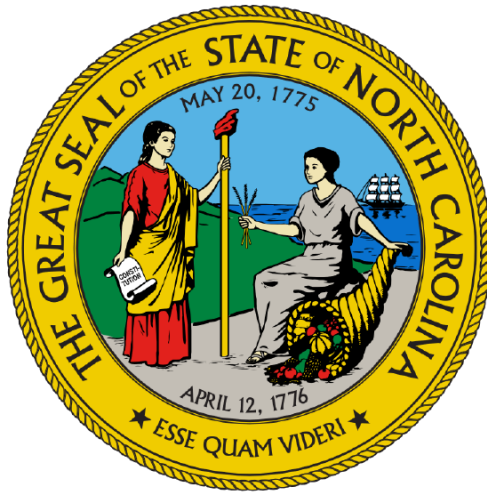


NC Department of Health and Human Services



Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities 101

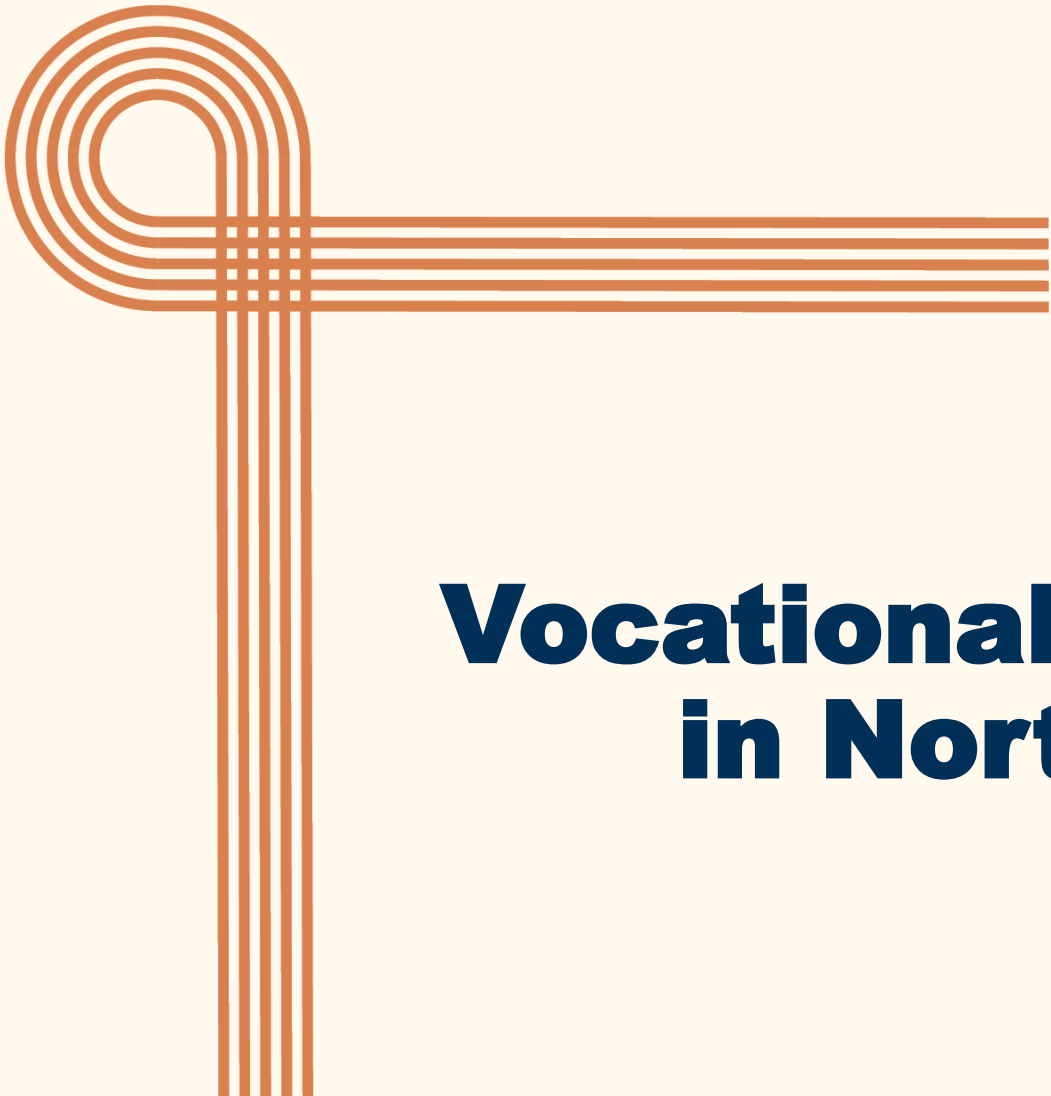
Kathie Smith
EIPD Division Director

May 13, 2026



**Your goals.
Our support.**

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities**

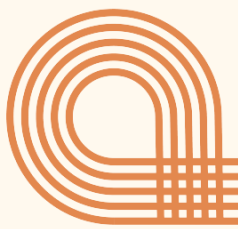
A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a horizontal line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a vertical line.

Vocational Rehabilitation in North Carolina

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a vertical line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a horizontal line.

A Century of Services

- The federal Rehabilitation Act (the Act) of 1920 created a program to help civilians with physical disabilities retrain and find employment.
- Over time, eligibility rules and services have expanded over time to help more people with disabilities in more ways
- The NC Department of Health and Human Services is the administrator of state grants for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Independent Living (IL) and Assistive Technology (AT) programs



VR Funding: State-Federal Partnership

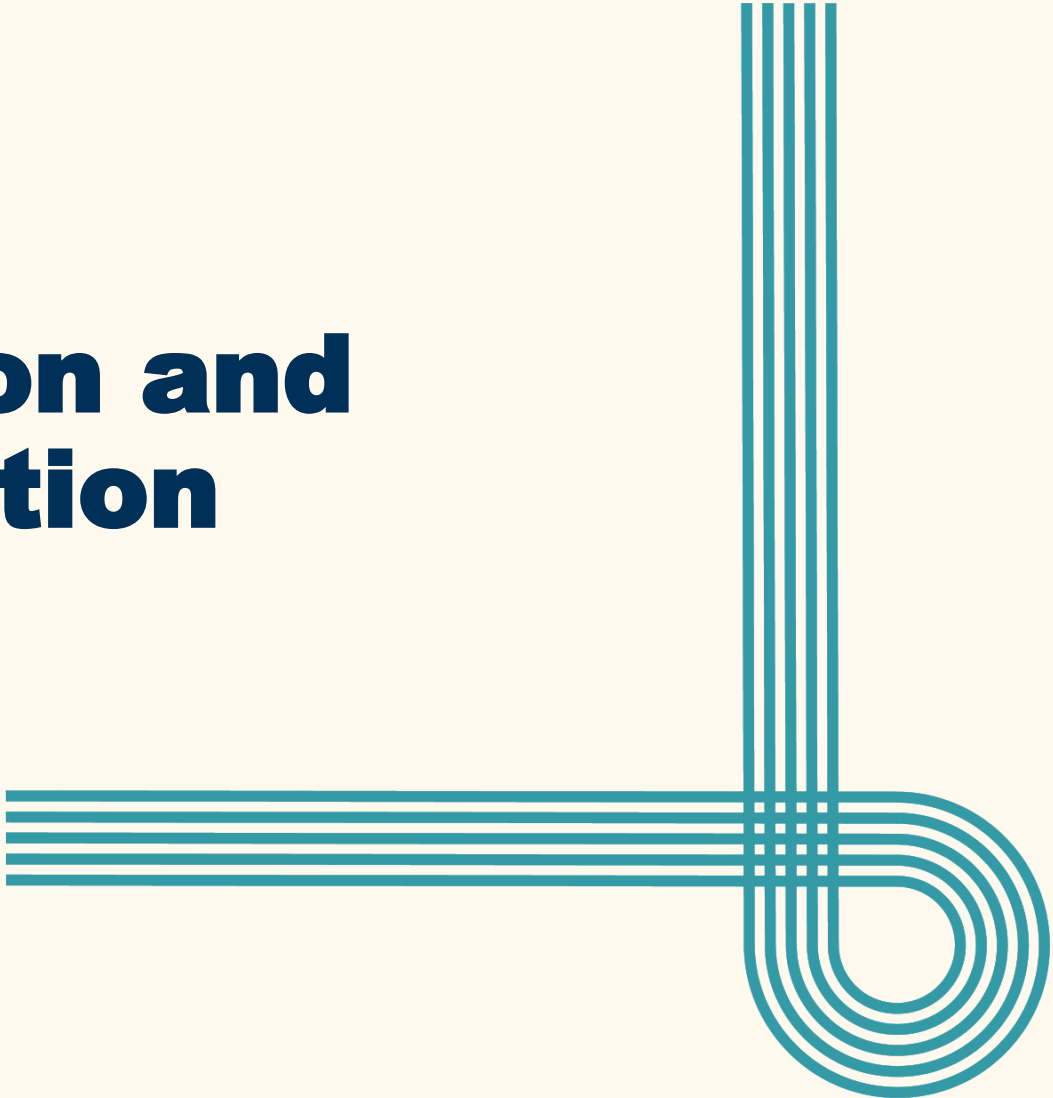
- **The Rehabilitation Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Education awards state vocational rehabilitation grants annually according to a formula**
 - **Federal dollars comprise around 78 percent of total grant award**
 - **States “match” the federal dollars by providing approximately 22 percent of total award funding**

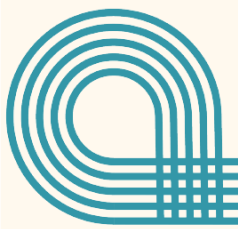
Forfeiting Federal Dollars

- The NC VR System forfeits \$22M in federal funding annually because the system lacks \$5.8M in state matching funds
- A \$5.8M state investment unlocks \$22M in federal dollars—directly supporting employment outcomes for people with disabilities

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a horizontal line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a vertical line.

EIPD Mission and Organization

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a vertical line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a horizontal line.



EIPD – Recent History

- **In April 2024, North Carolina’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) transitioned to the Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities (EIPD)**
- **The new name reflects the wide range of services we provide to promote employment from a whole-person perspective and is inclusive of a range of other services provided by the agency**
- **Our name change celebrates the potential and accomplishments of individuals with disabilities and their journeys to independence**
- **We collaborated with our clients, staff and partners to develop the new name and ensure it accurately captures and clearly explains our mission and spirit**

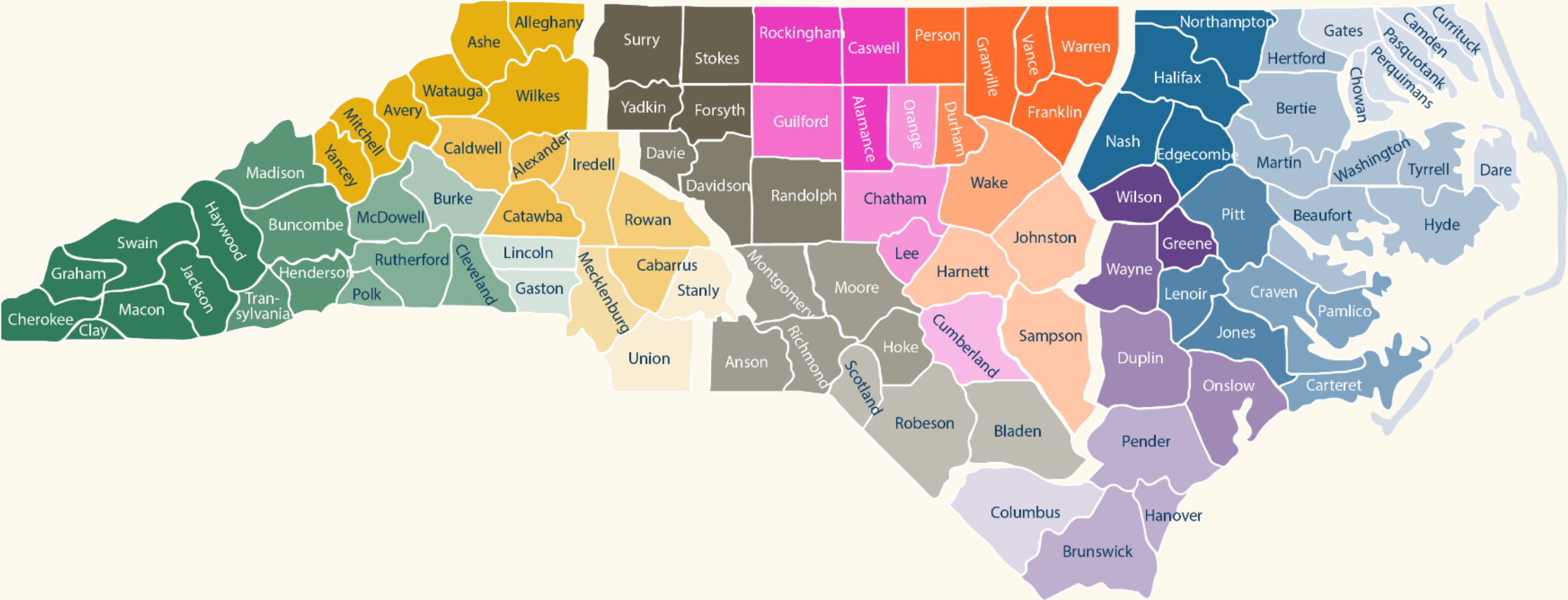


EIPD's Mission

Promote competitive integrated employment and independence for people with disabilities through client partnership and community leadership.



EIPD Offices by Region and County



WESTERN REGION OFFICES

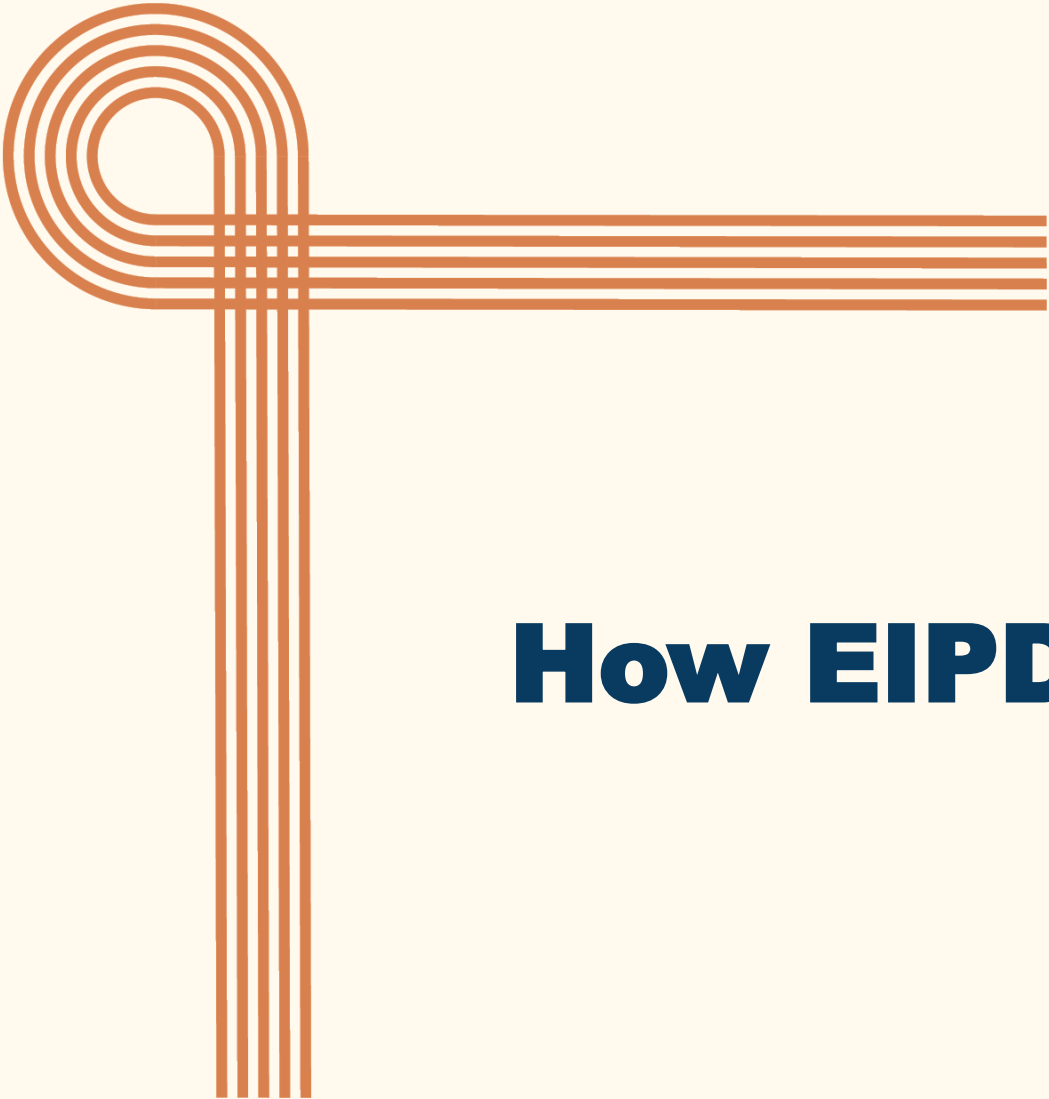
- Albemarle
- Asheville
- Boone
- Charlotte
- Forest City
- Gastonia
- Hickory
- WorkSource West
- Salisbury
- Sylva

CENTRAL REGION OFFICES

- Burlington
- Chapel Hill
- Dunn
- Durham
- Fayetteville
- Greensboro
- Henderson
- Lexington
- Lumberton
- Pinehurst
- Raleigh
- Winston-Salem

EASTERN REGION OFFICES

- Elizabeth City
- Goldsboro
- Greenville
- Jacksonville
- New Bern
- Rocky Mount
- Washington
- Whiteville
- Wilmington
- Wilson

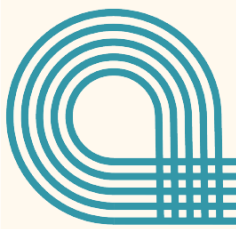
A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a horizontal line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a vertical line.

How EIPD Helps Clients

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a vertical line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a horizontal line.

