

The Arc Wisconsin supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) over “The Arc” of their lifetime. Since 1960, The Arc Wisconsin has served individuals and their families through our 14 locally affiliated chapters across the state. The Arc Wisconsin works to develop programs and advocate for public policy — giving people with I/DD the opportunity to learn, live, and work inclusively in their communities.



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## SUPPORT COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

People with disabilities in Wisconsin want to work — but getting the right supports, finding transportation, or connecting with employers who don't have stereotypes about workers with disabilities is difficult. Employment rates remain low. A person without a disability is three times more likely to be working than someone with a disability.<sup>4</sup> The Institute for Community Inclusion shows Wisconsin's integrated employment rate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (at 20%) is lower than other states that have made targeted employment investments: Washington, 87%; New Hampshire, 45%; Maryland, 45%; Vermont, 38%. In the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (DVR) most recent interview of people working in sheltered workshops (6,509 workers), more than 40% of people with disabilities say they want to or would consider community employment.<sup>5</sup> There are some signs of improvement of employment for youth. Since passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which requires additional supports, the percentage of youth with intellectual disabilities engaged in work or post school education in Wisconsin has increased to 71.6% in 2017 (up from 66% in 2014).

Having one paid job while in high school doubles a youth's chances for employment as an adult. Due to lack of funding and training, many Wisconsin districts do not operate formal youth transition programs or programs that secure community jobs for youth.

### OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:



Support the Governor's proposal to increase payments to schools under the Transition Improvement Grant (from \$1000 to \$1500/student). Schools receive the payment only after they prove that youth with disabilities from their district are either enrolled in postsecondary education or training programs or have retained a paid job one year after graduation.



Support the Governor's proposal to increase funding for Transition Readiness Grants that have allowed schools to purchase vans or other transportation to get youth to job experiences, supported job coach or staff training, or other improvements to their transition programs. In 2018 DPI received 130 applications for this grant program totaling requests over \$9 million (there is currently only \$1.5 million in grant funding available). \$7 million over the biennium.



Fund a targeted Transformation Fund for providers offering facility-based pre-vocational (sheltered workshop) and day services. Support providers to make changes to their business model that can help get more people with disabilities employed in community jobs and help providers comply with new federal home and community-based regulations. Develop a Competitive grant fund: \$6.75 million for up to 30 providers; one-time award of between \$25,000 and \$150,000.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2019.

<sup>5</sup> UW-Whitewater Wisconsin WIOA Career Interview Project, 2017. [file:///C:/Users/lpugh/OneDrive%20-%20The%20Arc%20of%20the%20United%20States%20Inc/Downloads/Annual%20Interview%20Report%20FY2017%20\(8\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/lpugh/OneDrive%20-%20The%20Arc%20of%20the%20United%20States%20Inc/Downloads/Annual%20Interview%20Report%20FY2017%20(8).pdf)