

Customized and Supported Employment: Addressing the Needs of Jobseekers with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

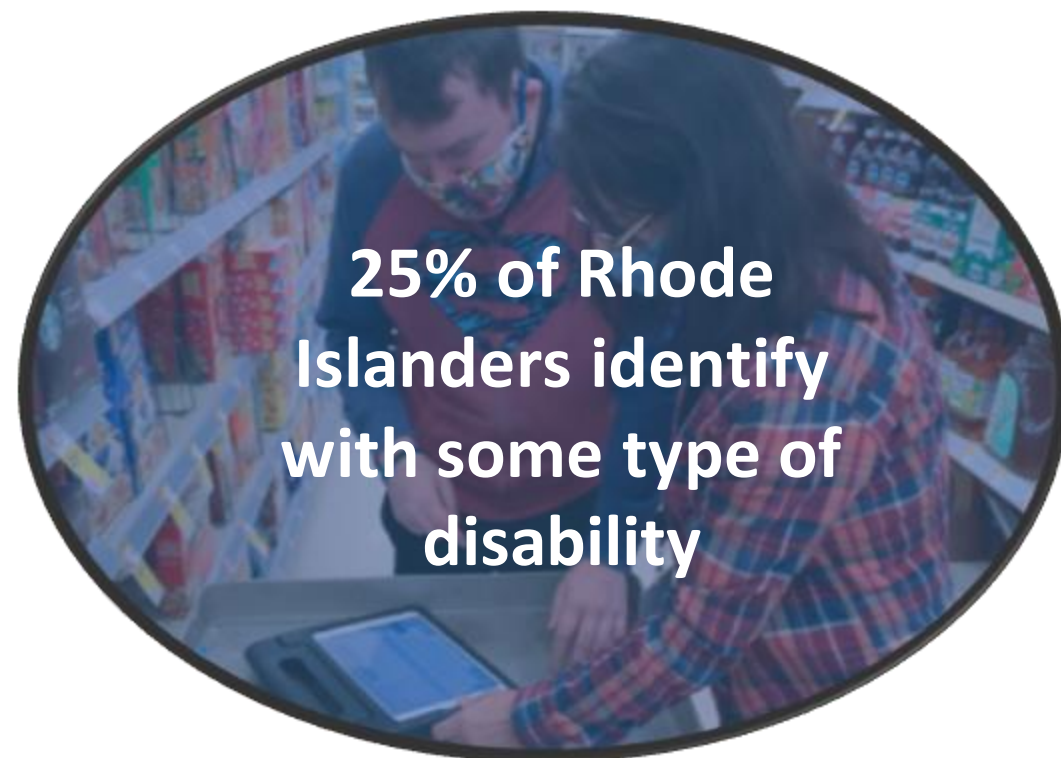
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**25% of Rhode
Islanders identify
with some type of
disability**

The purpose of this session:

- Brief overview of the history of I/DD legislation
- The goals of I/DD work today
- Customized and Supported Employment
- workABILITY; A SkillsRI Disabilities Hiring Initiative

A Little Bit of History...

- **FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act), 1938**
- **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), 1975**
- **ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), 1990**
- **Olmstead Act, 1999**



Landmark settlement sets the precedent for the rest of the country in disabilities employment:

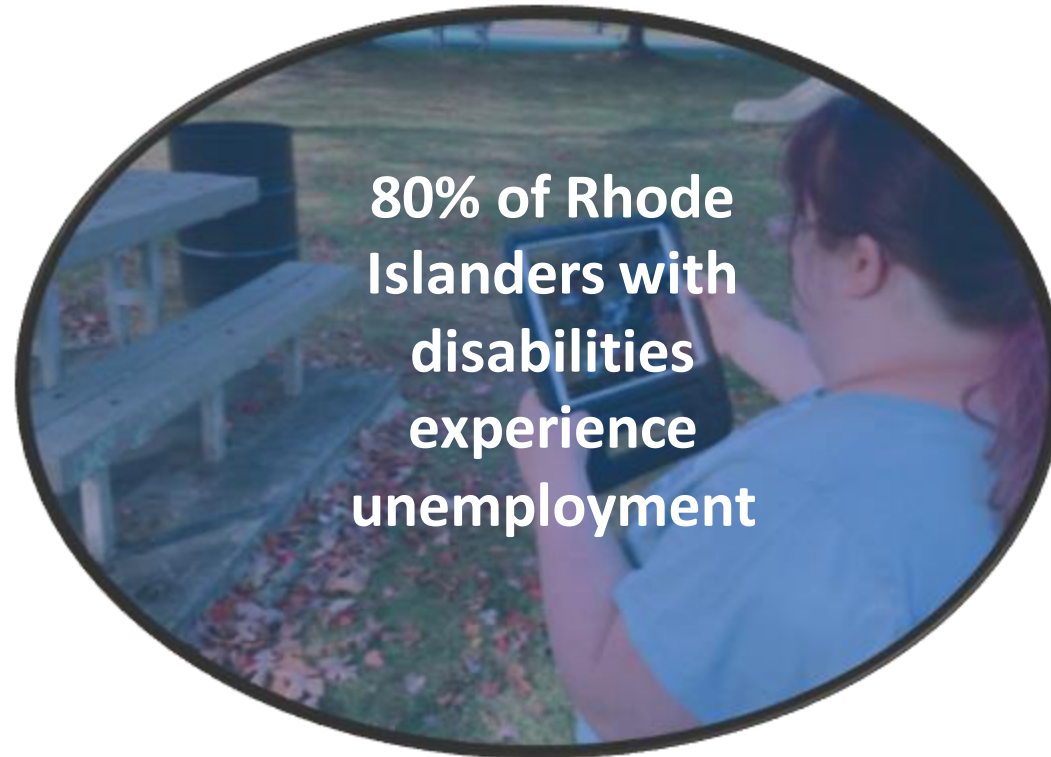
The Consent Decree – The State of Rhode Island entered into a Settlement Agreement with the United States Department of Justice in 2013.

