



**EMPLOYMENT FIRST policies are needed in Wisconsin because everyone will benefit when we have:**

- **Real Jobs for Real People with Disabilities** - Everyone can work in the community, regardless of disability. People need varying levels of support to be successful at jobs.
- **Public Resources Shifted 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 to work 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.
- **Movement Out of Poverty** - Disability has meant poverty for people for too long. 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** - Federal policies that advance the rights of people with disabilities are being upheld and states are being brought into compliance. Wisconsin must ensure that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Olmstead Decision, and the Rehabilitation Act are fully protected and enforced.
- **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 35 states now have some type of formal Employment First Initiative - this movement is growing and people with disabilities in Wisconsin should not be left behind!