

**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Competitive Integrated Employment Fact Sheet**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), places extensive emphasis on the achievement of competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. Per WIOA regulations, competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcomes under the Vocational Rehabilitation program must meet the following three criteria.

Competitive Earnings

- Earnings are equal to or greater than the Federal, State, or local minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, where the place of employment is located; and
- Comparable to the customary rate paid by the employer to employees without disabilities in similar positions with comparable skills, experience, and training.

Integrated Location

- Employment is in a setting typically found in the community (a setting in the competitive labor market), and
- It is in a setting which the individual with the disability interacts while performing his or her job duties with employees without disabilities in the work unit and the entire employment site, and other persons (e.g., vendors and customers) without disabilities to the same extent that employees without disabilities in similar positions interact with these persons.

Opportunities for Advancement

- The employee with the disability must be eligible for the same opportunities for advancement that are available to employees without disabilities in similar positions.

DORS may support individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment in any position that meets the criteria given above for CIE. If an individual's employment fails to satisfy any one of the three components, the employment will not meet the definition of CIE and is not allowable under the VR program.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Question: Does this emphasis on competitive integrated employment mean that DORS cannot pay for services required by an individual to obtain or maintain employment in non-integrated settings?

Answer: Yes. An individual with a disability may be found ineligible or no longer eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if he or she chooses to pursue employment in a non-integrated setting. CRPs will not receive payment from DORS for the placement or support of an individual into these non-integrated employment settings or any follow-along services that the individual may need to be successful in these non-integrated employment settings.

Question: DORS is required to determine if a position meets the requirements for CIE on a case-by-case basis. Has DORS established a procedure for doing so when "CIE" is in question?

Answer: Yes. DORS has established CIE verification procedures which must be used before DORS funding is invested in job development or job coaching for positions funded by AbilityOne or Maryland Employment Works or positions with a CRP as the employer of record. Employers interested in DORS assistance to fill such vacancies must complete the CIE Review Request form available on the DORS website prior to or when requesting DORS assistance to fill those positions. Determinations regarding whether positions meet CIE review requirements will be listed for reference by DORS staff and job developers on the DORS website.

Question: If a position is found not to be CIE, can DORS still inform individuals about the vacancy?

Answer: Yes. Under 34 CFR 361.37 (b), DORS is required to refer any individual who wishes to pursue an outcome other than CIE to other organizations that might best meet the needs of that individual.