

EMPLOYMENT FIRST GEORGIA/EFG

Realizing Possibilities

Employment First means that employment should be the first and preferred option for all people, regardless of their **disability**. Under an Employment First policy, employment in the general workforce at or above minimum wage is the first and preferred option for all working age citizens with disabilities.

An Employment First policy benefits Georgians with disabilities, who get real jobs based on their abilities, talents and passions.

It benefits Georgia families, whose peace of mind and financial well-being are dramatically improved when their loved one with disabilities is employed.

It benefits Georgia employers, who get access to a talented, committed workforce.

It benefits Georgia taxpayers, who get a positive return on the dollars invested.

\$260/month = the average gain for Georgia taxpayers when a person with intellectual disabilities gets vocational rehabilitation employment services that help them work. That's because when Georgians with disabilities work, they are no longer partaking of more expensive services, and they become taxpayers themselves.¹

¹ Robert E. Cimera (2010) National Cost Efficiency of Supported Employees With Intellectual Disabilities: 2002 to 2007. American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.



Many Georgians with disabilities, including D.W., are labeled “unemployable” or “unready to work”. But in reality, it’s our system that’s not working. D.W. received employment support services and now has a full time job at \$11 an hour with benefits.

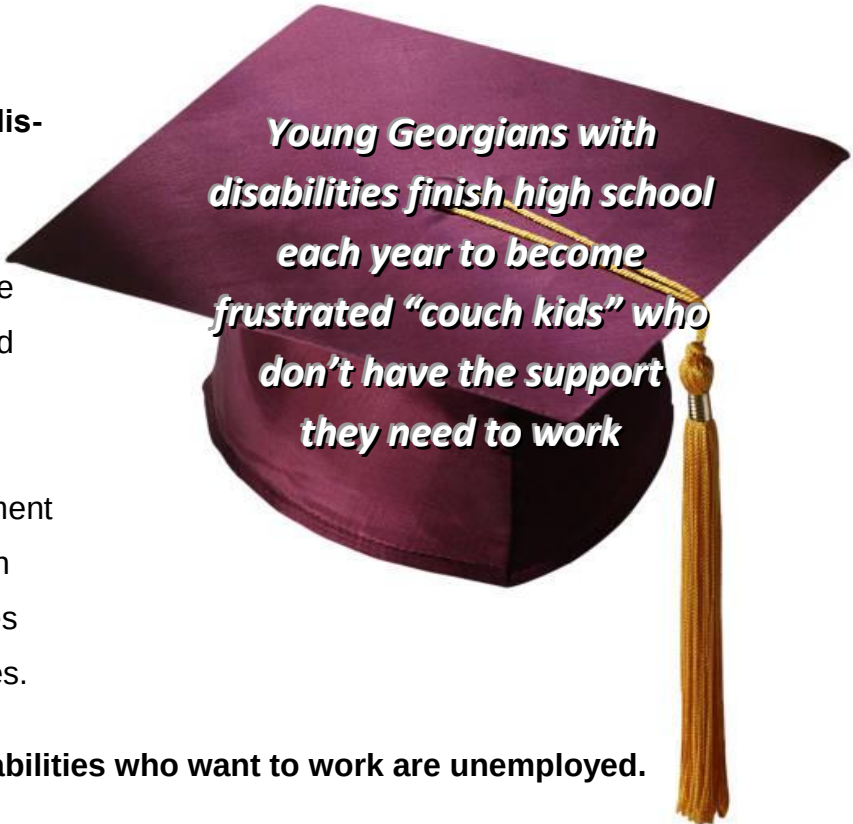


Paula Clark of Tift County enhances her employer’s efficiency. The system she and her job coach created for sorting laundry has been adopted by several co-workers. Carlotta Booker of Savannah uses technology to make her dream job in retail a reality.



Georgians with disabilities want jobs and careers, but our current system makes it tough to work.

Georgia's disability support system disincentivizes employment. Under the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, providers are reimbursed up to \$17,500 for segregated day services, but only up to \$10,500 for supporting a person to participate in the general workforce. No ongoing employment services are available for Georgians with physical disabilities. Employment policies are not aligned across our state agencies.



Young Georgians with disabilities finish high school each year to become frustrated "couch kids" who don't have the support they need to work

As a result, most Georgians with disabilities who want to work are unemployed.

The majority of Georgians with developmental disabilities want to work, but only 14% have a job.²



Edgar Victoria of Cartersville is one of many young Georgians with disabilities who wants to be an employee, not a couch kid.

The Employment First Georgia Coalition is funded and supported by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Georgia Advocacy Office. The Employment First Georgia Coalition is made up of Georgians with disabilities, family members, advocates, and providers who want to see our state adopt an Employment First policy that will prioritize, incentivize and support employment in the publicly funded service system.

What we want is a policy that will establish Employment First as the direction of Georgia, and direct all involved state agencies to collaborate in aligning their programs and resources to that end. Involved agencies must include the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities, Department of Education, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, & Department of Community Health.

For more information, please contact Employment First Georgia Coalition Co-Coordinator D'Arcy Robb at darcy.t.robb@gmail.com or 404-955-8558

² National Core Indicators 2011-2012. National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services and Human Services Research Institute. <http://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/charts/>.