



## Welcome to the INCLUSION WORKS Community Update

We are excited to share new updates about Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) in the Inclusion Works Community Update!

Stay tuned to hear about all the great things happening in Inclusion Works! New updates every other month. [Join](#) our mailing list!

## INCLUSION WORKS NEWS

### DOL Announces Proposed Rule Impacting Workers with I/DD who are paid less than Federal Minimum Wage

On December 3, 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced a proposed rule that would no longer allow employers to pay workers with disabilities less than minimum wage via special certificates. The rule proposes to gradually eliminate certificates employers can apply for under [Section 14\(c\) of Fair Labor Standards Act](#) that allow them to pay certain workers with disabilities subminimum wages. The rule would institute a three-year period for employers holding existing Section 14(c) certificates to gradually cease paying subminimum wages to workers with disabilities.

The Department of Labor encourages the public to submit comments on the proposal once it is published in the Federal Register. **All comments must be received by 11:59 p.m. EST on Jan. 17, 2025, for consideration in this rulemaking.** Follow this link to [learn more about the proposed rule and instructions for submitting comments](#).

Follow this link to [read the full press release on the DOL website](#).



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

## KEY UPDATES

### Provider Innovation Program for the New Year

The **Inclusion Works Provider Innovation Program** will be open soon for Providers to apply and start in early 2025.

**Program Goal:** Support Providers expand competitive integrated employment for their members

**Benefits of Program (all at no cost):**

- Organizational assessment
- Strategic Change Plan
- Personalized Training Content
- Ongoing Technical Assistance
- Financial Incentives - \$ for participating in program

**Next Steps:** NCDHHS will open application window and encourage Providers to apply. In the first year, **2** Provider Organizations will be selected. More details coming soon!



### Recap the Inclusion Works Two-Part Benefits Counseling Lunch and Learns

In November and December, Inclusion Works hosted two online Lunch and Learn sessions that dived into benefits counseling and work incentives.

Missed them? No worries! Follow the links below to access the webinar recording and a copy of the presentation.

**1st Session – Understanding Benefits and Employment**

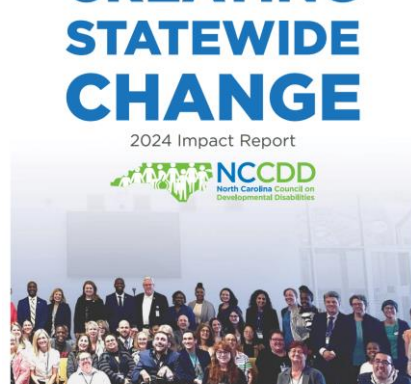
- Relationship between employment and benefits for individuals with I/DD
- Access the webinar [Recording Link](#) and [Presentation Link](#)

**2nd Session – Navigating Benefits and Employment: Real World Experiences**

- Benefit Programs Eligibility and Info: Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, WIC/SNAP
- Access the webinar [Recording Link](#) and [Presentation Link](#)

### North Carolina Council for Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) 2024 Impact Report

The NCCDD [has released](#) its 2024 Impact Report, highlighting progress in improving services for individuals with I/DD across the state. Over the past year, NCCDD focused on educating the public and legislators about challenges faced by the I/DD community, particularly concerning the Innovations Waiver waitlist and shortages in the Direct Support Professional workforce. Council-funded initiatives advanced goals in financial asset development, promoting competitive integrated employment, expanding inclusive post-secondary education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and enhancing benefits counseling services.



The **2024 Impact Report** is available as a PDF download in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

### Inclusion Works Wants to Hear From You!

Do you have a success story? We would love to hear from people who are working in good paying jobs in their communities, those who helped a person get and keep a job, and employers who have successfully hired employees with I/DD. Please reach out to [Inclusion Works](#) to share your stories!



### Inclusion Works Spring Lunch and Learn Webinars

Register for the upcoming Inclusion Works Lunch & Learn Webinars kicking off in the new year!

**February Lunch and Learn– Employment Models**

**Wednesday, February 19th from 12:00 – 1:00pm**

- There are different types of employment options available to people with I/DD. Join us to discuss how internships, self-employment, and other models can be part of the journey towards Competitive Integrated Employment.



**March Lunch and Learn– National Developmental Disability Awareness Month**

**Wednesday, March 19th from 12:00 – 1:00pm**

- Inclusion and awareness of people with I/DD is important. Join Inclusion Works to celebrate National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, observed throughout March.

Register for [Lunch and Learns](#)

### Save the Date! NC APSE 2025 Spring Conference

**Conference Dates:** March 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>

**Pre-Conference:** March 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

**Location:** Courtyard by Marriott, Carolina Beach

Mark your calendars to join NCDHHS Inclusion Works at the 2025 Spring North Carolina Association of People Support Employment First (NC APSE) Conference. Agenda and registration information coming soon!



NC APSE has secured a block of rooms at the Courtyard by Marriott at the rate of \$149 per night. You can make your reservations by clicking [HERE](#) or calling the hotel at (888) 616-4655 and asking for the NC APSE block. **Reservations must be made by February 7, 2025.**



## RESOURCES

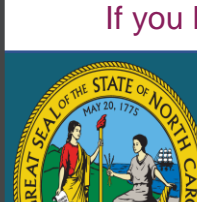
### Helpful Links and Resources for Inclusion Works

- [Inclusion Works Initiative](#)
- [Paths to CIE Guide](#)
- [Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities \(EIPD\)](#)
- [EIPD Information Request Form](#)
- [Division of Health Benefits \(DHB/NC Medicaid\)](#)
- [NC LME/MCO Directory](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ's\) on CIE](#)

### Meet the Inclusion Works Team

- Kelly Crosbie, Director of DMHDDSUS
- Renee Rader, Deputy Director and COO of DMHDDSUS
- Ginger Yarbrough, Director I/DD, TBI & Olmstead, DMHDDSUS
- Claire Colligan – I/DD Employment Lead -IDD/TBI/OLMSTEAD
- Tina Barrett – I/DD Team Lead, IDD, TBI, and Olmstead, DMHDDSUS
- Sandy Terrell, Chief Clinical Officer, NC Medicaid, DHB
- Pam Scott, Assistant General Counsel, OGC
- Chris Egan, Asst. Secretary for Employment & Inclusion
- Kathie Smith, Director of EIPD
- Kenneth Bausell, Sr. Dir. of Employment & Inclusion
- LaCosta Parker, I/DD Program Manager, DHB
- Tara Heasley – I/DD Policy Consultant, DHB
- Anita McMahan – Chief of Employment Services & Prog. Dev., EIPD
- Adrienne Kittle - Program Specialist for I/DD, EIPD
- Jeanna Cullinan – Comms & Special Proj., Employment & Inclusion
- Dina Reynolds – Communications Consultant, DMH/DD/SUS

If you have questions, email or call: [dmhiddcontact@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dmhiddcontact@dhhs.nc.gov) • 984-236-5045



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/inclusion-works>

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