



# **Benefits of Competitive Integrated Employment Over Sheltered Workshops**

Sheltered workshops are part of an old employment model that has not changed much in the last 50 years! Sheltered workshops often separate workers with disabilities from employees without disabilities and treat them differently. For example, sheltered work often pays workers with disabilities less than minimum wage, with some Hoosier workers earning just pennies per hour. Nor do most sheltered workers get employment benefits like their supervisors do, including health insurance, worker's compensation, a retirement plan, and paid time off.

Competitive integrated employment (CIE) is a newer employment model. In 2017, Indiana's General Assembly passed a law recognizing that people with disabilities are capable of working in the community and should be expected to do so. Several years later, our State Rehabilitation Council adopted an Employment First Plan. CIE is now the preferred type of employment for people

---

## **Equity Through Advocacy**

The Protection and Advocacy System for the State of Indiana



with disabilities. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that sheltered workers be told about CIE opportunities at least once every year.

## **What Is Competitive Integrated Employment?**

WIOA defines CIE as full-time or part-time work, including owning one's own business, that provides the same wages and benefits to employees with and without disabilities who do the same kind of work. These wages must be set at or above minimum wage, which is generally \$7.25 per hour in Indiana. A CIE work site must be a place where an employee with a disability can be around co-workers and customers without disabilities. Finally, CIE ensures that an employee with a disability has opportunities to advance in their career in the same manner as employees without disabilities.

## **Competitive Integrated Employment's Benefits**

CIE has many benefits for employees with disabilities, including:

1. Working in your community alongside people with and without disabilities.
  2. The opportunity to develop new relationships or friends.
  3. Earning more money, which creates more independence and builds confidence.
-



4. Getting to work in areas you are interested in.
5. Developing new skills and climbing the career ladder.

CIE also benefits the employer, because employees with disabilities tend to be hard workers, creative, and very dependable.

## **Advantages Unique to Competitive Integrated Employment**

You will be paid \$7.25 per hour or more for your work. You can expect the same wage as workers without disabilities who do similar work and have a similar level of experience.

You are considered an employee rather than a worker, making you eligible for any benefits offered to similarly-situated employees. Many jobs offer employee benefits like paid time off, health insurance, retirement plans, professional development opportunities, education and training materials, and more.

If you do not like your job, you can look for a new one. You can work at different places until you find a good fit.

In addition to Waiver services, you also can get help from Vocational Rehabilitation Services to prepare for a job, get hired, or obtain ongoing support to maintain your job.

---



## Questions?

If you have questions about this fact sheet, feel free to contact Indiana Disability Rights using one of the methods below.

Phone: (317) 722-5555

Toll Free Phone: (800) 622-4845

Website: <https://www.in.gov/idr/for-help-fill-this-out/>

Email: [info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org](mailto:info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org)

---