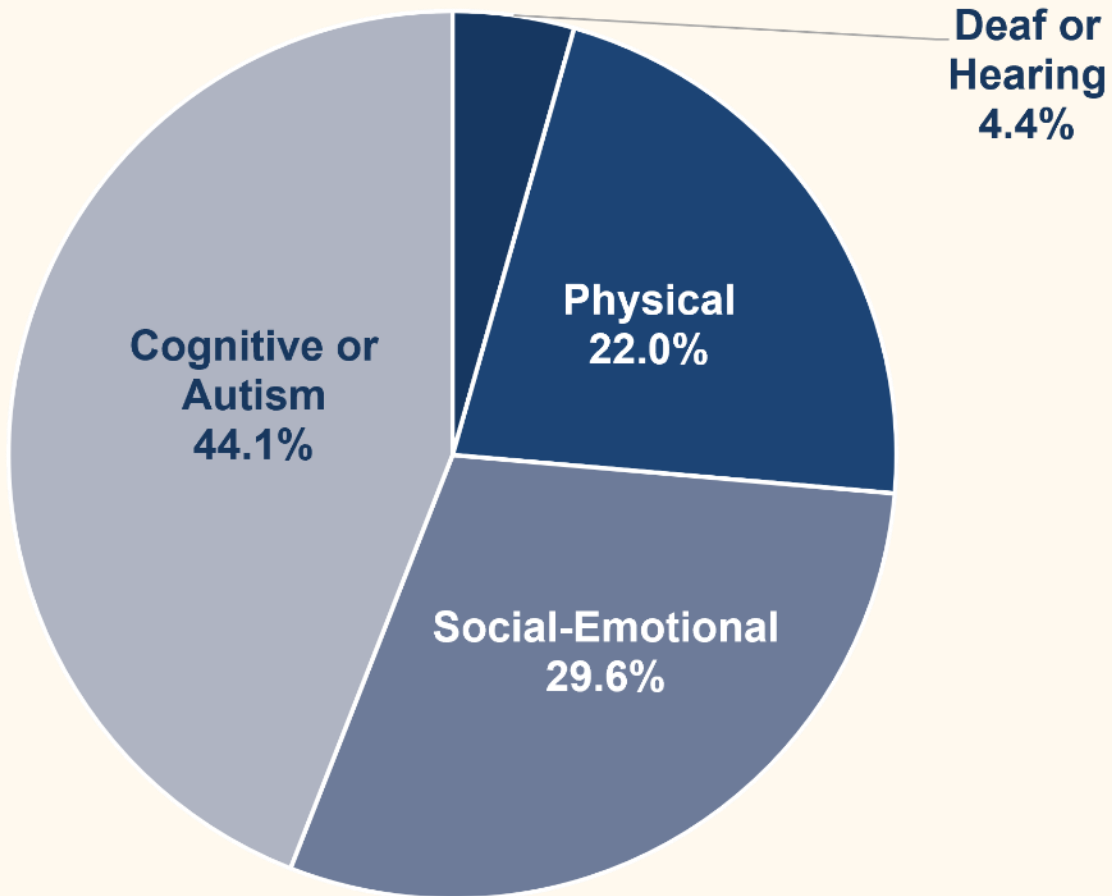
**We help people
overcome disability-
related barriers
and achieve their goals
for employment and
more independent living.**



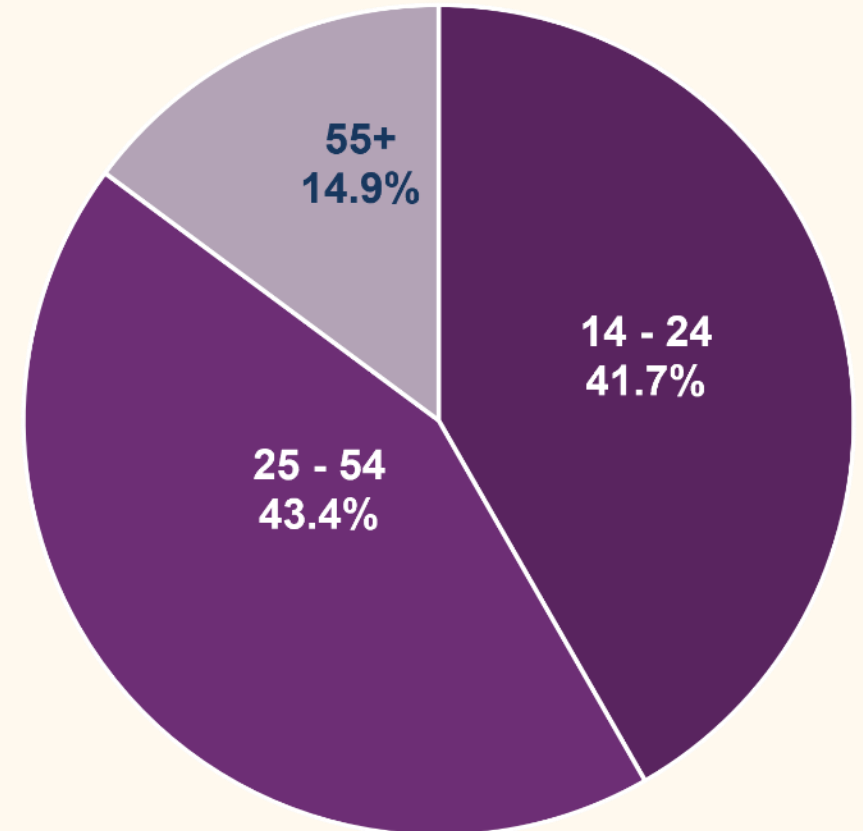


Client Demographics

Primary Impairment Type



Age Group



Examples of Disability Types

Cognitive/Developmental

- Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Developmental Disabilities, Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disorders

Physical

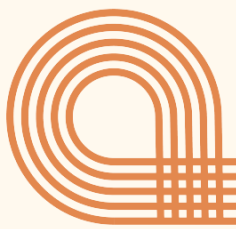
- Amputation, Arthritis, Cardiac and Cardiovascular Impairments, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Diabetes, Disc Herniation, Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Neurological Impairment, Stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury

Mental/Behavioral Health

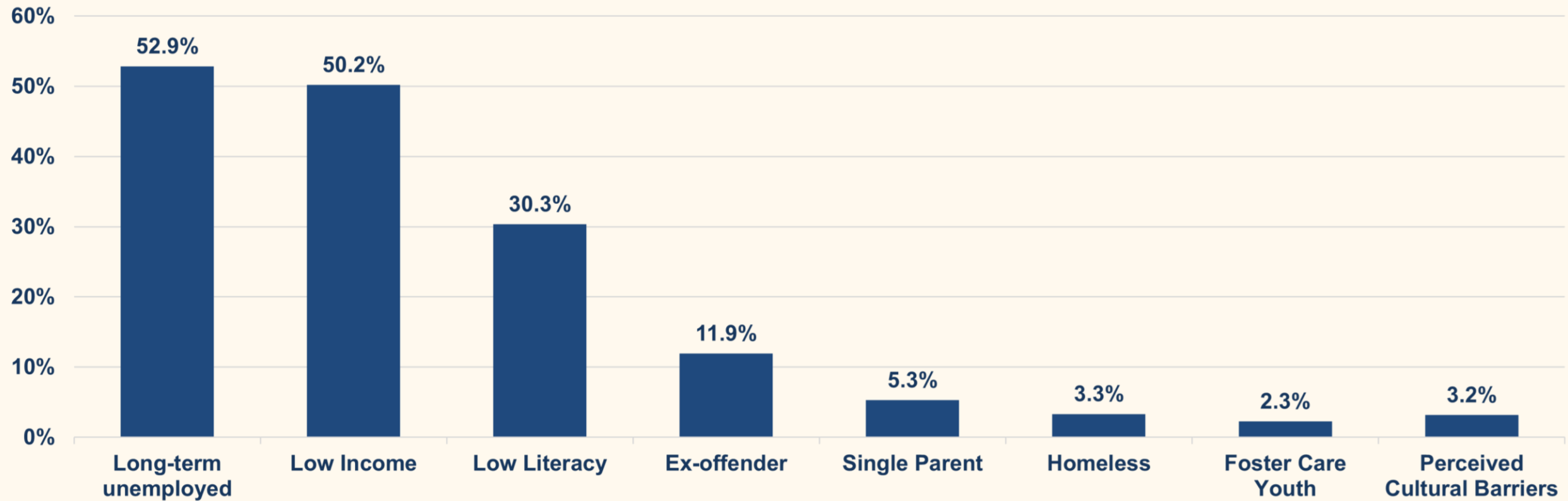
- Anxiety, Bipolar, Depression, Personality Disorders, Schizophrenia, Substance Use Disorder

Sensory

- Hearing, Vision, and Speech Impairments



Other Barriers



Vocational Supports

We provide counseling and assessments, training and on-the-job experiences, job search and placement assistance, and many other services, depending on an individual's unique needs and employment goal.



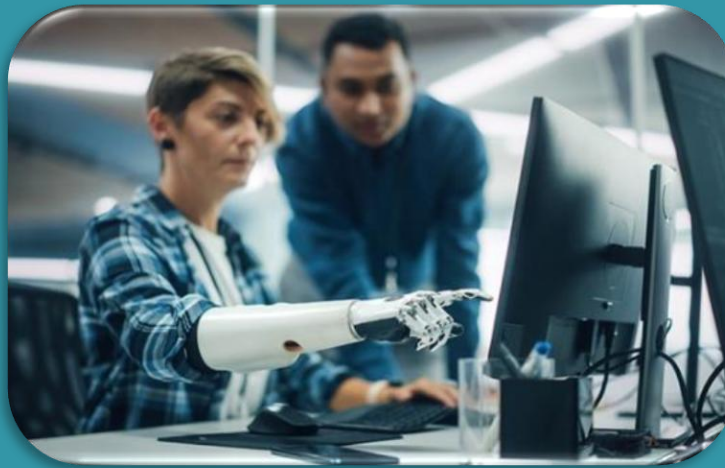
How EIPD Can Help - Examples

No work experience?



**Help identify a
career goal and
get your first job**

Returning to work?

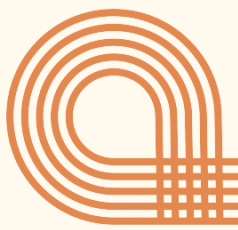


**Help you go
back to same
job or find a
similar job**

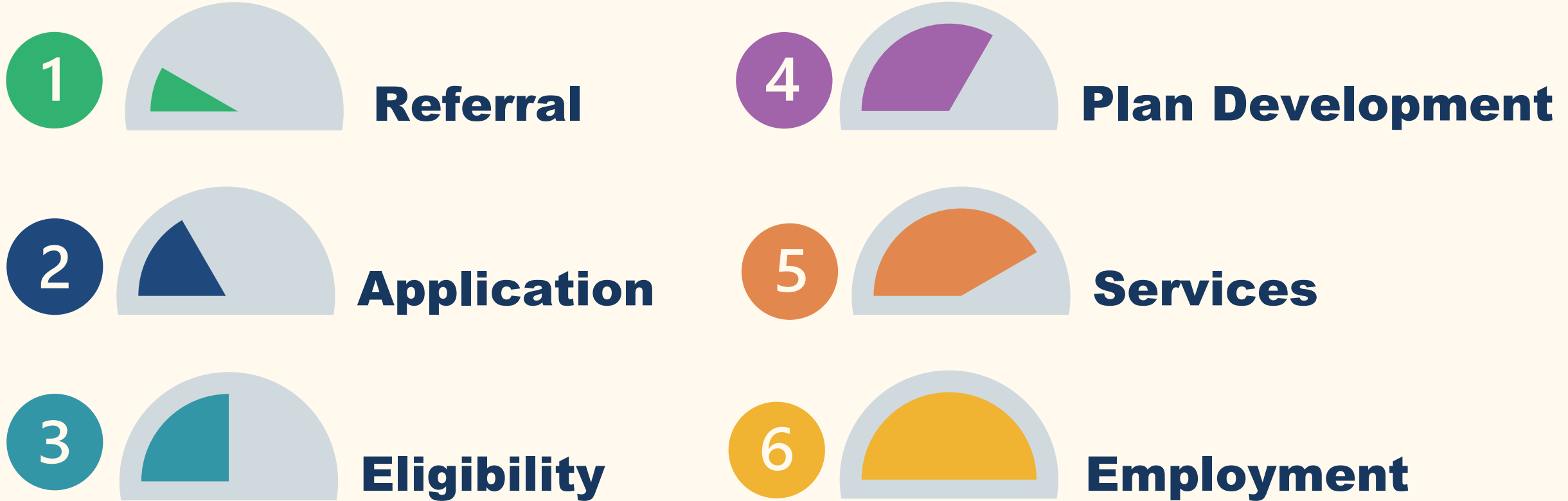
At risk of losing job?



**Help you
overcome
barriers and
keep working**



Process: Steps to Employment Success



Timeline: Application to Employment

Up to 60 days

Up to 90 days

Varies by Client

Application

- Intake with EIPD staff
- Review existing medical and psychological records
- Referral for medical and/or psychological evaluations as needed
- Work assessment or trial work period

Eligibility

- Vocational assessments and interest testing
- Evaluate barriers
- Look at interests and capacities
- Comprehensive assessment

Individualized Plan

- Research jobs
- Job shadow and informational interviews
- Choose job goal
- Select services needed to achieve goal
- Write and sign Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- Implement plan of services to achieve employment goal

Case Closure

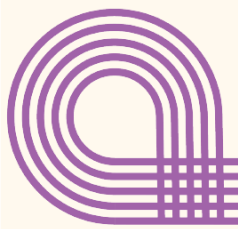
- Get hired in position that reflects employment goal
- Maintain employment for 90 days
- Case closed as successful employment outcome



EIPD Partnerships

We collaborate with disability service providers, local and national employers, workforce system and other community partners to support jobseekers with disabilities and connect them with careers.





Who is Eligible for EIPD's VR Services?



Individual is a legal resident and at least 14 years old



Individual wants to pursue employment



Individual faces disability-related barriers to employment

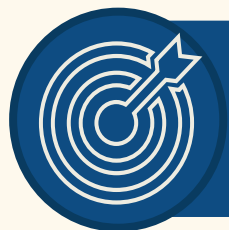


EIPD services can reduce or eliminate these barriers

Eligibility for Social Security Beneficiaries



If an individual receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), they are *presumed eligible* for services



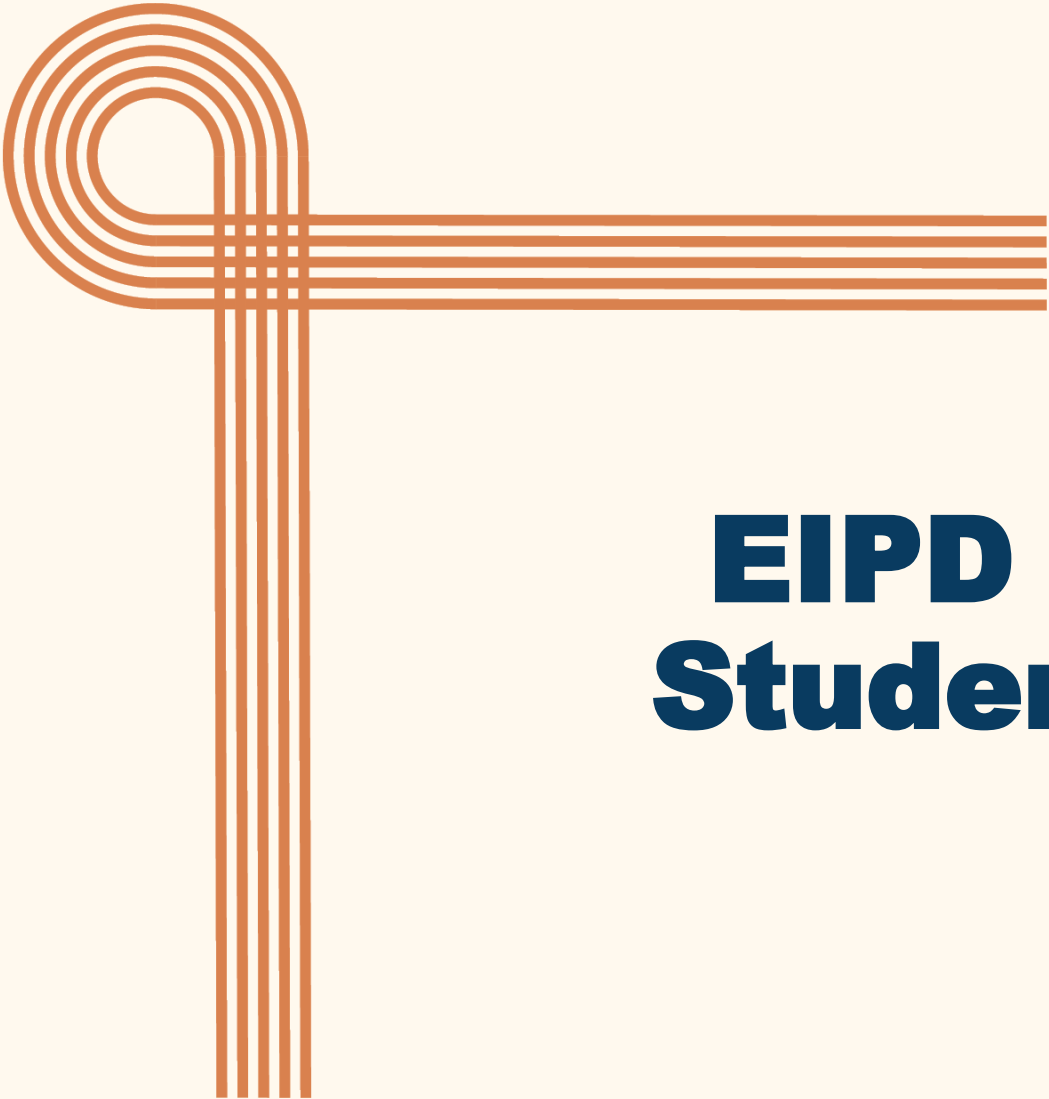
Working with an EIPD counselor, the individual will pick an employment goal and develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)



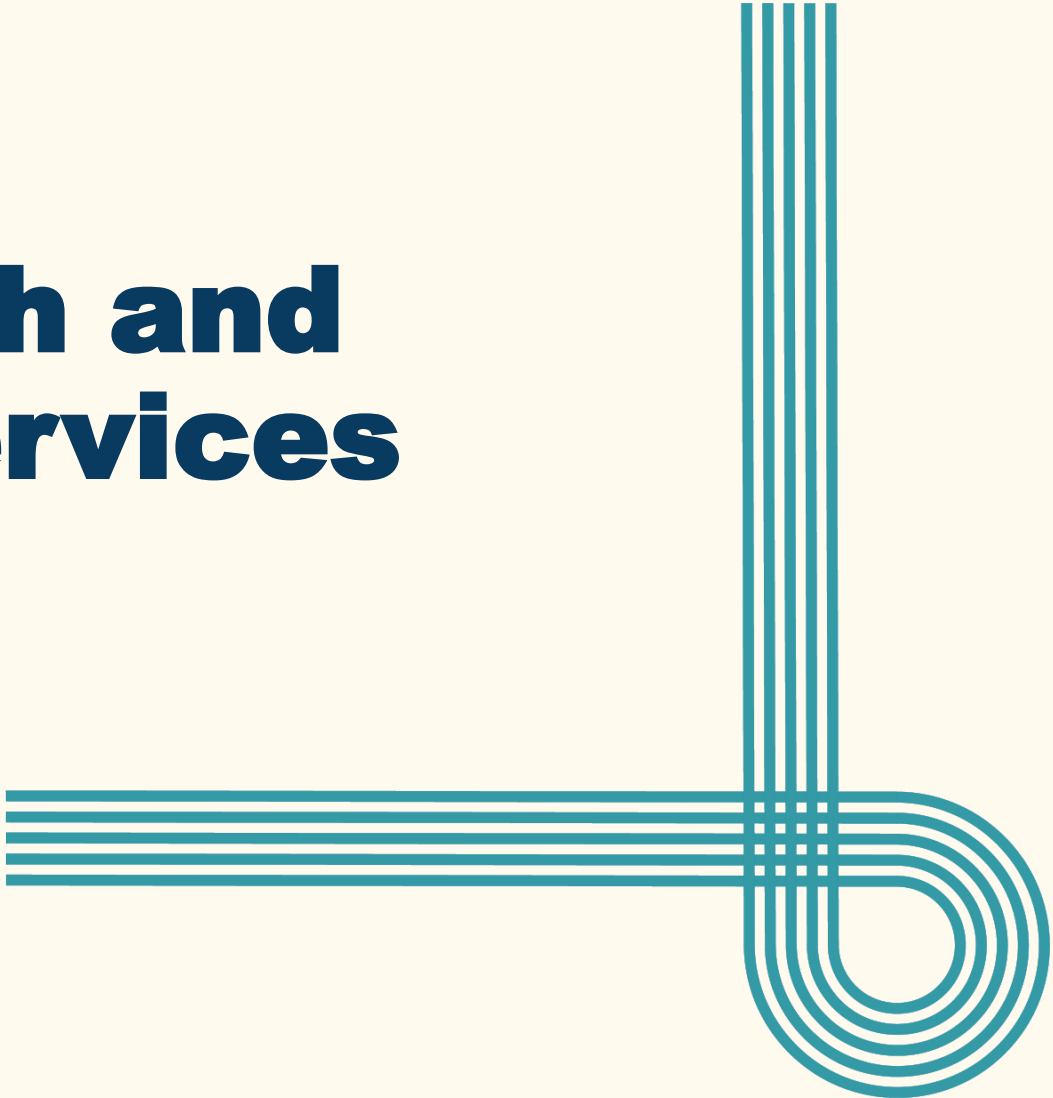
SSI/SSDI beneficiaries will be referred to a benefits counselor to discuss how earned income can impact their benefits



EIPD will include documentation of individual's disability and barriers to employment for their casefile

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a horizontal line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a vertical line.

EIPD Youth and Student Services

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a vertical line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a horizontal line.

Student Services: Pre-ETS Overview

Pre-Employment Transition Services

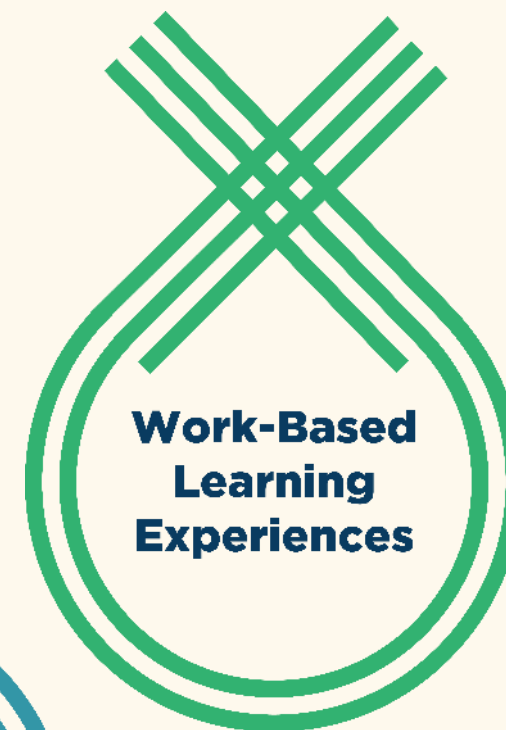
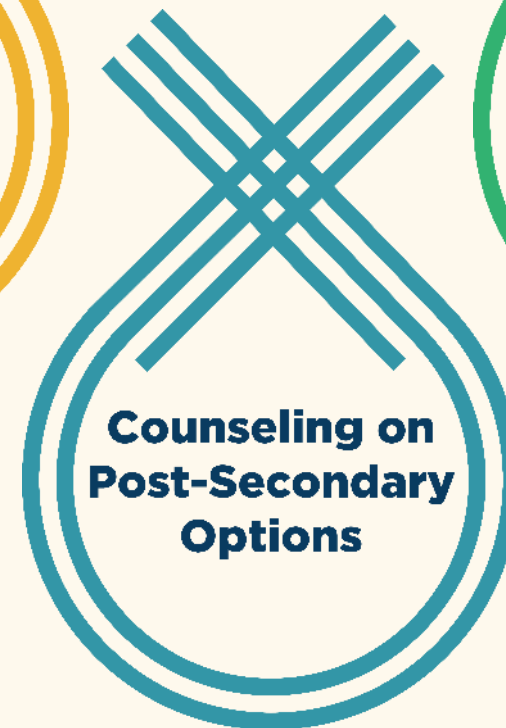
Pre-ETS gives students with disabilities early access to career planning, work experience, and job readiness training to support a successful transition from high school to college, careers and adulthood.

To participate in Pre-ETS, you must:

- Be a student with a disability (IEP, 504 plan or other documentation)
- Be enrolled in a post-secondary program
- Have a signed consent form



Student Services: Pre-ETS Activities



Transition Services Overview

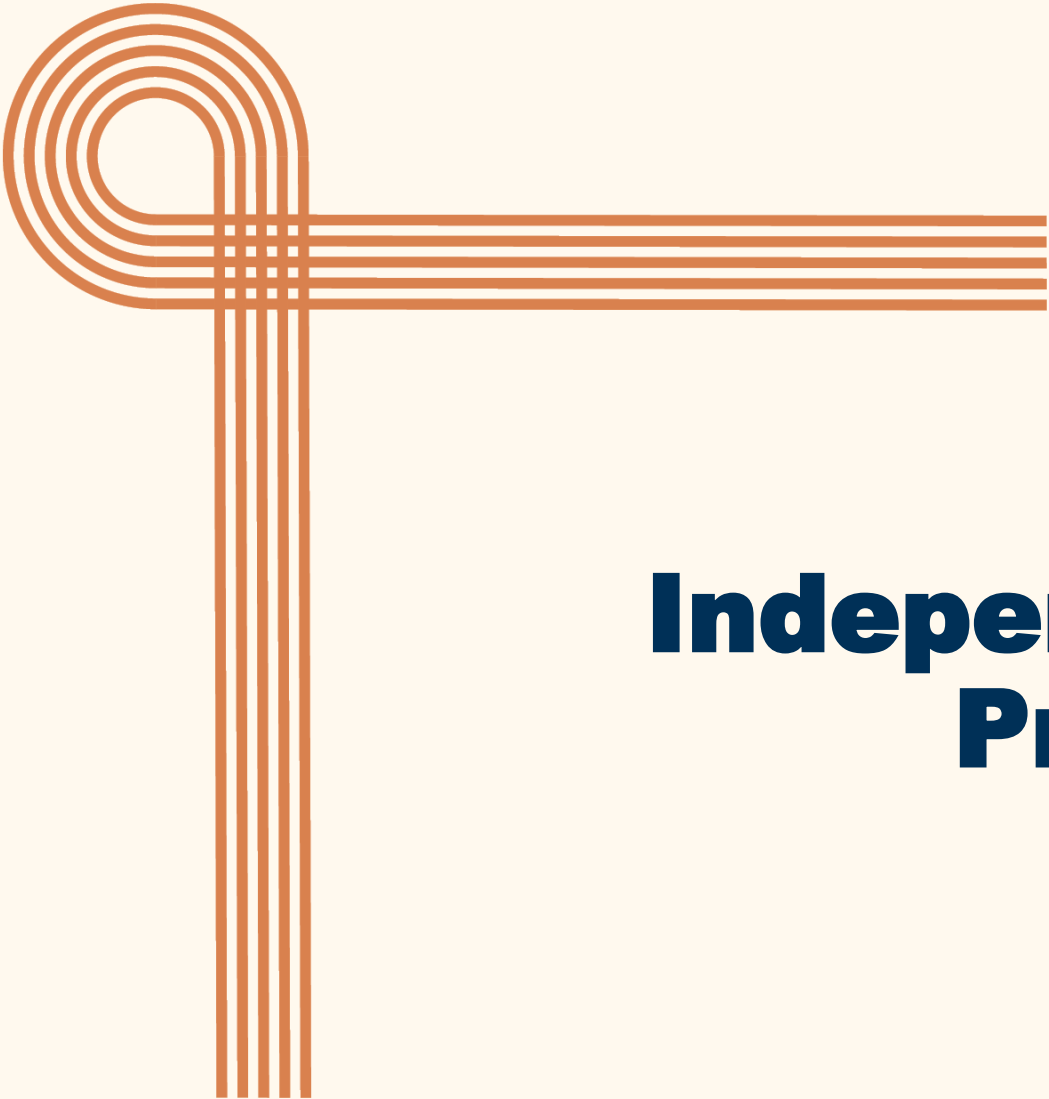


EIPD Transition Services

Young people with more significant disability-related barriers can apply to become an EIPD client. Eligible clients will partner with a counselor to explore career interests, identify an employment goal, develop a customized plan to achieve that goal, and overcome challenges they face along the way.

