



# New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

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Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Chris Christie, *Governor*

## **POLICY RESOLUTION: SETC #2016-07**

**SUBJECT:** *Employment First* Career Pathways Framework

### **Purpose**

In April 2012, Governor Chris Christie declared that New Jersey would become the 14th *Employment First* state in the United States. According to the United States Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy; *Employment First* means that competitive employment is the first and preferred post-education activity for everyone, including individuals with disabilities. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 places a greater emphasis on career pathways across its titles. *Employment First* strategies must be developed within a Career Pathways Framework to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities, have equal access to competitive integrated employment in the general workforce and opportunities for economic self-sufficiency.

### **Background**

*Employment First* is a framework centering on the premise that competitive integrated employment is the first and preferred outcome for individuals with disabilities, and New Jersey commits to support the development of an *Employment First* Framework utilizing Career Pathways to improve competitive integrated employment for individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Capitalizing on the work already done by the New Jersey Department of Labor in identifying industry sectors that engage employers and align the skills and training to the needs of targeted industry sectors, New Jersey's workforce development system will strive to:

- Increase the availability of integrated workforce, education and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Increase the number of youth with disabilities who earn a post-secondary industry-valued credential or degree in their chosen careers;
- Increase knowledge among individuals with disabilities and their families of the variety of pathways that lead to competitive integrated employment; and
- Increase the number of individuals with disabilities who obtain competitive integrated employment.

**RESOLUTION: The State Employment and Training Commission undertakes a commitment to support the development of an *Employment First* Career Pathways Framework to improve competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

**Commission Approved: January 19, 2016**