



## WHY WE NEED EMPLOYMENT FIRST POLICIES IN WISCONSIN

A Fact Sheet created by APSE and promoted by: WI APSE, BPDD, and DRW

- **Real Jobs for All:** Everyone can work in the community, regardless of disability. People need varying levels of support to be successful at jobs.
- **Employment First:** Public policies should be based on the concept of *Employment First* - that employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome for publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.  
  
Over 19 states currently have Employment First Policies.
- **Shifting of Resources to the Community:** Public resources used to assist and support individuals with disabilities should be spent on individualized, community settings. Community employment is more cost effective in the long run than facility-based, segregated services.
- **Sufficient Resources for Employment Success:** Resources to assist and support individuals with disabilities with their employment needs in the community must be available to service providers.
- **Promotion of Employment in the Public and Private Sector:** Government should serve as a model employer for people with disabilities, setting an example for the private sector, in conjunction with efforts to promote employment in the private sector through the availability of employment opportunities as well as necessary assistance and accommodations.
- **Movement out of Poverty:** Too often disability equals poverty. When people with disabilities work, they can move out of poverty and into the middle-class, and decrease their reliance on public benefits.
- **Protection of Disability Rights:** The advancement of rights of people with disabilities resulting from the Americans with Disabilities Act, Olmstead Decision, the Rehabilitation Act, and similar legislation, must be protected and fully enforced.