

# Partners with Business Annual Report to the Legislature, June 2018 - May 2019

*Submitted by Shannon Webb, inControl Wisconsin (contractor for the WI BPDD's Partners with Business coaching program)*

2017 Wisconsin Act 323 established the Partners with Business initiative to assist businesses interested in hiring and employing people with disabilities using an evidence-based coaching model. The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) submits the first annual report to the legislature on Partners with Business pilot projects and outcomes.

In its first year, Partners with Business has provided technical assistance and coached two employment service providers (Opportunity Development Centers, VIP Services) and two school districts (Altoona High School, Green Bay Public School District) on effective strategies to respond to the hiring needs of local businesses and match employees who have disabilities with jobs that fit their skills and interests.



- Fourteen businesses interested in employing people with disabilities have received assistance.
- Twenty-two people with disabilities participated in the pilot sites. In the first few months of the pilots, six people with significant disabilities landed jobs working an average of 11 hours a week at \$9.57 per hour.

One Family Care managed care organization (Inclusa) received a grant and focused on building capacity to implement Partners with Business practices within their employment services provider network, which includes hundreds of service providers across 52 Wisconsin counties. Inclusa adjusted service provider service contracts, created a tool to identify employees who can benefit from co-worker supports, and conducted trainings on Partners with Business best practices.

## The Partners with Business initiative promotes the use of best practices to:



Ensure good job matches between employers and job seekers with disabilities;



Empower employers to directly train and supervise their employees with disabilities;



Cultivate workplace inclusion and natural supports;



Maximize independence on the job for workers with disabilities; and



Reimburse employers for the costs of providing formal support above and beyond the “natural supports” typically found in the workplace to their employees with disabilities, rather than relying on outside job coaches provided by a vocational agency.

To incentivize employment service providers to implement these best practices, Inlucsa compensates service providers based on the number of hours a person with disabilities works and the length of time they've been on the job. Using these strategies costs the Medicaid funded long-term care system significantly less, while increasing the number of hours worked.

Compared to service providers being paid through a traditional Fee for Service (FFS) Medicaid model—which pays providers based on the number of hours of job coaching they provide and creates a disincentive to reduce paid services—Partners in Business providers:

- **Invested 83% less staff time;**
- **Increased the number of hours people with disabilities worked by 32%; and**
- **Spent 48% fewer Medicaid dollars.**

	Provider (Partners with Business)	Provider (Fee for Service Model)
Number of people with disabilities receiving employment services	47	50
Total Hours Members (people with disabilities) Worked	2030.45 per month	1385.75 per month
Average Hours Worked per person	43.20 per month	27.72 per month
# Hours Job Coached	220.75 per month	1264.50 per month
Total Medicaid dollars spent on employment services for all members	\$18,855.85 per month	\$35,760.06 per month

All five grantees will continue to implement Partners with Business strategies and have agreed to continue to track employment and cost savings outcomes in the 2019-2020 project year.

Five more grantees have been selected for the 2019-2020 project year, including another Family Care Managed Care organization and four employment service providers. They are:

- **My Choice Family Care; based in Wauwatosa**
- **Aptiv, Inc; based in La Crosse**
- **Employment Resources Inc; based in Madison**
- **Portal, Inc; Grafton**
- **Valley Packaging Industries, Inc; Appleton**



“This is a guy that loves his job and being part of a team,” said Josh. “He is just happy and grateful to be here every day. He is taking on more and more responsibility, and he is very productive during his shifts.”

Josh Witt, Co-owner of Power Pac, a “power sports” dealership in Marshfield.