



NDSO Position Statement on Employment

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSO) believes that employment should be an expected life activity for individuals with Down syndrome, and that individuals with Down syndrome should have the individual and systemic supports necessary to enable them to find, keep and succeed in careers in the community based on their preferences, interests, and strengths. We are committed to advancing policies that:

- Empower individuals with Down syndrome to make informed choices about their work and careers by providing individualized exploration of and experiences with inclusive, community-based employment and by presenting all information needed to make informed choices in an understandable way;
- Build infrastructure and transition supports needed to phase out the issuance of subminimum wage certificates while increasing opportunities for competitive, meaningful, integrated employment and putting in place safeguards to protect the interests of any people affected by this shift;
- Increase employment opportunities in integrated, meaningful, community-based settings that contain the proportion of disabled people in the general population, pay all employees at least the minimum wage in their state, and offer benefits commensurate with their positions;
- Provide sufficient financial, personnel and other resources including training opportunities to support inclusive meaningful, employment opportunities in the community and be flexible enough to foster collaboration and braiding of employment-related funds;
- Increase access to and capacity of supported and customized employment services funded through Medicaid and other mechanisms;
- Promote the Employment First framework, as defined by the Department of Labor, to align policies, service delivery practices, and reimbursement structures to commit to integrated employment as the priority option with respect to use of publicly-financed day and employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities;
- Encourage and incentivize businesses to improve hiring practices and/or reward retention of employees with Down syndrome and other disabilities;
- Increase opportunities for apprenticeship and work-based learning experiences by facilitating the coordination of school-to-work transition programs, higher education, and community-based employers;
- Minimize transportation barriers to employment;
- Facilitate opportunities for self-employment and business ownership;
- Provide individuals with Down syndrome and other disabilities ongoing opportunities for and information about job advancement, career development, benefits and retirement;

- Provide training in best practices to staff of employment and school-to-work transition programs to help individuals with disabilities find and keep jobs, receive on-the-job training and guidance in acquiring workplace social skills; and
- Allow for an environment of “continued attachment” for individuals who have successfully achieved partial self-sufficiency but require continued public assistance to offset the tremendous costs of certain long term supports related to their disability.