To participate in EIPD Transition Services, you must:

- Be a youth with a disability, age 14+
- Apply for EIPD services and be determined eligible

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a horizontal line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a vertical line.

Independent Living Program

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a vertical line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a horizontal line.

Independent Living Program Overview

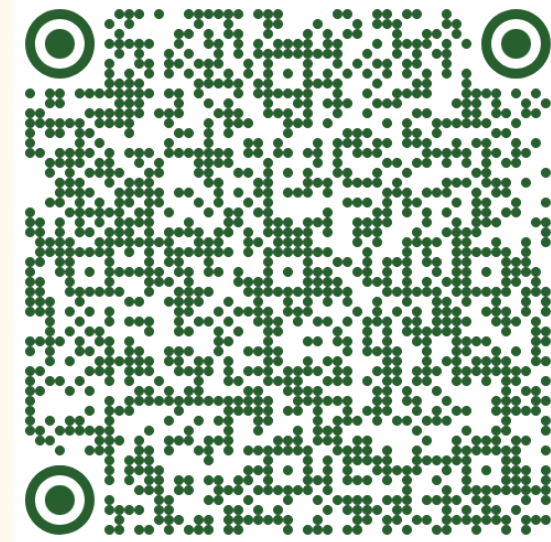


- **The Independent Living Rehabilitation Program – commonly known as IL – supports community living and independence for people with disabilities**
- **We believe that all people can live with dignity, make their own choices, and participate fully in society**

Independent Living Services

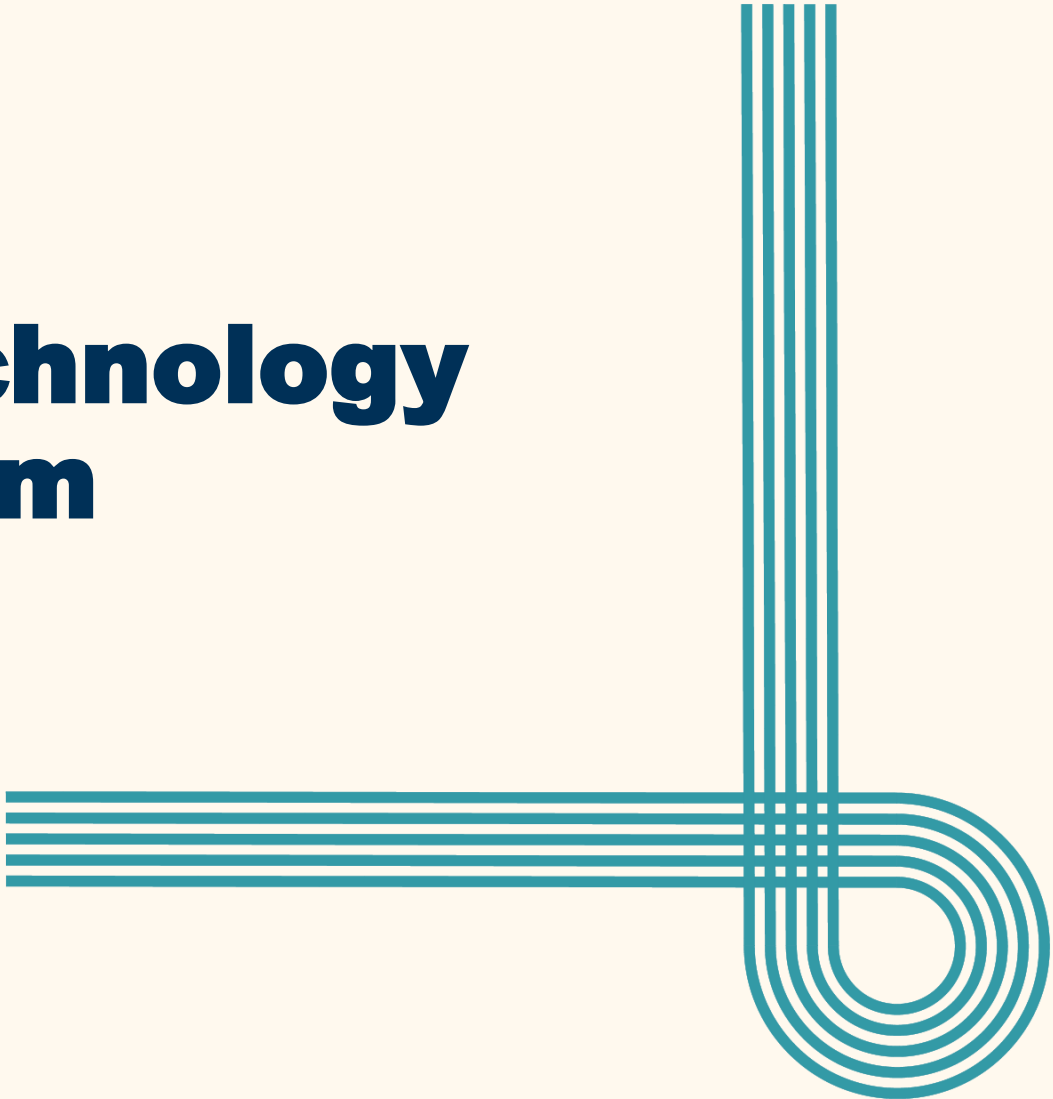
- IL program provides person-centered services to approximately 2000 people annually, focusing on de-institutionalization and independence
 - Guidance, Counseling and Assessments
 - Personal Assistance Services
 - Housing and Community Integration
 - Rehabilitation and Assistive Tech Services
 - Skills Training

SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFO:



A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a horizontal line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a vertical line.

Assistive Technology Program

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The top part of the 'L' is a vertical line that curves into a semi-circle, and the bottom part is a horizontal line.



NCATP Overview

- **The North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) is a state and federally funded program that provides assistive technology services statewide to people of all ages and abilities**
- **NCATP promotes independence for people with disabilities through access to technology for over 12,000 people with disabilities each year**





NCATP Services

NCATP leads North Carolina's efforts to carry out the Federal 21st Century Assistive Technology Act by providing:

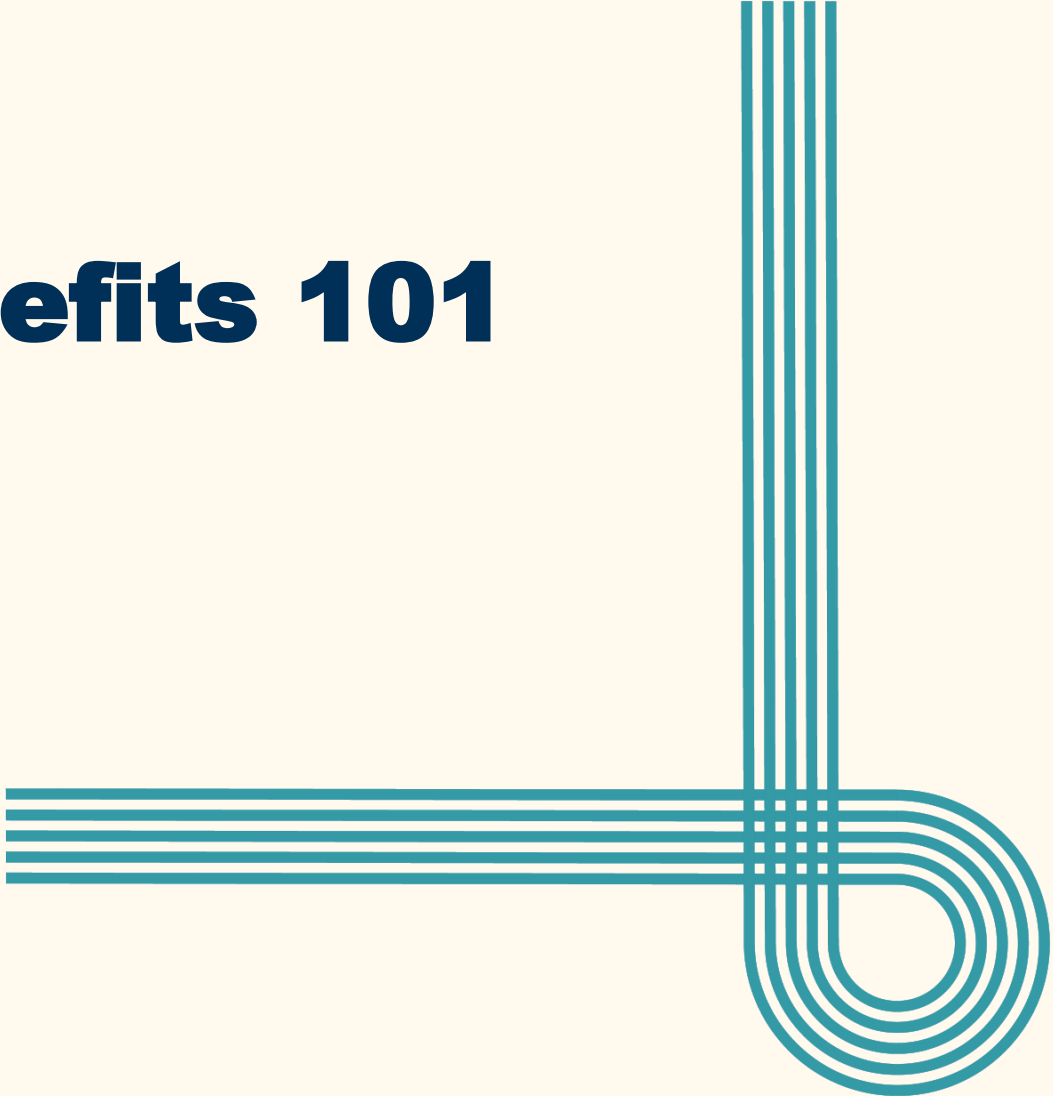
- Device demonstration
- Short-term device loans
- AT reutilization

SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFO:

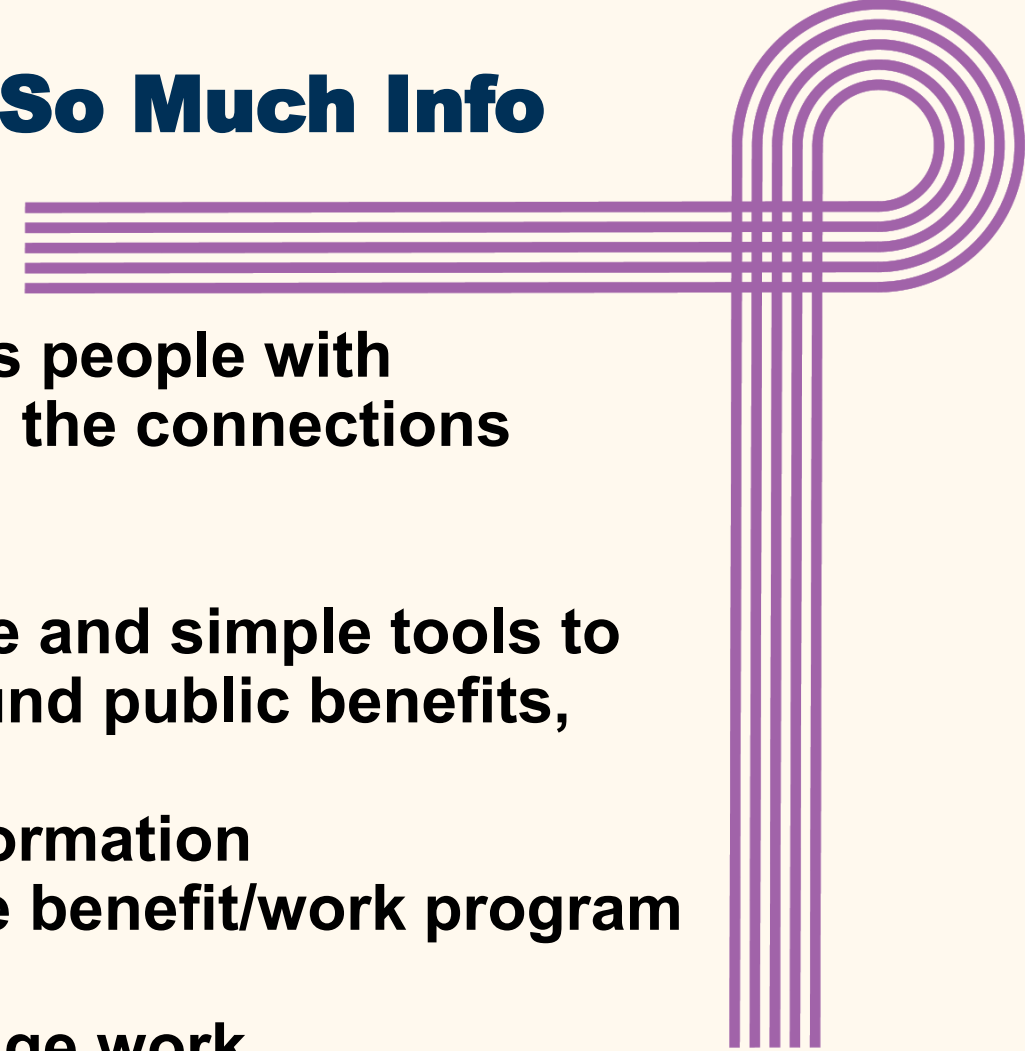


A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The lines are arranged in a way that they appear to be layered or overlapping, creating a sense of depth.

Disability Benefits 101

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The lines are arranged in a way that they appear to be layered or overlapping, creating a sense of depth.

Disability Benefits 101: One Tool, So Much Info

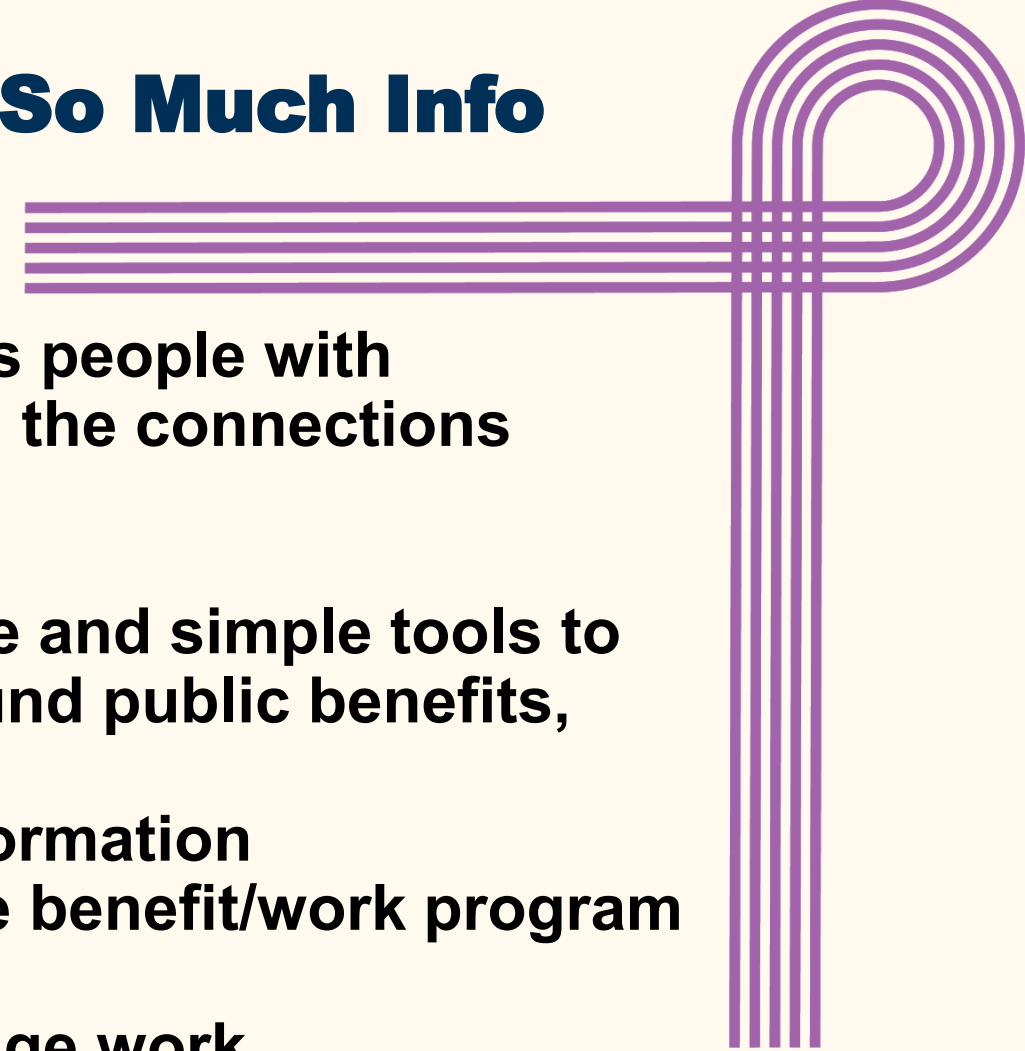


Disability Benefits 101 (www.db101.org) helps people with disabilities and service providers understand the connections between work and benefits.

DB101 provides information in plain language and simple tools to help dispel myths and reduce confusion around public benefits, earned income, health insurance, and more.

