

The Employment First Bill Basics

Representatives Edming and Anderson and Senator Tiffany introduced The Employment First Bill that is supported by employment service providers, disability advocacy organizations and people with disabilities statewide, including:

- The Arc Wisconsin
- Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Special Olympics Wisconsin
- Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin
- Bethesda Lutheran Communities
- Easterseals of Southeast Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition
- Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations
- Headwaters, Inc.
- Black River Industries
- Rehabilitation for Wisconsin in Action

A Summary of the Bill:

- The bill requires state agencies (DPI, DHS, DVR) to set Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) as their priority policy.
- The bill specifically PROTECTS a person's choice of facility-based employment services or sheltered work. These services are still allowable if provided in accordance with current law. This element was added to the bill to provide assurance and secure support from service providers.
- The bill requires state agencies to collaborate and develop a joint plan to improve rates of CIE. They will identify barriers and discuss policy changes or data sharing agreements that can help. Agencies are required to work with stakeholders.
- State agencies are required to set benchmarks and goals (jointly and by individual agency) for improvement in CIE rates. This will include measuring number of people working, wages, hours working, etc.
- State agency plans and reports on progress must be published on a public website.
- The bill requires that DHS assess how to conduct a study that would tell us how people's services are changing because of this new policy - asking questions about whether services are reduced or enhanced. This includes an assessment of any change or reduction in use of facility-based employment (sheltered workshop) services.

