

# We want to work, too.

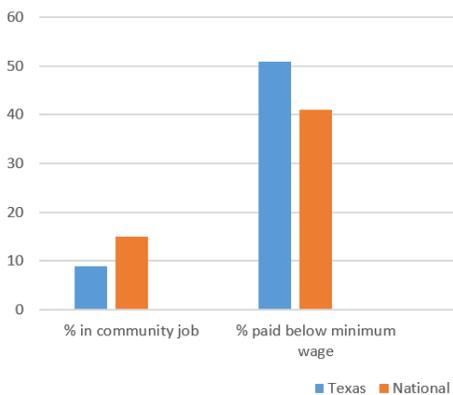
Build better opportunities for Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to join the workforce.

**OUR POSITION:** With the right supports, Texans with IDD have the desire and skills to achieve and maintain meaningful employment. Texas' Employment First Policy states that earning a living wage through competitive, integrated employment is the first and preferred outcome for adults with disabilities. This policy helps individuals with IDD to achieve their employment goals, and **Texas must continue towards Employment First compliance.** [3]



## Texas ranks 50th

in services for people with IDD. [5] Texans with IDD are less likely to have a paid job in the community and are more likely to be paid below minimum wage. [6]



**14%** of Texans with IDD work in segregated sheltered workshops. An overwhelming **90%** of those Texans report being paid below minimum wage. In fact, the majority report being paid **less than \$1.00** an hour. [6]

## 1, 2, and 3

Only **1%** of Texans who have a Medicaid waiver receive Supported Employment services. Only **2%** received Employment Assistance. Only **3%** even have employment as a goal in their service plan. [7]

**137,921**



Texans are waiting for a Medicaid waiver to even be able to receive these and other necessary services. Medicaid waivers exist to serve individuals with disabilities in the community instead of institutions. [12]



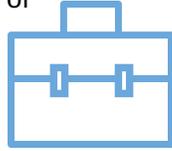
## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In alignment with the new CMS rules, redistribute money away from cost-inefficient, segregated services and towards cost-efficient community-based services, including Medicaid waivers and supported employment.
- Closely monitor proper implementation of the Texas Employment First policy among all state agencies and reinstate the Employment First Task Force. Ensure that all service recipients are offered employment *first*.
- Investigate effects of Managed Care in employment and service delivery outcomes for people with IDD.
- Increase awareness among employers about the benefits of hiring persons with IDD and how to accommodate their needs.
- Phase out sub-minimum wages for people with IDD in sheltered workshops through 14(c) certificates.
- Ensure all state agencies and contracted service providers receive adequate training to implement services and to prioritize competitive, integrated employment.
- Ensure funds (local, county, and state) are set aside specifically for supported employment follow-along services so that people with IDD can receive needed, ongoing supports to maintain employment.
- Prioritize funding for persons with IDD by moving away from a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) benchmark payment system and towards an hourly rate for VR providers.

# More Helpful Facts

## WHAT IS COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT?

The federal Workforce Innovation Act (WIOA) of 2014 defined competitive, integrated employment as the optimal outcome for people with disabilities. This means that Americans with disabilities should work full or part-time for at least minimum wage in a community-based setting alongside coworkers without disabilities. [1]

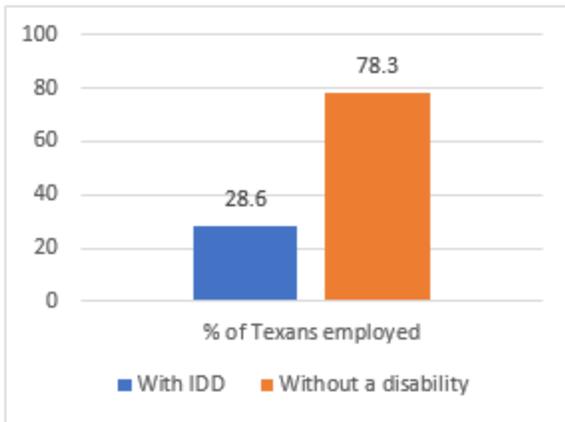


## WHAT ARE INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (IDD)?

Intellectual disabilities are usually permanent conditions that originate before age 18 and significantly impact adaptive behaviors, like learning, reasoning, or social skills. Developmental disabilities are also usually permanent but originate before age 22 and significantly impact cognitive ability, physical functioning, or both. The term "developmental disability" encompasses intellectual disabilities but also includes other conditions. A person with a developmental disability may or may not have an intellectual disability. [2]

## DESPITE POLICIES THAT ENCOURAGE COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT FOR TEXANS WITH IDD, FEW ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

Texans with IDD are employed at a lower rate, work less often, and earn less than their able-bodied peers.



In 2016, only 16.1% of Texans with IDD worked the full year, earning a median salary of \$34,300, compared to 60.9% of Texans without disabilities earning \$43,300. [4]

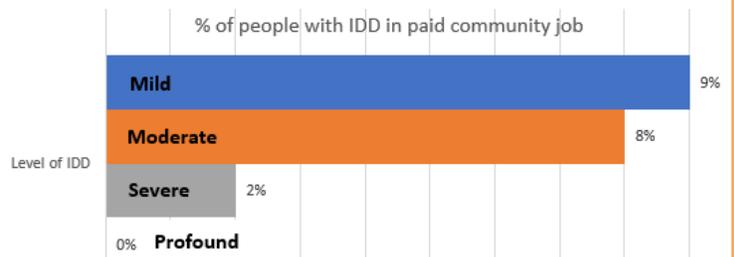


Texas ranks **50th** in quality and access to community-based services for people with IDD [5].