- Safe Harbor: no personally identifying information
- User-friendly estimators help demonstrate benefit/work program interactions
- Features Disability Calculators to encourage work
- Live as of May 2025

Disability Benefits 101: One Tool, So Much Info



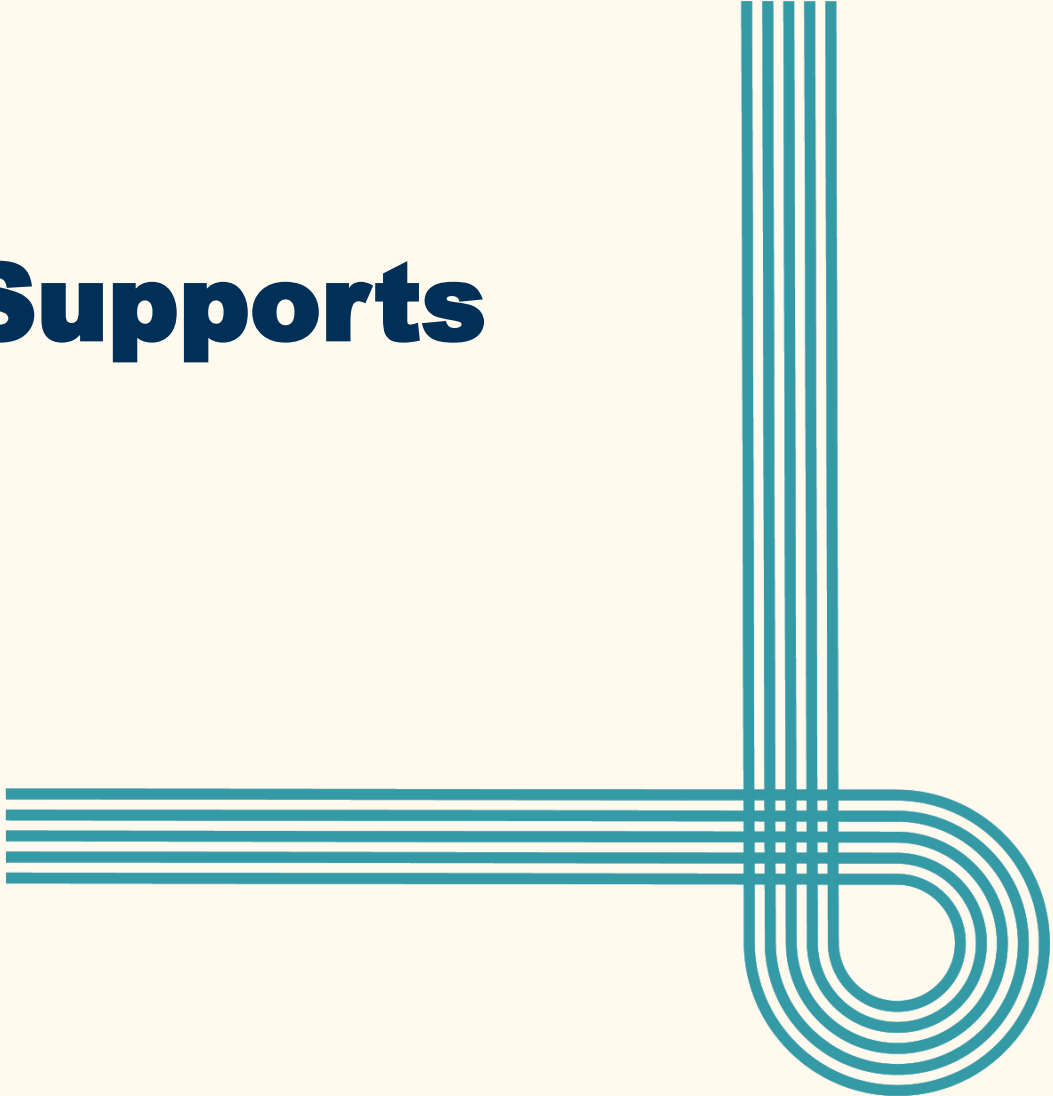
Disability Benefits 101 (www.db101.org) helps people with disabilities and service providers understand the connections between work and benefits.

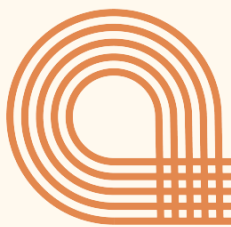
DB101 provides information in plain language and simple tools to help dispel myths and reduce confusion around public benefits, earned income, health insurance, and more.

- Safe Harbor: no personally identifying information
- User-friendly estimators help demonstrate benefit/work program interactions
- Features Disability Calculators to encourage work
- Live as of May 2025

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel orange lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The lines are arranged in a way that they overlap and create a sense of depth.

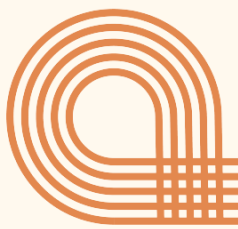
TBI Specific Supports

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide, consisting of multiple parallel teal lines that form a large, stylized 'L' shape. The lines are arranged in a way that they overlap and create a sense of depth.



Individuals served with a primary TBI diagnosis

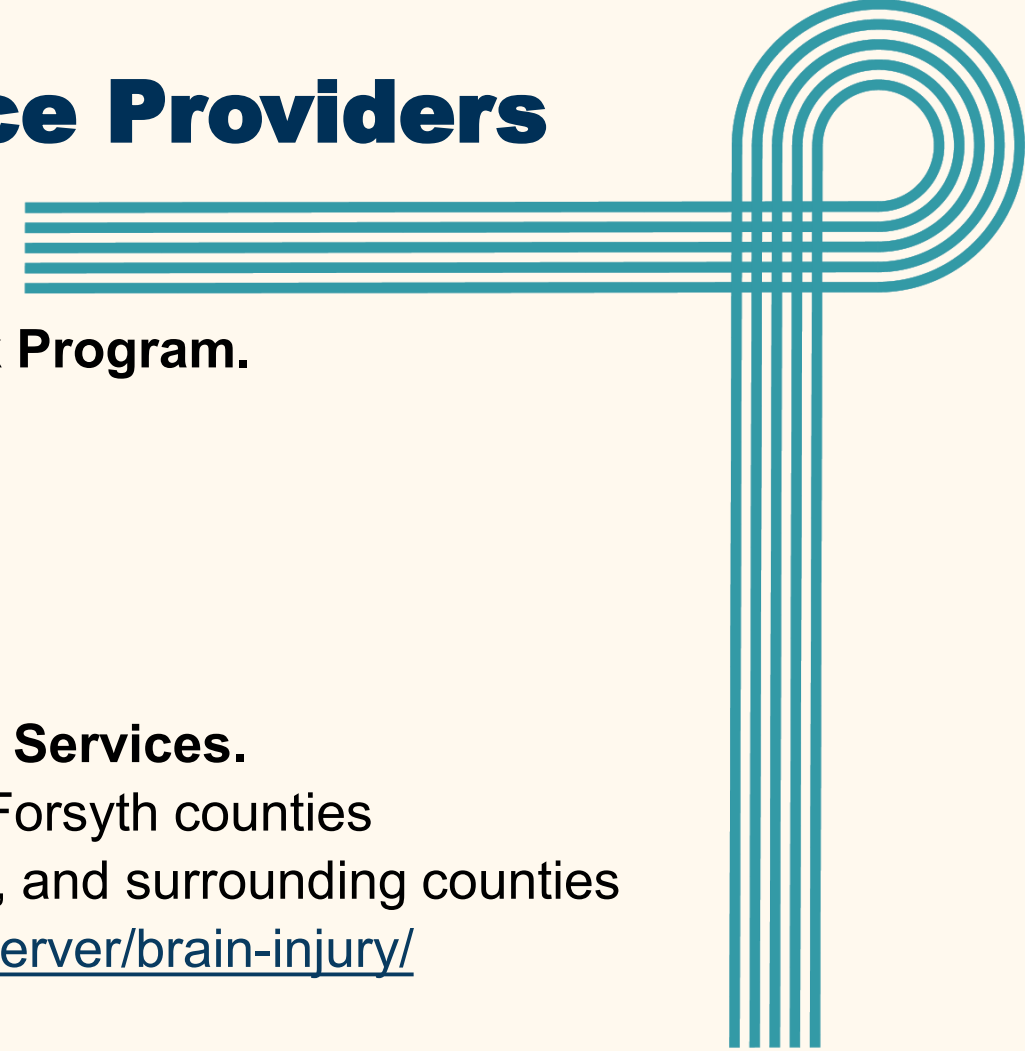
- **July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025**
 - VR eligible served 401 and 37 reaching a successful employment closure.
 - IL eligible served 30 and 4 reaching a successful closure.
- **July 1, 2025 – May 11, 2026**
 - VR eligible served 389 and 34 reaching a successful employment closure.
 - IL eligible served 27 and 6 reaching a successful closure.



Brain Injury Support Services

- Outcome based comprehensive service specific to the needs of individuals diagnosed with either a traumatic or non traumatic brain injury that would like to go to work.
- Service involves an assessment to identify the individual's specific needs in the areas of Cognitive Rehabilitation, Therapy/Counseling, Case Management, and Occupational Information and Exploration.
- Cognitive rehabilitation is focused on overcoming specific barriers to employment prior to beginning job development.
- The individuals will then move forward with supports for job development and placement, 90 day follow along supports leading to successful closure and will receive extended follow along supports post EIPD case closure.
- Services are provided by a Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapist that is also a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) under the Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialist (ACBIS) at the time of hire or within one year from the state day of employment.
- Overarching goal is to assist individuals with brain injuries pursue and finding meaningful employment.

Brain Injury Support Service Providers



- **Community Workforce Solutions Gateway to Work Program.**
 - Location in Wake County
 - Serves Wake and surrounding counties
 - <https://www.gatewayclubhouse.org/services>
- **Community Partnerships Inc. Brain Injury Support Services.**
 - Locations in Greenville, Mecklenburg, Wake, and Forsyth counties
 - Serves Wake, Durham, Mecklenburg, Pitt, Forsyth, and surrounding counties
 - <https://www.communitypartnerships.org/who-we-server/brain-injury/>
- **Contact Marcia Gibson EIPD Program Specialist regarding further information on Brain Injury Support Services.**
 - Email: marcia.gibson@dhhs.nc.gov
 - Phone: 919-855-3598

A decorative border made of multiple parallel blue lines. It features a vertical line on the left and a horizontal line on the top, both with rounded, overlapping ends. A horizontal line on the bottom and a vertical line on the right are also present, with the bottom line having a rounded end on the right and the right line having a rounded end at the top. The word "Questions?" is centered within this frame.

Questions?