- The agreement addresses findings that the State violated the ADA by failing to serve youth and adults with developmental disabilities in the *most integrated settings possible*, thereby placing them at serious risk of segregation.
- Rhode Island commits to transforming its service system over a 10-year period, by achieving certain goals each year with a primary focus on providing integrated employment services for Rhode Islanders living with developmental disabilities.
- The State of RI is in its 8th year of the Consent Decree and the commitment to resolve issues of segregation. There is still more work to be done!

What's been going on over the last eight years?

- **“Employment First”** as state policy and philosophy
- Elevated level of services with incentives provided to improve employment outcomes specific to I/DD jobseekers
- Schools and adult provider agencies convert to practices that lead to more integrated, community-based employment opportunities
- Employment support services shift from facility-based (“day programs”) to being offered in/from home to community to on the job with the goal of seamless integration. Sheltered workshops close their doors and 14 C certificates are no longer issued
- **“Discovery”**, **“Customized Employment”** and **“Supported Employment”** became best practices, and opportunities for a wider array of training and work experiences became possible

Everyone can work, given the right place, time and match!



What is Customized Employment?

Creating an employment relationship between candidate and employer that meets the needs of both

Place

- A real, competitive business or organization that is “open” to (or promotes) opportunities for hiring individuals who require specialized support and training to perform their duties and to maintain successful employment

Time

- When the jobseeker’s work-readiness, identified interests, and contributions to the workplace are presented to an employer in a manner that meets the immediate and carved-out hiring needs of the business

Match

- Rethinking the demand-driven model; a way for a jobseeker to become employed and stay employed by matching skills, interests and abilities to tasks, opportunities and roles that don’t yet exist in an otherwise typical job description or org chart

What Customized Employment ISN'T

- Only for those who have proven they can work, despite their disability
- Non-competitive, “easy” work that no one else wants to do
- Created by a job developer without the jobseeker or others on the team
- Compensated any less than the standard wage for similar job in industry
- Focused on what a person can't do and their disability
- Apart or different from other people and activities in the work environment
- Rigid or unchanging; traditional hiring that seeks to fit the “best” candidate for an existing role

What is Supported Employment?

A service provision that assists individuals with significant disabilities by creating and maintaining opportunities for real, integrated work as a primary option

Place

- A real, competitive, business or work environment
- An employer that understands and allows for specialized support to train and maintain individuals/candidates with differing needs
- A “natural support” environment exists

Time

- The candidate’s introduction and pathway to employment begins with Discovery (no demand, no fail) to determine interest, ability and supports
- Employer-Employee relationship only starts if the timing is right for all

Match

- A real job with benefits that focuses on what an individual wants to do, can do or learn to do successfully with support
- A fulfilling role where an individual can achieve the highest level of independence possible

What Supported Employment ISN'T

- Charity, a favor or a good deed
- Simply a way for an employer to reach disability hiring requirements
- An (ongoing) subsidy to incentivize the employer
- A job coach who is going to do the job for the employee (to meet production or another demand), AKA a “two for one”
- A job coach who is going to stick around forever
- A segregated environment in any way

“Building a bridge between those ready, willing and able to work and employers who may not believe...”

-Richard Pimental

- 1) Facilitate or collect the information needed to determine a jobseeker’s interests, passions and foundational skills and to create candidate pipeline
- 2) Outreach, engage, and educate employers who may be open to Customized and Supported Employment
- 3) Setup tours/visits/Discovery with employers to source potential opportunities through matching general skills and interests of candidates to the business
- 4) Once business and hiring practices/needs are better understood, create or “carve” a role, based on the match between candidate’s skills and interests and the needs of the business
- 5) Facilitate accommodations and support to employer through the process of candidate application, interview, onboarding and for retention

Meet Ryan...

Why should employers participate?

- Participation comes with pre-screened and uniquely qualified applicants for both customized roles and existing roles that may require some accommodation
- A job coach is provided (at least initially) to assist in training employee, ensure work quality, and to provide any necessary training for supervisors or co-workers regarding the integration of the new hire
- Financial incentives are available for employing people with disabilities
- Demonstrated return on upfront investment, especially in areas of attendance and reduced turn-over/retention
- The business receives recognition for its commitment to hiring people with disabilities

Ways for employers and partners to get involved:

- Host a Business or Facility Tour
- Provide Informational Interviews
- Host Candidates for Job Shadowing
- Host a Discovery
- Provide Paid Internships
- Work with SkillsRI to Develop a Customized Train-to-Hire Program
- Develop a Customized Opportunity for I/DD jobseekers and commit to hire
- Engage SkillsRI to Consult on I/DD Employment

Thank you for joining us today!



Please contact a member of the SkillsRI team to become a workABILITY partner or follow the link to our webpage to fill out an employer questionnaire at <https://skillsforri.com/workability>, and we will be in touch with you!

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