



BACKGROUND

Across Illinois and the U.S., youth and adults with disabilities, their family members and advocates for people with disabilities expect full community integration, including employment. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) recognizes the need for new employment models for youth and adults with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment (CIE) (34 CFR § 361.5(c)(9)). Given that subminimum wage (SMW) employment models (29 CFR § 525.1) are outdated, a new and innovative focus is required for eliminating SMW employment in Illinois. Critical policy and programming gaps exist. Identification of strategies to expand CIE opportunities for Illinoisans with disabilities currently employed at SMW are needed. IDHS DRS will use the SWTCIE Illinois project to build a body of evidence and practice toward achieving state and national CIE policy and goals.

About the Project

The IDHS DRS From Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment for Illinoisans with Disabilities (SWTCIE Illinois) Model Demonstration Project (U.S. Department of Education Disability Innovation Fund, 84.421D) is a new initiative that

- addresses the need to expand opportunities for Illinoisans with disabilities to obtain high-quality CIE
- transformative business model for 14(c) certificate holders
- assists and encourages employers in Illinois to fully include youth and adults with disabilities in their workforce.

SWTCIE Illinois will increase opportunities for Illinois youth and adults with disabilities to transition from SMW employment to CIE and redirect youth and adults to CIE when they are contemplating SMW employment for the first time.

SWTCIE Illinois provides funding for organizations that hold certificates issued under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The SWTCIE Illinois team, comprised of the Division of Rehabilitation

Services (DRS), in collaboration with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).

SWTCIE Illinois Project Goals

- Implement a statewide innovative, collaborative, and coordinated partnership model.
- Establish partnerships with at least six 14(c) certificate holders.
- Identify strategies for addressing challenges associated with access to CIE.
- Provide integrated services that support CIE.
- Support integration into the community through CIE.
- Identify and coordinate wraparound services for any individual served by SWTCIE Illinois who obtains CIE.
- Develop evidence-based practices and share those practices with other entities holding section 14(c) certificates, State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, local rehabilitation providers, state and local workforce agencies, and regional and local employers.
- Provide entities holding section 14(c) certificates with readily accessible transformative business models for adoption.

Participant Outcomes

- Increased revenue sources/self-sufficiency (primarily through DRS contracts)
- Less dependence upon 14(c) contract work
- Status within the community
- Active participation in addressing local labor force issues
- Participants become contributing members to their community

14(c) Agency Outcomes

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Broad Statewide Outcomes

- Identify and address challenges to eliminate subminimum wage statewide
- Benefits Planning
- Transportation
- Create a manualized evidence-based program that can be implemented statewide



- Establish stakeholder partnerships that will work together to eliminate subminimum wage across the state
- Promote a strong diverse labor force to address the future labor employment needs across the state
- Promote economic development

FYI: SWTCIE Illinois

Funded by U.S. Department of Education — Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), this five-year grant project spans from Oct. 1, 2022, to Sept. 30, 2027.

The purpose is to support innovative activities aimed at increasing CIE for youth and other individuals with disabilities seeking or engaged in SMW employment.

Illinois DRS was one of 13 states chosen for this award and received \$13,943,946 for the five-year project, the second highest dollar amount.



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