

Monthly tips and resources for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Defining Competitive Integrated Employment

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You may have heard the phrase “Competitive Integrated Employment” (CIE) during school or while using a service agency. This phrase is used by teachers, case managers, and Vocational Rehabilitation staff. CIE is also referred to as community integrated employment, inclusive community employment, competitive integrated work, or simply integrated employment. These terms all mean the same thing.

CIE refers to a job that:

- Is located within the community: This means the job is performed in a typical workplace setting, alongside individuals without disabilities.
- Offers competitive wages: You'll earn at least minimum wage, and often more.
- Includes benefits: This may include health insurance, paid time off, and opportunities for advancement.



Let's explore CIE a bit more.

Competitive: Employees with disabilities receive the same wages and benefits as their colleagues without disabilities, regardless of their employment status (full-time or part-time). Everyone has equal opportunities for promotion within the company. Reasonable accommodations are provided to all employees as needed, which may include assistive technology, equipment adjustments, or other forms of support. CIE includes opportunities for career advancement, including skills training and professional development.

Integrated: Employees with and without disabilities work together in the same physical space, fostering social interaction and teamwork. Individuals with disabilities are not isolated or separated from their colleagues within the workplace.

Employment: A wide variety of jobs are available within your community. Many businesses cultivate positive and inclusive workplace cultures. You can receive ongoing support from an adult agency, such as job coaching, skills training, or job adaptations, to facilitate a smooth transition into the workforce and ensure your success.

Aside from knowing what CIE is, you may want to know why it's important. CIE offers benefits to job seekers and employers.

Benefits for Job Seekers:

- Access to Employer Paid Benefits: Most jobs offer paid leave, retirement, and health insurance depending on hours worked.

- Well-being: Having a job can give you a sense of purpose and increase self-esteem. This improves your quality of life.
- Independence: CIE provides financial power, allowing you to pay bills without relying on others.
- Learn New Skills: You will gain more experience and learn new skills as you work. You might learn new skills through education, on-the-job training, and mentoring.
- Social Connections: Working with others gives you meaningful interactions, builds relationships, and can even lead to friendships with coworkers.

Benefits for Employers:

- Innovation: Diverse teams bring a wider range of perspectives, skills, and experiences, leading to more creative solutions and improved problem-solving.
- Customer Relations: A diverse workforce better understands and connects with a diverse customer base, fostering stronger relationships and increased partnership opportunities.
- Positive and Inclusive Culture: When everyone feels valued and included, employee morale and commitment improve, creating a more positive and productive work environment.
- Tax Incentives: Employers who hire individuals with disabilities may qualify for tax credits or deductions.

Wherever you are in your employment journey, CIE will give you opportunities and experiences beyond your imagination. For more information, see our list of resources below.

Resources:

- [“What is Competitive Integrated Employment?” Video](#) from the Pacer’s National Parent Center on Transition and Employment.
- [Competitive Integrated Employment Information](#) from the Center on Community Living and Careers.

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