

North Carolina Alliance on Full Participation

Employment First Position Paper

Purpose

This position paper represents a statewide initiative sponsored by the North Carolina Alliance on Full Participation to promote the values and principles of Employment First.

How can you help support this initiative?

Awareness Campaign: Distribute the paper to DHHS Agencies, NC School Systems, Councils for Independent Living, Legislators, Advocacy Groups, Committees, Families/Self-Advocates, Local Managing Entities, Community Rehabilitation Programs/Employment Providers, DD/MH/SA Service Providers, Business Networks/Employers, and any other group that has a stake in the employment services continuum.

Endorsement: If your organization supports the values and principles of Employment First and wishes to endorse this document, email our coalition at: employmentfirstNC@gmail.com Provide a contact name, title, organization, phone number and email address. Your organization's name will be added to our endorsement list at the end of this paper. As we move forward, we will also be seeking assistance for the implementation process.

Vision

The State of North Carolina shall implement Employment First policies and practices. Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all citizens with disabilities regardless of level of disability, in a job of their choosing with supports and accommodations provided as necessary to achieve and maintain employment.

Guiding Principles

- Employment First applies to all individuals with intellectual and developmental, physical, mental health and substance abuse disabilities.
- All working age adults and youth with disabilities can work in fully integrated jobs within the general workforce, working side-by-side with coworkers without disabilities, earning competitive wages and benefits.
- Individuals with complex and significant disabilities can work in jobs with appropriate placement and support.
- Young adults with disabilities shall effectively transition from school into the workforce or into continuing education that will enhance future employment opportunities.
- Individuals shall have opportunities for self-employment options that are comparable to the general workforce.
- Employees with and without disabilities are equally valued.
- Individuals shall be supported and have the same opportunity for career advancement as workers without disabilities.
- Jobs shall match an individual's work skills, abilities, and career choices to the greatest extent possible

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Goals

- The State shall adopt an Employment First policy for all publicly delivered services; the State shall expect, encourage, provide and support integrated employment in the workforce for people with disabilities.
- Clear public policies and practices shall ensure that employment of citizens with disabilities within the general workforce (including self-employment) is the priority for public funding and service delivery.
- Funding streams shall align with Employment First principles.
- Individuals shall be encouraged and assisted to attain community-based employment holistically looking at an individual's choices and providing appropriate accommodations and supports.
- Increased collaboration with school systems and other agencies shall occur at an early age for youth to improve transition to employment outcomes.
- Individuals shall be educated and provided resources on opportunities for self-employment.
- Employers shall be encouraged, through collaborative ventures, education and awareness, to accept people with disabilities within their work environments (e.g., NC Business Leadership Network, Chambers of Commerce)
- Public agencies that provide employment services for individuals with disabilities shall adopt an individualized placement and support philosophy.
- Individuals receiving publicly funded services shall consider employment or employment-enhancing education as the first option by integrating employment within service plans.

Employment First in North Carolina is endorsed by the following:

Organizations

- 1) Advocations
- 2) Another Level Counseling
- 3) Autism Society of North Carolina
- 4) Beaufort County Developmental Center
- 5) Benchmarks
- 6) Beyond Academics™, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- 7) Bridges of Hope, Inc.
- 8) Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, UNC
- 9) Cleveland County Schools
- 10) Community Alternatives of N.C.
- 11) Community Partnerships, Inc.
- 12) Courageous Hope, Inc.
- 13) CPDMI (Coalition for Persons Disabled by Mental Illness)
- 14) DD Consortium
- 15) Disability Rights North Carolina
- 16) Easter Seals UCP North Carolina & Virginia
- 17) First In Families of North Carolina
- 18) Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont
- 19) HSB Enterprise Corporation dba HSB Health Care
- 20) InnerVision, Inc.
- 21) InReach
- 22) LIFESPAN, Inc.
- 23) Linden Lodge Foundation
- 24) Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers (MARC, Inc.)
- 25) Mecklenburg CFAC
- 26) Mecklenburg Disability Action Collaborative - Employment First Initiative

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27) Mental Health Council for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing

- 28) Metrolina Provider Network
- 29) NAMI NC
- 30) NC CANSO (NC Consumer Advocacy,
Networking, and Support Organization)
- 31) NC Council on Developmental Disabilities
- 32) NCAPS (NC Association of Peer
Specialists)
- 33) NCAPSE (NC Association for Persons in
Supported Employment)
- 34) NCARF (NC Association of
Rehabilitation Facilities)
- 35) NC Mental Health Consumers
Organization
- 36) North Carolina Families United, Statewide
Family Network, NFFCMH, Inc.
- 37) North Carolina Psychological Association
- 38) Primary Care Solutions
- 39) Rainbow 66 Storehouse, Inc.
- 40) Servant's Heart
- 41) Special Needs Advisory Council, Chapel
Hill-Carrboro City Schools
- 42) State Rehabilitation Council
- 43) The Arc of Greensboro
- 44) The Arc of Orange County
- 45) The Arc of Mecklenburg
- 46) Transylvania Vocational Services
- 47) VirPark, Inc.
- 48) Voices Together
- 49) Watauga Opportunities, Inc.
- 50) Western Carolina University, University
Participant Program

Individuals

- 1) Dana Hanson-Baldauf, Doctoral
Candidate, UNC
- 2) Kate Brinko
- 3) Leslie Jaffe
- 4) Jill Edens, Pastor, United Church of
Chapel Hill
- 5) Sarah Dameron, AU IV teacher, Wake
County Public Schools
- 6) Kathy Nanry
- 7) Kimberly Rider
- 8) Mei Dey
- 9) Faith Nager, Parent
- 10) Jessyka Glatz, mother of Luke Glatz
(Special Olympian), Duke University
Clinical Trials Coordinator
- 11) Terri L. Shelton, PhD, Vice Chancellor for
Research and Economic Development,
UNC at Greensboro
- 12) Melody Schwantes, PhD, Director,
Scholars with Diverse Abilities Program,
Appalachian State University
- 13) Cathy Feole, Vice Chair, Special Needs
Advisory Council
- 14) Erin Walker, Volunteer Assistant Soccer
Coach, Special Olympics
- 15) Monica J. Foster, CC CVBC CPSS RM:
The Life Beyond Limits Coach®, Reiki
Master, Speaker & Consultant;
BUTTERFLYWHEEL® Motivation,
Advocacy & Consulting
- 16) Margaret Pendzich, Parent and coach for
Special Olympics of Orange County
- 17) Ron Reeve, Mecklenburg Disability
Action Collaborative
- 18) Marianne P. Kernan, Chairman, Linden
Lodge Foundation