



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



POLICY PRIORITIES: 89TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Arc of Texas advocates for public policy that prioritizes community-inclusion for Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This overview covers one of our four policy pillars.

COMPETATIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT

We believe Texans with IDD deserve fair, competitive, and integrated job opportunities that build financial security without risking essential public benefits. This requires removing employment barriers, supporting job training and career growth, and ensuring workplace protections and fair pay so Texans with IDD can thrive as valued members of the workforce.

See three related policy priorities below.

1. Promote Competitive Integrated Employment

- Full- or part-time work in community settings where people with disabilities earn at least minimum wage, work with coworkers without disabilities, and have equal opportunities for career advancement leads to essential community integration, recognition of one's value, earning wages and job benefits, and a chance to contribute meaningfully to society.
- Employment First initiatives reinforce Texans with disabilities are valued workers capable of the same employment standards, responsibilities, and expectations as other adults.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- *Expand Employment First initiatives by increasing employers that hire people with disabilities.*
- *Provide additional funding for vocational rehabilitation, supported employment services, and workforce development programs tailored to people with disabilities.*

2. Enhance Employment Support Services and Peer Support

- Improved employment outcomes for people with IDD requires comprehensive support systems, like job training, career counseling, and on-the-job and peer supports. Expanding these resources would help Texans with IDD secure, retain, and succeed in meaningful employment while fostering economic competitiveness in Texas.
- Peer support helps people with disabilities navigate workplace challenges and provides mentorship and emotional support by someone with similar lived experience. Increasing the availability and accessibility of these services would improve job retention and satisfaction.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

- *Pass House Bill 4702 88(R) to allow peer support services for Texans with IDD to be billable under Medicaid. This would also require HHSC to establish training and certification for peer support specialists and form a stakeholder workgroup to provide input on the process.*

3. Eliminate Barriers to Employment

- Texans with IDD face significant barriers to the workforce, like lacking accommodations, exclusionary hiring practices, and limited career advancement opportunities. Increasing employers' understanding of barriers and how to address them is essential.
- Many people with disabilities are unaware of existing employment services and benefits. Increasing awareness, particularly for transition-age students, would help Texans with IDD access tools to succeed in the workforce.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- *Provide training to employers on the benefits of hiring people with IDD, including strategies for creating reasonable accommodations and fostering inclusive work environments.*
- *Improve awareness and access to employment services, incentives, and benefits-planning for Texans receiving Medicaid services and transition-age youth in special education.*



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