

Customized Employment Activity	SEMP Allowable Service (may not be limited to these examples)
Implementing self-employment	(vi) development and review of a business plan (for individuals who are pursuing self-employment or are self-employed); (Or Pathway to Employment for comprehensive self employment business planning)
Job coaching supports (comprehensive)	(v) job coaching, training, and planning within the work environment; (xi) other workplace support services including services that enable the individual to be successfully integrated into the job setting (e.g., development of natural supports in the work environment);
Benefits planning	(x) benefits support, advisement, and asset development;
Other allowable SEMP services may also apply	Billable Services Location: https://eiversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/5.-List-of-Allowable-SEMP-Services-1-2-24.pdf

How can the Employment Training Program Support Customized Employment?

- **ETP Discovery:**
 - Support people with more intensive support needs
 - Offer opportunity to get to know the person on a deeper level. If the person needs a more comprehensive Discovery, Pathway to Employment may be an alternative
- **Technical Assistance:**
 - Provide additional information about Customized Employment
 - Use ETP as a tool for innovation rather than standard placement process
 - Eleversity is creating a Customized Employment Training
- **Job Development/Negotiation:**
 - ETP Job Development Plan
 - Provide agencies with a framework to pursue creative, customized job options
 - Support Employment Support Professionals (ESPs) to strategize options and negotiate employment opportunities
- **Job Coaching:**
 - Support ESPs to strategize supports and services
 - The Discovery informs job coaching strategies

Customized Employment Eleversity Training

- Eleversity is developing a new Customized Employment Introductory Class by the end of 2026.
- The concepts are infused throughout the Eleversity training classes, but the need for a standalone class was identified so staff fully understand Customized Employment and how it differs from typical SEMP services.
- This topic was suggested at the November 2025 Eleversity Leadership Conference.

Seeking Additional Information?

Visit:

- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/cie/customized-employment>
- <https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/employment/discovery-and-customized-employment/>
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) offers a Customized Employment Training Series – Free!
 - <https://tacqe.com/customized-training-series/>

Leadership Conference

November 2025 Overview

2025 Leadership Conference Highlights



Attendance was a grand total of **235 attendees.**

180 Employment & Vocational Service Providers
55 others including Guest Speakers, Employment First Team, OPWDD Leadership, EMCA Unit & ETP Supervisors



Collected a total of **140 written evaluations.**

THANK YOU!



Overall Sentiment

High satisfaction with relevance and quality of sessions.
Strong appreciation for **peer learning, practical tools, and networking.**

2025 Leadership Conference Highlights

Suggested Topics

What's available now?

Billing and Documentation: Detailed ADM breakdowns, maximizing funding, and compliance protocols.

Consider: Program Specific Classes, *Vocational Services: Then & Now, Roles and Responsibilities of ESP*

Leadership Development: Staff recruitment/retention, agency culture, and resilience strategies.

Consider *Hiring and Onboarding Skills for Leaders, or Supervision Skills for Leaders – Supporting Teams*

Technology & Innovation: AI in job development, social media use, and assistive technology.

Consider *Strategies and Techniques for Vocational Success*. Keep an eye out for Eleversity special events!

2025 Leadership Conference Highlights

Suggested Topics

Employment Strategies: Self-employment, gig economy, customized employment, and microbusiness development.

Family Engagement: Guardianship boundaries, benefits advisement, and transition planning.

Policy & Advocacy: OPWDD reforms, transportation solutions, and systemic barrier removal.

What's available now?

Keep an eye out for Eleversity special events, panels and new classes!

Consider: *Public Benefits & Financial Literacy: What do you need to know?*, OPWDD Website: Steps to Employment

Consider: *Vocational Services: Then & Now or Disability Resources and Incentives*

Eleversity

Updates & Announcements

Eleversity

Reminders

- ✓ Check your Eleversity accounts to make sure emails are correct
 - Manager email addresses, Staff email addresses
 - New Hires who obtained innovations credits working at a different agency
 - Changes in agency name / mergers

- ✓ Resources Available on the Eleversity Website

ELEVERSTY ACCOUNT AND ZOOM SUPPORT RESOURCES

ELEVERSTY ACCOUNT RESOURCES

+

ZOOM SUPPORT RESOURCES

+

LEARNER RESOURCES

+

Contacts

Julia Kelly, M.S. Ed.

Director of Employment and Meaningful Community Activities

Julia.A.Kelly@opwdd.ny.gov

Kristine Snyder, LMSW

Statewide Employment and Vocational Services Coordinator

Kristine.Snyder@opwdd.ny.gov

Technical Assistance

EMCA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MAILBOXES

employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov

day.community.services@opwdd.ny.gov

EMCA/ETP DIRECTORY

<https://eiversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/ETP-EMCA-AT-A-GLANCE-EXTERNAL-10.25.pdf>

Eleversity

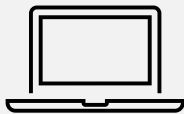
NEXT-LEVEL WORKFORCE EDUCATION



info@Eleversity.org



(585) 340-2051



www.Eleversity.org