



## Differences Between Sheltered Work and Competitive Integrated Employment

Sheltered workshops are part of an old model of employment for people with disabilities, favoring segregation over values like choice and equity. Typically, in sheltered workshops people with disabilities work together, doing tasks that are different and apart from workers without disabilities. Federal and state law allow some sheltered workshops to pay workers with disabilities less than minimum wage. Competitive integrated employment (CIE) is Indiana’s preferred and expected employment option for people with disabilities. CIE involves work done alongside non-disabled colleagues and customers, in the community, for the same wages and benefits that employees without disabilities receive for doing the same work.

	Sheltered Work	CIE
Who works there?	People with disabilities	People with and without disabilities
What does it pay?	Usually less than minimum wage	Minimum wage or more
Do workers get benefits, like health insurance or retirement?	No, because sheltered workers are not considered employees	Maybe; employees with disabilities get the same benefits as employees without disabilities
How does the boss determine worker pay?	Based upon the worker’s productivity level	By the number of hours worked and/or the amount of skill or experience needed

### Your Rights to Work in the Community

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that sheltered workers be told about their right to prepare for and try CIE at least once each year. WIOA also limits participation in sheltered work by requiring youth with disabilities to try CIE, with supports and services from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, before deciding whether they want to work in the community or at a sheltered workshop.

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### Equity Through Advocacy

The Protection and Advocacy System for the State of Indiana



## **What is Competitive Integrated Employment?**

**Competitive** means that an employee with a disability earns a similar wage and benefits as employees without disabilities that do the same work.

**Integrated** means working with co-workers, customers, and suppliers with and without disabilities.

**Employment** means providing a good or service in exchange for money.

The WIOA has additional CIE requirements. For example, that CIE can be full-time or part-time, and CIE may include owning one's own business (also called entrepreneurship). Because some sheltered work pays less than minimum wage, WIOA clarifies that CIE results in at least minimum wage pay. In Indiana, the current minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, but may be higher for some jobs through the federal government. Finally, CIE must offer employees with disabilities opportunities for career advancement.

## **What Is a Sheltered Workshop?**

Sheltered workshops typically hire only people with disabilities to conduct piece work, or a single assembly task, while hiring non-disabled employees to supervise and assist workers with disabilities. Workers with disabilities often complete the same task over and over. They are frequently paid less than minimum wage, and sometimes earn only a few pennies per hour. Sheltered workers are not paid during "down time," or the time they spend in the sheltered workshop when no piece work is available. Unlike their supervisors without disabilities, sheltered workshops rarely provide workers with disabilities benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, workers compensation, and paid time off. It is very difficult to learn new skills or get promoted as a sheltered worker.

## **Questions?**

Feel free to contact Indiana Disability Rights with any questions about this fact sheet.

Phone: (317) 722-5555

Toll Free Phone: (800) 622-4845

Website: <https://www.in.gov/idr/for-help-fill-this-out/>

Email: [info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org](mailto:info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org)

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