



## INCLUSION WORKS NEWS

### Inclusion Works Provider Innovation Awardees

#### CONGRATULATIONS to:



**Alleghany County Group Homes Inc.**  
**Vocational Opportunities of Cherokee Inc.**

**Neuse Enterprises Inc.**  
**OE Enterprises Inc.**

#### Candidates were chosen based on:

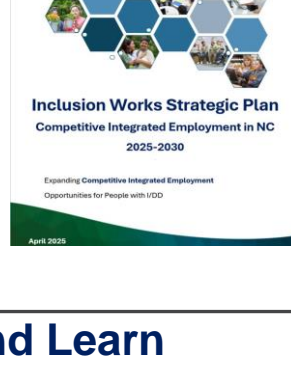
**Organizational Values**  
**Commitment to CIE**  
**Organizational Capacity**  
**Long- and Short-Term Goals**

### Inclusion Works Strategic Plan

NCDHHS has finalized the *Draft* Inclusion Works Strategic Plan. This document outlines the vision for improving CIE Opportunities for CIE for people with I/DD in North Carolina.

The Advisory Committee, Advocacy Partners and Stakeholders across North Carolina contributed feedback. Look for the final version of the Strategic Plan in August 2025.

For more information on how the Strategic Plan was developed, access the [Webinar Recording!](#)



### Inclusion Works Hosts June Lunch and Learn

This past June, Inclusion Works hosted a Lunch and Learn featuring a panel of Inclusive Employers who hire people with I/DD. Employers discussed the benefits of hiring people with I/DD as part of a skilled and talented workforce. The panel was led by Brianne Tomaszewski, Ph.D., MPH. Brianne is an Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry with the UNC TEACCH Autism Program and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Access the webinar here! [Inclusion Works Employer Panel](#)



### Work Together NC

*Possibility to Opportunity*

#### Upcoming Inclusion Works Lunch and Learn on August 20

Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities (EIPD) will host The Windmills Disability Awareness Training Program on August 20. The Windmills Disability Awareness Training Program equips business leaders with the knowledge, skills and tools to create an inclusive workplace. Don't miss it!



**Register for**  
[Lunch and Learns](#)



## INCLUSION CONNECTS

**Inclusion Connects is a NCDHHS program to connect people with I/DD to more choices and more access to services and supports.**

Inclusion Connects is addressing the critical shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSP) in North Carolina. The shortage significantly affects the availability and quality of home and community-based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) including employment opportunities. [The DSP Workforce Plan](#) outlines DHHS' comprehensive, multi-year strategy to address this shortage and reaffirms our commitment to supporting DSPs and the vital services they provide. Inclusion Connects is funding Direct Support Scholarships now! [Click here to find out more:](#)

## PARTNERSHIPS at WORK

### Collaboration Continues to Thrive

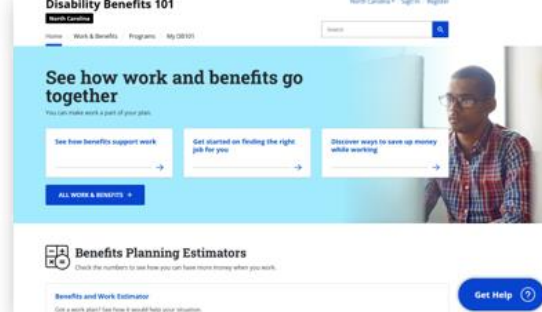
NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services, Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities, and the Tailored Plans, along with Work Together NC and the Service Provider Community, continue to grow their partnership to effectively transition people with I/DD from non-CIE jobs to CIE jobs. A new system was developed to streamline the process flow from Assessment to Referral to Employment. After 2 months, the results have shown an overall increase in referrals to services for those people who have chosen to pursue CIE.



## KEY UPDATES

[Disability Benefits 101 \(DB 101\)](#) is a new online resource designed to help people with disabilities, their families and guardians, service providers, and other advocates better understand how work and benefits can go together.

- It provides information in plain language with simple tools to help dispel myths and reduce confusion around public benefits, earned income, health insurance, and more;
- It also provides answers to frequently asked questions, tips on how to avoid common pitfalls, information on how to save money while working, and resources to help people with disabilities prepare for work;
- EIPD is planning DB101 training events for stakeholders – more information to come.



## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

### Inclusion Works Wants to Hear From You!

Do you have a success story? We would love to hear from people who are working in good paying jobs in their communities, those who helped a person get and keep a job, and employers who have successfully hired employees with I/DD. Please reach out to [Inclusion Works](#) to share your stories!



### Coming Up: Fall Conferences

Join NCDHHS Inclusion Works at the 2025 fall North Carolina Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (NCARF) Conference! Conference runs from September 17 to September 19.



NCDHHS will be in attendance at the NC Association of People Supporting Employment First (NCAPSE) conference from October 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>. Join us!

Inclusion Works is proud to be a member of the [State Employment Leadership Network](#). We will be attending the annual meeting in Alexandria, VA from October 21 to October 23.



**State Employment Leadership Network**



## RESOURCES

### Helpful Links and Resources for Inclusion Works

[Inclusion Works Initiative](#)  
[Paths to Competitive Integrated Employment \(CIE\) Guide](#)  
[Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities \(EIPD\)](#)  
[EIPD Information Request Form](#)  
[Division of Health Benefits \(DHB/NC Medicaid\)](#)  
[NC LME/MCO Directory](#)  
[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ's\) on CIE](#)

### Meet the Inclusion Works Team

- Kelly Crosbie, Director of DMHDDSUS
- Renee Rader, Deputy Director and COO of DMHDDSUS
- Ginger Yarbrough, Chief Clinical Officer - IDD, TBI & OLMSTEAD
- Claire Colligan – I/DD Employment Lead -IDD/TBI/OLMSTEAD
- Tina Barrett –, Assistant Director, IDD, IDD/ TBI/OLMSTEAD
- Pam Scott, Assistant General Counsel, OGC
- Chris Egan, Asst. Secretary for Employment & Community Access
- Kathie Smith, Director of EIPD
- Kenneth Bausell, Sr. Dir. of Employment & Community Access
- LaCosta Parker, I/DD Program Manager, DHB
- Tara Heasley – I/DD Policy Consultant, DHB
- Anita McMahan – Chief of Employment Services & Prog. Dev., EIPD
- Adrienne Kittle - Program Specialist for I/DD, EIPD
- Jeanna Cullinan – Comms & Special Proj., Employment & Inclusion
- Dina Reynolds – Communications Consultant, DMH/DD/SUS
- Marla Sink - Strategic Communications Lead DMH/DD/SUD



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
 HUMAN SERVICES**

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/inclusion-works>

NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider 5/2025