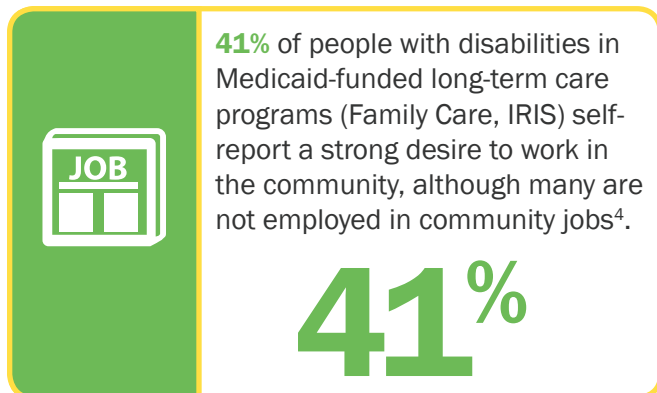


# Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment

**Nationwide, the employment rate for people with disabilities is only 17.9%, compared with 65.3% for the general population.**

■ Wisconsin's bi-partisan Employment First legislation, signed into law in 2018 by Governor Walker, recognizes community integrated employment as a priority for people with disabilities.

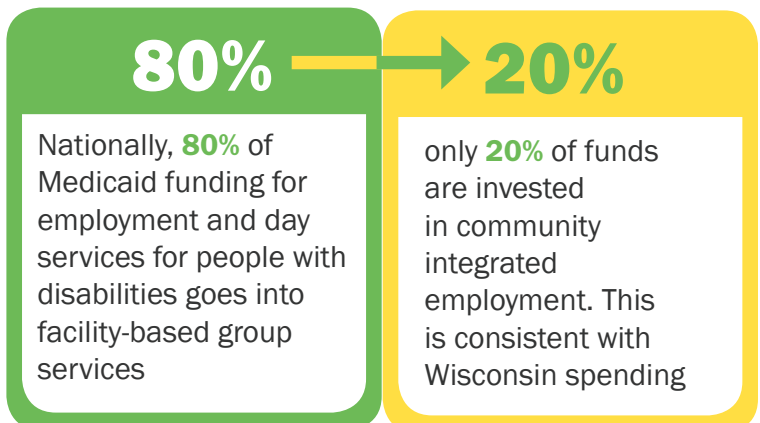
■ Wisconsin's Department of Health Services (DHS), in conjunction with a diverse group of disability stakeholders has developed community integrated employment principles<sup>1</sup> and is committed to increasing the number of people in Wisconsin's long-term care programs (Family Care, IRIS) that are working in the community<sup>2</sup>.



■ Wisconsin families want more employment choices. BPDD hears from many families and people with disabilities that they do not have the employment choices and options they want; many want to choose community integrated employment but are frustrated by provider's lack of capacity to offer those choices.

■ **More than 40%** of people with developmental disabilities participating in Medicaid-funded sub-minimum wage pre-vocational facilities say they want to or would consider community employment<sup>5</sup>.

**Some WI facility-based providers already are shifting their business models towards community integrated employment supports to respond to families and people with disabilities who want work in the community with positive results.**



# Recommendations



Create a one-time appropriation within the 2019-21 budget establishing an Employment Service Provider Transformation Fund for the purpose of transitioning the business models of long term care employment service providers to move people who have shown interest in working in community integrated employment into competitive-wage community jobs. Direct DHS to administer the appropriation as a competitive grant process and require the Department to report measurable outcome criteria on grantees' progress.

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Direct the Department of Children and Families to create an Individual Development Account (IDA) program, modeled after success in the PROMISE Youth Supplemental Security Income pilot project<sup>6</sup>, which matches youth earnings to finance work-related expenses.

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Provide adequate Medicaid funds to provide employment supports to people with developmental disabilities who are eligible for Family Care but do not meet the nursing home level of care.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01786.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Wisconsin's Medicaid-funded long-term care programs recognize community integrated employment is more cost-effective than facility-based employment, and that a shift to this type of employment is necessary for fiscal sustainability in state programs. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services' 2014 report on sustainability <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00590.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health Services data pulled April 2017 from Long Term Care functional screen and Program Participation System (PPS) employment data.

<sup>4</sup> Wisconsin's National Core Indicators 2015-2016 survey.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Workforce Development Wisconsin WIOA Career Interview Project 2016-2017 Annual Report - a survey of sheltered workshop participants required under Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. It is estimated that a great majority of the 6,509 subminimum wage employees who were interviewed are also long-term care program (Family Care, IRIS) participants, many receiving facility-based pre-vocational services. <http://www.uww.edu/Documents/csd/WIOWA/Annual%20Interview%20Report%20FY2017.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Wisconsin's PROMISE grant—funded by the Social Security Administration—has demonstrated tangible ways to double the number of youth with disabilities that have community-based paid work experiences that translate into a lifetime of employment and can help lift entire families out of poverty.