

Community Employment: Let's Talk Work!
WIOA, Section 511: Parent /Guardian Informational Letter
April 2017

This letter pertains to recently passed federal legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113–128, passed by Congress in July 2014 and directly affects your son, daughter, family member, or individual for whom you hold guardianship.

The WIOA requires individuals who wish to continue, or start to earn subminimum wage to receive ‘*Career Counseling, Information and Referral Services*’ and, depending on their age, certain other services from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). IVRS is the state agency that assists individuals with disabilities in achieving competitive, integrated employment and is partnering with the Iowa Coalition for Integration & Employment (ICIE) to offer “Community Employment: Let's Talk Work!” (Career Counseling, Information and Referral webinar sessions). Individuals must be offered an opportunity at least once a year to learn about services and supports available to them in securing competitive, integrated employment in the community.

Your son/daughter or ward has the opportunity to participate in a group-setting career counseling webinar. The subminimum wage employer (Community Rehabilitation program) will be registering their agency to host group sessions. IVRS welcomes you to attend the career counseling session if you are available, or you can access an archived recording of the webinar if you are unable to attend any of the live scheduled sessions. Additional information on how to register for one of the webinars is included at the end of this letter.

The purpose of the presentation is to help participants make an informed choice about whether to pursue community employment at minimum wage or above. The presentation will lay the ground work for the beginning of conversations and gathering of more information, and doesn't commit anyone to a final decision. Participants will need to have follow-up discussions after the career counseling session regarding interest, questions, and possible next steps. Here are some questions to consider for follow-up conversations....

- After hearing about working in the community, do you think you would be interested in learning more about different jobs?
- Do you like the idea of making more money in a job?
- Do you need more information to help you decide what you want to do?
- If you aren't interested in looking at jobs in the community, why is that? (Are there ways to address the individual's concerns? For example, they don't want to leave friends at the workshop if they get a job in the community, but what if they could find other times to spend time with their friends?)

If the individual is interested in exploring opportunities to work in the community or to make more money in their job, they should be referred to IVRS. If they need more information to help them with deciding or have concerns, they can:

- Still be referred to IVRS to help them explore options
- Discuss their questions and concerns with their case manager/care coordinator
- Ask their employer to begin career exploration services
- Contact one of the resources on the information/referral sheet for support

As a parent or guardian, you may have questions and concerns as well and there are resources that can help you consider the different options available.

Please be aware that at the federal and state level, there is a shift in moving publicly funded services from segregated to community-based environments and this includes work. For individuals working in subminimum wage under prevocational services, funding will be time limited if individuals are not using prevocational services to move into community-based employment. However, someone can use prevocational services as a wraparound service in conjunction with community based employment. Additionally, if someone refuses to participate in the required WIOA 'Career Counseling, Information & Referral Services', they will not be able to continue to work in subminimum wage jobs.

Employers who pay subminimum wage will need to maintain documentation that employees who work in subminimum wage are receiving the required Career Counseling, Information and Referral services under WIOA. They will need to release the name of participants in the career counseling session to ICIE to obtain a certificate of attendance. It is for this reason that you may be asked to sign a release of information to share a participant's name for confirmation of attendance.

If you have questions about the career counseling session or different options available, please email Jessica Kreho with the Iowa Coalition for Integration & Employment at pruittjess@gmail.com or call (515) 250-9803. For IVRS referral information or questions please contact 1-800-532-1486 (Toll Free) or 515-281-4211 V/TTY.

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Session Dates: April 14, 21, 24 May 1, 8, 12

Choose one webinar from either time option on your selected date: 11:00 am or 1:00 pm. Registration is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/3258937453210199811>

Thank you for your time and consideration!

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