



## **Request**

**Provide** funding for employment services for all eligible students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who will be exiting high school in the 2019-2021 biennium.

### **High School Transition Age is a Critical Period for Individuals with I/DD**

Individuals with I/DD who leave school with a job are much more likely to remain employed and be included in community life. Those who do not get a job within six months of leaving school may lose learned skills, including those that lead to gainful employment. These individuals may be at risk for becoming isolated without connections in the community.

### **Benefits of Employment Services**

Historically, many people with I/DD have been unemployed or underemployed despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work. Employment services help people with I/DD find and keep competitive jobs in the community that align with their preferences, interests and strengths. This promotes financial stability and independence. Employment services also promote community inclusion and personal well-being because of increased social connections and opportunities to engage with and contribute to the community.

### **A National Leader: King County's S2W Program**

The King County School to Work (S2W) program is a leader in the nation in implementing a best practices model to support high school transition age individuals in obtaining and maintaining employment.

S2W is a partnership between King County, Washington State's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities Administration, school districts, job support agencies, and students and families.

S2W connects students with I/DD to employment services while they are still in their high school transition programs. S2W provides customized one-

on-one support to be successful in obtaining and keeping a job.

**The job placement rate for individuals exiting the King County S2W program is nearly 60 percent. This outcome exceeds placement rates for young adults with I/DD elsewhere in the nation.<sup>1</sup>**

### **Strong Legislative Support**

The Legislature has maintained a strong commitment to high school transition services and has appropriated funding for students with I/DD over the past 25 years. During the last biennium, the Legislature added funding for individuals to access the Basic Plus Medicaid Waiver program, which provided employment supports for 2017-2018 high school transition students.

### **Sustain the Gain from Special Education**

High school transition students need opportunities to move into the workforce. We must leverage our investment in special education and ensure students with I/DD can access employment services in order to establish independence, create a new generation of taxpayers, and reduce dependency on other long-term government supports.

**Fund additional Basic Plus Medicaid Waiver Program slots to provide employment services for all high school students with I/DD exiting high school in the 2019-2021 biennium.**

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<sup>1</sup> State Data: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes – 2016