



# **How to Leave a Sheltered Workshop for Competitive Integrated Employment**

If you are a person with a disability in a sheltered workshop, you have the right to pursue a job in the community, making minimum wage or more and interacting with people with and without disabilities. This fact sheet has information about your rights to leave the workshop and work in the community.

## **Your Right to Work in the Community**

You have the right to try preparing for, getting, advancing in, or regaining competitive integrated employment (CIE), even if you currently work in a sheltered workshop. CIE is work for which you earn at least minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour), and your coworkers may not have disabilities. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that sheltered workers receive information about CIE every year.

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### **Equity Through Advocacy**

The Protection and Advocacy System for the State of Indiana



## **What is Informed Choice?**

With employment, informed choice is the process for choosing the kind of work you would like to do. You might consider your knowledge and experiences, and you might get input from trusted family members and friends. The final decision is yours, although you can always change your mind. Practicing informed choice regularly, for all types of decisions, can help build and improve your decision-making skills.

## **Benefits of Competitive Integrated Employment**

CIE has many benefits, including:

1. Working in the community, where you can interact with coworkers, customers, and other visitors
2. Having co-workers with and without disabilities, allowing you to develop new friends and relationships
3. Earning at least \$7.25 per hour
4. Choosing from a variety of careers, rather than just the tasks available at your sheltered workshop
5. Developing more independence and confidence in your skills

## **I'm Interested in Competitive Integrated Employment. Where Do I Start?**

1. If you are interested in CIE and receive waiver services, you can speak to your case manager.
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Whether you receive waiver services or not, you can follow these steps to seek help from Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR):

- a. Start by calling, emailing, or visiting your local VR office and letting them know that you would like to apply for services.
  - b. VR will schedule an intake interview, during which you will meet with a VR counselor and complete an application.
  - c. VR may ask you to sign releases to obtain medical, educational, vocational, and other records, to help determine your eligibility for the program.
2. When you meet with VR staff, explain that your goal is to get CIE. If you are not sure exactly what kind of job you want to do, VR can help you learn about options through:
- a. Testing to learn about your skills and prior experience, interests, and workplace needs;
  - b. Informational interviews, or talking with people who have interesting jobs to learn whether their work is something you would be interested in doing regularly;
  - c. Job shadowing, or watching an employee do their typical duties, over several hours or an entire workday;
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- d. Job tours, or traveling to different workplaces and learning about the employment opportunities each offers;
- e. Discovery, or trying a particular job for a couple of hours up to a few days.

### **I Already Tried Competitive Integrated Employment before I Came to a Sheltered Workshop.**

No problem! You can try CIE again, even if it did not go well in the past. Even if you previously chose to work in a sheltered workshop, you can change your mind and make new choices.

### **Questions?**

If you have questions about this fact sheet feel free to contact Indiana Disability Rights!

Phone: (317) 722-5555

Toll Free Phone: (800) 622-4845

Website: <https://www.in.gov/idr/for-help-fill-this-out/>

Email: [Info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org](mailto:Info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org)

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