

Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities Testimony on HB 2550

The Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities has as part of its mission to advise state partners and agencies on important research and policy issues that impact people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Kansas. A trend that we have noted is that Kansas is well below national averages in key statistics regarding employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Data collected on state IDD agencies' service trends (Zalewska & Winsor, 2018) shows that:

- Kansas has 11% of people with IDD working in integrated employment (national average is almost 20%). Compared to 38% in sheltered employment
- Kansas has 92% of people with ID spending their day in sheltered activities (work and nonwork). The national average is 81%.

This is concerning because people with IDD who work in integrated employment have better outcomes on choice, self-determination, community integration, and health. Kansas does not have rate structures in place that promote a move to competitive, integrated employment for people with I/DD.

The low rates available to pay staff make it difficult for people who self-direct services and families who are seeking caregivers to find appropriate staff. Staff that provide direct care to Kansans with I/DD help the person prepare for work and other responsibilities. For many, competent and reliable staff can be the difference between maintaining and losing a job. The rate should increase to reflect the critical role these workers play in people's lives.

Likewise, we are concerned about system capacity especially with regard to serving people with challenging behaviors, dual diagnosis of mental illness and developmental disabilities and serving people with complex medical needs. The total amount of dollars being requested is needed for the above mentioned reasons, but presents an opportunity to transform the system by moving toward competitive integrated employment as an expectation, and by structuring a system that increases individual choice and capacity to serve the needs of all Kansans with developmental disabilities. We believe that engaging stakeholders, especially self-advocates and families in a planning process would be an important first step in infusing new dollars in the system to target specific outcomes.



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References

Zalewska, A., and Winsor, J.E. (2018). State Intellectual and Developmental Disability Agencies' Service Trends. DataNote Series, Data Note 60. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion