



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Policy Number: SE4.260	Policy Section: Supports and Services	Effective: April 1, 2010
Title: Employment Policy		Executive Sponsor: Vice President, Policy and Program Development

1. PURPOSE

This policy brings focus to the importance and value of employment in the lives of individuals supported by CLBC. The policy orients staff to the emphasis on employment and provides general guidance for integrating it into their work.

2. DEFINITIONS

Employment: Paid work that takes place in an integrated community setting, alongside people without disabilities; and where wages, benefits and working conditions comply with industry standards and relevant laws (e.g. Employment Standards). Employment does not include work experience or volunteering. It may include self-employment. It is sometimes referred to as *“real work for real pay”*.

Employment Supports: Tools and strategies to support an individual to get and keep a job. Employment supports can include discovery, job development, job carving, job customization and negotiation, on site job training and job retention strategies, accommodations, training for co-workers, and information and ongoing support for the employer. Ideally, employment supports are faded over time to natural supports. Employers and employees are supported for as long as needed for success.

Natural Supports: Assistance provided on an informal, voluntary basis; also known as informal supports. In the workplace, co-workers may support an individual in similar ways as they support each other. Outside the workplace, friends, family and/or support network members may provide support that helps the individual get and keep a job.

3. POLICY

Employment is key to the CLBC vision of inclusion and full citizenship for all. Being employed is an important way in which most citizens contribute to society. The benefits of employment for individuals include:

- Improved financial security and independence;
- Expanded friendships, social relationships, and visibility within community;
- Increased happiness, self-confidence, and sense of belonging; and
- Expanded skills and abilities.

CLBC promotes and supports the expansion of employment opportunities for individuals it supports, based on the following principles:

- Individuals want to work.
- Everyone has important qualities and talents to contribute.
- Employment contributes to economic and social inclusion, and to safety within community.
- Everyone can be successfully employed in the right job if they have the right support.
- There is a need to balance disability-related support needs with employment supports.

CLBC operationalizes this approach by:

- Focussing on employment as a priority for individuals supported by CLBC.
- Integrating employment into person-centred planning and services.
- Providing staff with information, tools and training about best practice in employment.
- Sharing knowledge and raising awareness about the value of employment and best practices with individuals, families, service providers, community partners, and other ministries.
- Supporting individuals, families, staff, service providers and community partners to explore individuals' employment potential and develop employment opportunities.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 All Staff:

- a) Become familiar with CLBC employment services, supports and resources, and with best practices in employment supports.
- b) Become familiar with employment-related services, supports and resources available in the community and from other Ministries and community partners.
- c) Collaborate and share information across staff roles, and with individuals, families, service providers and community partners in order to expand and promote employment opportunities.

4.2 Facilitators:

- a) Provide employment-related information to individuals and families, including information that showcases people with disabilities working in B.C.
- b) Explore and include a component on employment when developing individual's plans.
- c) Provide support and referrals to help individuals and families access community employment supports.
- d) Raise employment as a priority when participating in transition planning for youth.

4.3 Analysts:

- a) Support service providers to align policies and practices with CLBC employment policy.
- b) Support service providers to raise awareness and build relationships with community partners, including business and all levels of government, about the benefits of hiring individuals CLBC supports.
- c) Develop and contract for employment supports that reflect best practice.
- d) Monitor outcomes and deliverables of contracted employment supports.

5. PRACTICE

5.1 Best practice in employment supports includes the following:

- a) Primary focus is on the individual.
- b) Flexibility, accountability, fairness, transparency and partnerships are encouraged with and among all stakeholders.
- c) Individual disability-related needs are considered and balanced with employment supports.
- d) Natural supports are supported, preferred and encouraged.
- e) Paid employment supports are used only when natural supports are not in place or sufficient.
- f) Respect, dignity and diversity are promoted in the workplace.

5.2 Discussion paper:

The discussion paper, *Defining a Path to Inclusive Employment*, developed by the CLBC Employment Initiative provides useful background for staff. Staff are encouraged to share this document with families, service providers and other community partners.

6. REFERENCES

Defining a Path to Inclusive Employment