



**Policy #:** DHHS-CS-01-10

**Issue Date:** 11/15/10

**Revision Date:** 10/15/14

## I. SUBJECT

Employment Policy for Individuals Served by the Department of Health and Human Services

## II. POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Health and Human Services shall support career development and meaningful employment for all working aged individuals receiving services through the Department. Employment is part of the natural course of adult life and provides opportunities for economic gain, personal growth and contributing to one's community. The development of a skilled and motivated workforce is essential to meeting the needs of Maine businesses.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**State Agency:** To include but not be limited to Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor and Education.

**Private Agency:** Shall include any for profit or not for profit, non-governmental entity.

**First and preferred service or support option:** The first employment services option that is offered by a state agency, prior to the offer of other supports or services, including day services.

**Customized Employment:** Employment acquired as a result of implementation of a flexible blend of strategies, services and supports designed to increase employment options for job seekers with complex needs through a voluntary negotiation of the employment relationship with the employer.

**Integrated:** "Integrated Community Setting (business) with respect to an employment outcome means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals, other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons."

[TechnicalAssistanceCircular-IntegratedSetting](#)

**Fair and Equitable Compensation:** Individuals employed at a business are compensated in an even and fair method by the employer as outlined in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

[FairLaborStandardsAct](#)

**Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate:** Support is provided that meets the National Standards of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. [NationalStandardsCLAS](#)

#### **IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Implementation of the DHHS Employment Policy will be driven by continuing quality improvement, quality assurance and service accountability consistent with the following tenets:

1. Employment Services or supports that will support the acquisition by the person of integrated community-based employment or customized employment will be the first and preferred option offered to individuals needing assistance.
2. Career planning will result from a strength based approach identifying the individuals' interests, capabilities and supports needed for successful employment.
3. Customized employment strategies will be used for those individuals with the most complex needs.
4. Employment support will emphasize the development and use of natural connections such as co-workers, supervisors, friends and family.
5. Employment shall be in integrated businesses, which may include self-employment and offer compensation that is fair and equitable.
6. Employment services shall be culturally and linguistically appropriate.
7. Efforts to increase employment will be coordinated in partnership with other State and Private agencies working toward a strong, diversified Maine workforce.
8. Providers of Services will be expected to meet or exceed all measurable employment outcomes developed by individual offices of DHHS.

#### **V. PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

This Departmental Policy provides the framework for employment practice guidelines within each relevant, participating Division/Office of DHHS. Those practice guidelines will comply with this Policy and be implemented by those Divisions/Offices.

#### **VI. POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

This Policy was updated in October 2014 to comply with The Employment First Maine Act Sec. A-1. 26 MRSA c. 39, *An Act To Provide Integrated Community-based Employment and Customized Employment for Persons with Disabilities*. The DHHS Employment Policy of People Served directs, aligns and strengthens services to address the employment needs of people served by DHHS who experience barriers to employment. The updated Policy further directs Offices/Divisions of DHHS to review and expand internal practice guidelines for implementation.

The Policy will ensure that supporting an individual's employment goals will continue to be an integral part of the work that the Department does in supporting Maine people to lead productive lives in their communities.

The 2010 version was developed by the DHHS Employment Policy Workgroup (Offices of Adult Mental Health Services, Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disability Services, Child and Family Services, Elder Services, Integrated Access and Support, MaineCare Services and Substance Abuse) in collaboration with the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. The 2014 Policy was updated by a workgroup under the direction of the Commissioner of DHHS.

## **VII. BACKGROUND**

The 2010 policy replaced the DHHS/BDS Vocational Policy #01-CS-110 issued October 18, 2000. That first departmental *Vocational Policy* assisted the then Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services with moving toward a system that supports integrated, community-based employment. The Policy was instrumental in promoting the conversion of sheltered workshops in Maine, and ending all state funding of segregated employment in July, 2008. The Policy was also instrumental in better coordinating services within the Department to increase the numbers of individuals working for real wages at real jobs in Maine.

## **VIII. DISTRIBUTION**

All Department employees via e-mail and posting on the DHHS website and intranet.

October 15, 2014

Date



Mary C. Mayhew  
Commissioner