Compared to national averages, far fewer Texans with IDD achieve competitive, integrated employment (see below). [6]

Person with IDD	Texas	National
In paid community job	9%	17%
Paid below minimum wage	51%	41%

Furthermore, the likelihood that a Texan with IDD is in a paid, community job depends on the level of their disability, as shown below. This trend reflects the widely-held misconception that people with higher support needs are unable to work. [6]



**Supported Employment** and **Employment Assistance** services help people with IDD obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment and are typically funded through Medicaid waivers and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). However,

- out of all Texans with IDD who received waiver services in FY 2018, only **1%** received Supported Employment and **2%** received Employment Assistance who were eligible [7];
- of those with IDD who have a waiver, only **3%** have employment as a goal in their plan [7];
- and only **1/3** of Texans with IDD whose case was closed by VR had supported employment as a goal in 2014 [8].

**Simply put, there are not enough service providers in Texas who help people with IDD find and keep a job. Competitive, integrated employment does not seem to be the prioritized outcome for Texans with IDD, which directly contradicts federal and state policies.**

## WHENEVER PEOPLE WITH IDD AREN'T IN COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT, THEY'RE OFTEN IN SEGREGATED SETTINGS.

According to a survey of Texans with IDD who receive state funded services and their family members, **14%** reported that they were in paid, facility-based settings. These include sheltered workshops and are places where most people there have a disability. Of those in these settings, an alarming 90% reported being **paid below minimum wage**. In fact, 63% reported being paid less than \$1.00 [6].

A Disability Rights Texas investigation of sheltered workshops revealed that nearly **10,000** people in sheltered workshops are being paid below minimum wage. Over half of the sheltered workshop organizations investigated pay their employees with IDD **50 cents or less** an hour [9].

**41%** of survey respondents reported that they or their loved one with IDD were in unpaid, facility-based settings. These include day habilitation programs or other activity centers [6]. Further, day habilitation services comprise **56%** of all Medicaid waiver services provided in Texas [7]. While these are valuable resources for many families, they are segregated in that most people there have a disability.

Finally, over **3,000** Texans with disabilities live in one of 13 State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs). These individuals do not participate or work in the community. Texas has the largest number of people living in SSLCs, and that number is significantly larger than all other states, with the second highest just under 2,000 (NJ) and the lowest at 26 (ID) [5].

These three segregated settings do not lead to competitive, integrated employment, which is the preferred outcome for people with disabilities. These settings also render people with IDD more vulnerable to abuse or exploitation. The new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rule effective in 2022 will enforce a more strict interpretation of what qualifies as a reimbursable residential or non-residential "home and community-based service" for Medicaid waivers [10].

## SERVICES TO HELP PEOPLE WITH IDD WORK IN THE COMMUNITY ARE VERY COST-EFFICIENT, BUT LITTLE MONEY IS ALLOCATED TO THOSE SERVICES IN TEXAS.

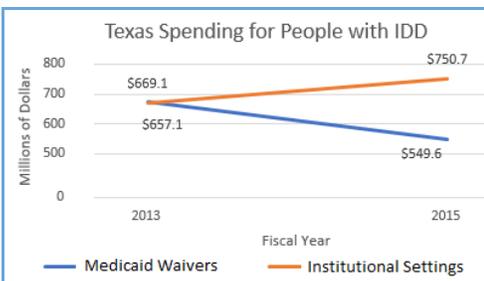
Supporting a person to live and work in the community through the Home and Community Based Medicaid waiver costs a fraction of what it takes to support a person in an institutional setting, as shown below. [11]

Setting	Average total monthly cost per person
State Supported Living Centers	\$24,334.58
Home and Community Based Services waiver	\$4,267.23

Medicaid waiver services can help people find and keep a job and decrease the risk of unnecessary institutionalization. In fact, people with very high support needs are more often supported in the community than in institutions and for a fraction of the cost.

Despite these benefits, there are **137,921** Texans waiting to receive a waiver, and some have to wait for up to **13 years** [12].

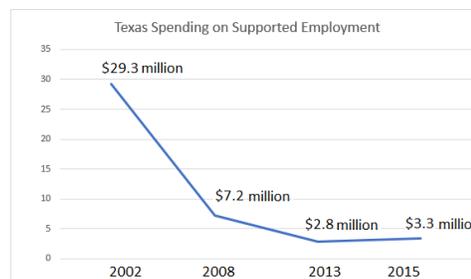
Unfortunately, no funding for waiver slots was provided in the 2018-2019 Health and Human Services budget to help reduce the waiting lists. The program would have to grow by 368% to accommodate the demand for waiver services [5]. On the other hand, there are no waitlists to live in an SSLC.



When using Medicaid waiver funding, it is more cost-efficient to provide supported employment services than day habilitation services, as shown below. [7]

Service	Cost per person
Day habilitation	\$718.82
Supported employment	\$492.46

Unfortunately, supported employment spending has decreased dramatically since the early 2000's.



Texas ranks **50th** both in percentage of funding expended on waiver services and in amount of money for supported employment spent per person [5].

Furthermore, there are no local, county, or state dollars to fund critical follow-along services for people with IDD who need ongoing, on-the-job support to help learn new tasks or navigate changes with new managers, for instance.

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12. Texas Health and Human Services. (April 2018). *Interest list reduction*. Retrieved from <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>
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Common Acronyms:

- IDD: intellectual and developmental disabilities
- HCS: Health and Community-Based Services waiver
- CLASS: Community Living Assistance and Support Services waiver
- TxHml: Texas Home Living waiver
- MDCP: Medically Dependent Children's Program waiver
- DBMD: Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities waiver
- HHSC: Health and Human Services Commission
- VR: Vocational Rehabilitation
- TWC: Texas Workforce Commission
- TEA: Texas Education Agency
- DARS: Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (now under TWC)

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