

## **TASH Resolution on Integrated Employment**

### **Statement of Purpose**

TASH recognizes the importance of work in the lives of all people as an element of full participation and inclusion in society. TASH calls for rapid and immediate development of individualized and integrated employment for all people with disabilities and the rapid and permanent replacement of segregated activity centers and sheltered workshops. TASH affirms the right of all people with significant disabilities to full participation in community life with supports tailored to individual abilities and needs. Integrated employment is a critical element of community living.

### **Rationale**

Despite the fact that individuals with significant disabilities have much to contribute to community workplaces, the vast majority do not have access to integrated jobs due to a variety of factors. In many instances individuals need access to work site supports and yet others need a customized process that allows them to make discrete contributions in relation to employer needs. Most individuals with significant disabilities continue to be isolated and segregated in a day activity centers and sheltered workshops or are unemployed and unserved on waiting lists. Reliance on community participation must not be seen as a substitute for employment. Furthermore, if individuals with significant disabilities are to achieve full participation and inclusion in society, work is viewed as the most defining aspect of that status. Employment should be an expected life activity for individuals with significant disabilities and they should not be forced into a decision of whether or not to work as an aspect of self-determination. Self-determination provides the right to direct the type and manner of employment and provides individuals a way to opt out of working for those who prefer a different lifestyle.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT TASH, an international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates and people who work in the disability field, endorses the following features of employment for all people with significant disabilities:

- **Integration:** Employment of people with significant disabilities must be in regular employment settings where they work along side people without disabilities. Frequent and ongoing interactions and the development of relationships must be assured.
- **Income and benefits:** Employment must result in paid compensation of at least the minimum wage, up to prevailing wage, for work performed and should include benefits comparable to co-workers performing similar work.
- **Customization and Choice:** Job seekers should be offered access to a customized process that allows for a negotiated relationship with the employer. This process serves to avoid strict competitive employment by focusing on the discrete contributions of the individual in relation to specific needs of the employer. Job selection and the duration of any job must be based on the choice of the individual
- **Control of resources:** People with disabilities and those they choose to support them should be given the option of controlling and directing the funding and resources allocated on their behalf for employment.
- **Ongoing career advancement:** Employment for persons with significant disabilities must be viewed as careers that evolve over time driven by the individual's interests where positive job changes and advancement occur with access to higher pay, greater responsibility and variety, better working conditions that meet personal needs.
- **Individualized and natural supports:** The assistance and support provided persons with significant disabilities should be individualized according to their conditions for

success, and their abilities. The supports provided should maximize natural features of support provided by personnel in the workplace.

- **Funding:** Funding for “day” services at the federal, state and local levels should be directed towards employment as the first and most important outcome for adults with significant disabilities. Funding for community participation, recreation and other non-work outcomes should be designed around the work routines of the individual.
- **Education:** Employment should be an expected outcome of the educational process for students with significant disabilities of both high school and college settings. Educational settings should provide information, supports and experiences to all students, including students with significant disabilities, on employment and the importance of a working life.
- **Business ownership:** For those individuals with significant disabilities who wish to own their own business, access to funding, services and supports should be provided in a manner similar to that of wage employment.
- **Equal access:** People with the greatest support needs must be given high priority for employment.

*Adopted December 1989*

*Revised March 2000*

*Revised July 2009*