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WHAT TO KNOW: Research on Competitive Integrated and Sheltered Employment

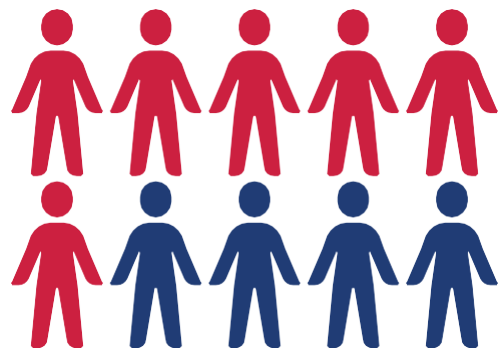
What is Trending?

- The federal minimum wage of US\$7.25 has remained stagnant for over a decade.
- Public outcry has called for efforts to increase the federal minimum wage to a sustainable living wage.
- In response, 29 states plus the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands set wage rates that exceed the federal minimum.
- Yet, people with disabilities are still legally allowed to be paid below the federal minimum.

U.S. Department of Labor (2022)

37,673

As of April 2022, at least this many workers with disabilities are paid subminimum wages via 14c certificates across the United States.



1,162

There are at least this many remaining 14c certificate holding agencies across the United States as of April 2022. Of these, only 32 submitted initial applications. Therefore, most 14c certificate agencies are renewing and maintaining existing certificates.

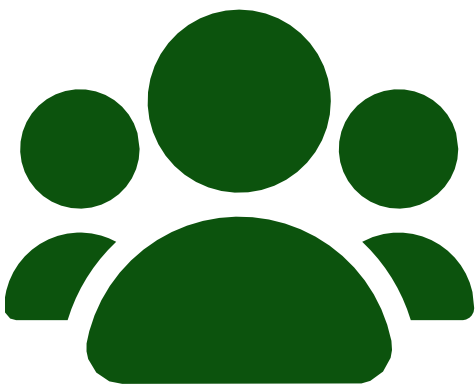
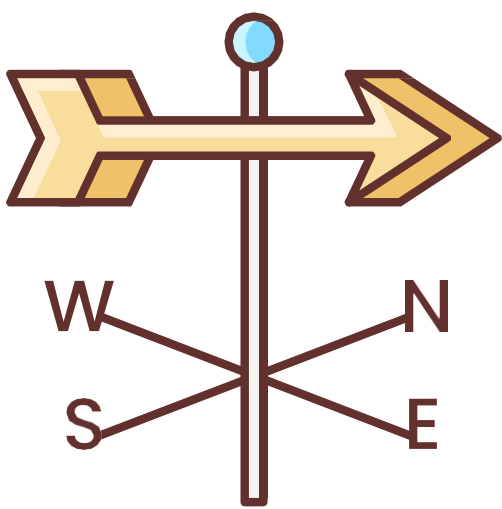
Avellone et al. (2023)



Where Is 14c Use Most Prevalent?

Midwest

Use of 14c certificates is highest in the Midwest (8.50 certificate-holding agencies per million state residents; 235.97 individual certificates/workers with disabilities paid subminimum wage per million state residents) and lowest in the West (2.88 certificate-holding agencies per million state residents; 34.43 workers with disabilities paid subminimum wage per million state residents).

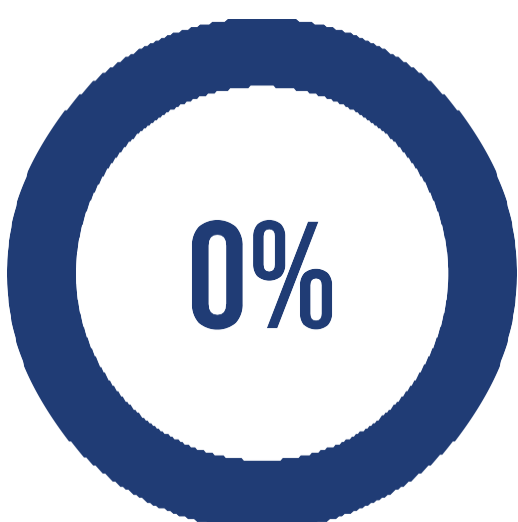


Avellone et al. (2023)

What Do We Know About These Workers ?

After examining 14(c) practices, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights concluded that the general profile of individuals

same disabilities earning competitive wages in integrated settings.



$n = 9$

This is the number of U.S. States and Districts that have ceased use of 14 certificates and now have zero workers earning subminimum wages as of April 2022, ME, NH, RI, AK, MD, DE, VT, HI, and DC

Avellone et al. (2023)



What Does the Research Say About Competitive & Sheltered Employment?

Cost Effectiveness

Supported employees with disabilities in competitive integrated employment cost less to serve than individuals in sheltered employment (Cimera, 2011). Those without a history of sheltered employment cost less to serve than those with a history of sheltered employment (Cimera, 2012).



A review of the empirical literature indicated that, to date, no studies have shown a cost-benefit for sheltered workshops (Taylor et al., 2021).

Earnings

Research indicates that individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities earn more in competitive integrated employment than in sheltered workshops, even when considering the full range of possible earnings in sheltered employment (Cimera, 2017).

Impact of Sheltered Work Before Competitive Employment

Research indicates that sheltered employment is not a necessary first step to competitive integrated employment. Individuals without a history of sheltered employment are just as likely to secure competitive integrated employment as those with a history of sheltered employment (Cimera 2011; 2012). Some research suggests that the longer an individual has been in sheltered work, the less likely they are to transition to competitive employment (Christensen & Richardson, 2017).

In addition, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with no history of sheltered work earn more and work more hours than those with a history of sheltered employment (Cimera, 2011; Cimera 2012).





What Else Does the Research Say About the Advantages of Competitive Integrated Employment?

Increased Independence

Research shows that young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are working competitively in the community show increases in skill development. These young adults show a significant reduction in daily support needed for employment, lifelong learning, health & safety, socialization, home-living, and protection & advocacy activities compared to peers in sheltered or non-work settings (Schall et al., 2020; Inge et al., in press).



Access to Fringe Benefits

A research study by Wehman et al. (2023) found that young adults with disabilities who participated in a supported employment internship program secured competitive integrated employment, 58% of which were federal jobs that offered paid time off, retirement plans, and sick-leave, whereas their peers with disabilities in sheltered workshops and non-work settings did not receive these benefits.

More Job Choices

Workers with disabilities in competitive integrated employment have access to more job choices in a wide range of industries that match their personal interests, skills, and abilities including healthcare, administrative services, arts and recreation, hospitality, and retail (Wehman et al., 2023).



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