

EMPLOYMENT

We anchor our position on employment in Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and are guided by the global movement we are part of through Inclusion Canada and Inclusion International.

Everyone has the right to work. Meaningful, inclusive and fairly-compensated employment is a cornerstone of economic security, dignity, social inclusion and community participation. Employment is more than a job; it provides opportunities for personal growth, fosters social connection, and grants a sense of purpose and meaning through contribution. People with intellectual disabilities have the right to real work for real pay.

When people with intellectual disabilities have access to real jobs, they contribute to the economy, improve their own financial security, build relationships and experience a greater sense of control over their lives.

Employment that is inclusive IS

- Engagement in the open labour market alongside people without disabilities
- Fairly-compensated work with wages, benefits and advancement opportunities on an equal basis to others
- Provision of support and accommodations as needed, including natural support from coworkers and employers
- Flexible and inclusive of diverse pathways, including full-time, part-time, customized employment, independent contracting, self-employment and entrepreneurship, shaped by the individual's goals, talents and vision for how they want to contribute

Assumptions about what people with intellectual disabilities can do has limited what we see as

possible. The vast majority of people with intellectual disabilities are either unemployed or under-employed, deepening isolation, marginalization and poverty. People with intellectual disabilities are

frequently steered toward sheltered workshops and segregated employment. These environments limit potential, restrict choice, reinforce exclusion and divert resources away from real opportunities. Further, our current income support programs can inadvertently act as a disincentive to employment.

Employment that is inclusive IS NOT

- Unpaid work in positions that are typically paid
- Placement in segregated, congregated settings where participation is based on disability
- Wage subsidies or fixed-term placements that do not lead to sustained employment
- Programs that limit choice, dignity or the ability to grow and advance in a career

Employment that is inclusive is a shared responsibility. It requires collective leadership and commitment across people with disabilities, families, communities, employers and government. Families need support to see what is possible and can lead in shaping pathways to employment. Youth with disabilities need early opportunities to learn about careers and employment opportunities. Individuals must be supported to pursue their goals and have their contributions valued - leading to a sense of purpose, dignity and belonging.

Employment that is inclusive leads to inclusive lives.