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**DIDD Statewide Employment Rate Increases**

Data collection tool shows increase in people with intellectual disabilities working in competitive employment

NASHVILLE—The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) announced today that the employment rate of persons supported in competitive, integrated employment is 17.6 percent. This marks a one percent increase from its first round of results collected in spring 2017 and reflects persons supported through DIDD’s waiver programs who are of working age and no longer in school.

Competitive, integrated employment (CIE) is defined as a workplace that pays at least minimum wage and includes workers with and without disabilities. CIE is the standard for professionals advocating for increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The data is collected from DIDD providers twice a year, in partnership with EconSys, through a web-based questionnaire. It looks at the overall rate, hourly wage, type of industry, and hours worked weekly. The numbers reflect employment data from October 2017.

“We have set an ambitious goal to double the employment rate for people in the DIDD waivers by 2022,” DIDD Commissioner Debra K. Payne said. “With this increase, we are currently on track to meet that goal, but will continue to work hard to ensure everyone who wants a paid job in the community has the opportunity to have one.”

Some key data points include:

* A 5 percent increase in people working in CIE as proportion of all employment types, with a simultaneous decrease in Sheltered Work and Group Employment rates
* A 5 percent increase in people supported by DIDD who are seeking employment
* An increase in the number of monthly hours worked, rising from 40.1 hours in April 2017 to 45.7 hours in October 2017

“As important as it is for us to celebrate our successes, it’s perhaps more important to identify areas where we aren’t seeing the improvement we want,” DIDD’s State Director of Employment and Day Services Jeremy Norden-Paul said. “Having the data to provide insight into these key areas will allow us to channel resources to areas of need and learn more about the supports people need to gain and maintain employment in the community.”

Agencies in the DIDD provider network will report next in May on employment data from April.

Video clip of Jeremy Norden-Paul discussing the data: <https://youtu.be/b3id71rchYA>

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**About the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is the state agency responsible for administration and oversight of community-based services for approximately 8,000 people with intellectual disabilities as well as 4,000 people through the Family Support Program. Every day, the department strives to support people to live rewarding and fulfilling lives. It does so by ensuring people are free to exercise rights, engage with their broader communities and experience optimal health. DIDD is the first state service delivery system in the nation to receive Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership. It has also been recognized as a national leader in its efforts to increase competitive, community-based employment outcomes for people with disabilities.