Employment rates for individuals with developmental disabilities are lower than those found in the general population. In fiscal year 2014-15, the employment rate for individuals with developmental disabilities in California was 4.8% lower than at the national level. This brief outlines the characteristics of employed individuals in California, which may facilitate a better understanding of these differences.
Employment as a Goal: A Possible First Step

Having work as a goal in the Individual Program Plan (IPP) may be an important first step on the path to a community job. Of the 8,405 people who took the ACS in FY 2014-15, 1,023 (12%) were employed in the community. Of those with a job, 69% had work as a goal in their IPP. In contrast, among people who did not have a job, 39% had work as a goal in their IPP. In addition, more people who didn’t have a job reported wanting a job (44%) than those who had work as a goal in their IPP.
Demographics

Individuals with developmental disabilities who were employed in the community were mostly male, under the age of 40, had an explicit means of communication (more than gestures or body language), and were in good to excellent health.

Gender

- 59% Male
- 41% Female

Age

- 31% 19-29
- 22% 30-39
- 17% 40-49
- 17% 50-59
- 10% 60-69
- 2% 70-79

Communication

- 17% Verbal
- 15% Sign Language/Finger Spelling
- 11% Communication Device/Aid
- 2% Gestures/Body Language

Health

- Had Poor Health
- Had Good to Excellent Health

Summary of Key Findings

- Males were employed in the community at a higher rate than females.
- Individuals under age 40 were more likely to work in the community. As age increased, rate of employment in the community decreased.
- Individuals who used gestures or body language as their preferred means of communication had a lower rate of employment than those who used other forms of communication.
- Individuals in good to excellent health were employed at double the rate of those in poor health.
Individuals who moved independently without aids were employed at a higher rate than those who required the help of aides or were non-ambulatory. Individuals with mild intellectual disability had the highest rate of community employment. As level of intellectual disability increased, rate of employment decreased. Individuals with two or fewer diagnoses other than intellectual disability were more likely to be employed. Individuals with chemical dependency, Prader-will syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, or an other disability not listed had the highest rates of employment.

### Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Diagnosis</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moves Self Without Aids</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves Self with Aids or Uses Wheelchair</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Ambulatory, Always Needs Assistance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intellectual Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profound</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Diagnoses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnoses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID Only</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID and 1-2 Other Diagnoses</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID and 3+ Other Diagnoses</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Type of Diagnosis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cerebral Palsy</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Disorder</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seizure Disorder</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Psychiatric Diagnosis</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Injury</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychotic Disorder</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety Disorder</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Disorder</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Syndrome</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Disability Not Listed</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Dependency</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prader-Willi Syndrome</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Diagnostic categories are not mutually exclusive (individuals may have more than one diagnosis). Categories add up to greater than 100%
Merrell is employed as a legislative assistant intern at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. His advice: “Be willing to try out a good job. Even though it might be a challenging job that you don’t like at first, you might actually like it later. Don’t give up.”

Nicole is employed in a competitive integrated setting providing animal care services at Mohnacky Animal Hospital. Nicole feeds and walks the animals at the hospital, prepares them for surgeries, and monitors their recovery, including those in critical condition. She has worked at her job for nearly one year, works full time, and receives above minimum wage. When asked about her job, she responded “I get paid to do what I am passionate about!”

The majority of employed individuals worked in building and grounds cleaning or maintenance (358 people), retail (218 people), or food preparation and food service (150 people).

Few individuals were employed in construction or repair (3 people), farming, fishing or forestry work (3 people), or management, business, or financial operations (4 people).

Summary of Key Findings

- The majority of employed individuals worked in building and grounds cleaning or maintenance (358 people), retail (218 people), or food preparation and food service (150 people).
- Few individuals were employed in construction or repair (3 people), farming, fishing or forestry work (3 people), or management, business, or financial operations (4 people).
People with developmental disabilities benefit from integrated community employment in more ways than just earned income¹,²

- Builds self-esteem
- Increases quality of life
- Increases feelings of independence
- Provides structure
- Expands socialization opportunities
- Increases feelings of social belonging
- Develops new skills and enhances existing skills

Average hours worked in the community in a 2-week period

Services and Supports:
Another Step Towards Competitive Integrated Employment

Individuals who received supports or services were more likely to have a community job. More than half of the 1,023 individuals who had community employment received supports for transportation or for finding, maintaining, or changing jobs. Fewer receive supports or services for education or training and for social relationship issues or meeting people.

Employed Individuals Receiving Support

- 34% Received Support and Had a Community Job
- 6% Did Not Receive Support and Had a Community Job

Type of Support Received by Employed Individuals

- 65% Transportation
- 62% Finding, maintaining, or changing jobs
- 38% Education or training
- 30% Social relationship issues or meeting people

Summary of Key Findings

- Among individuals who received services and supports for finding, maintaining, or changing jobs, 34% were employed in the community. Among individuals who did not receive these supports and services, only 6% were employed in the community.
- 65% of individuals with community employment received assistance with transportation and 62% received assistance with finding, maintaining, or changing jobs. 38% received assistance with education or training, and 30% received assistance with social relationship issues or meeting people.

Other Daily Activities

There are other types of work experiences that individuals with developmental disabilities participate in such as paid activities in facility-based settings and unpaid activities in community or facility settings. The greatest proportion of individuals participated in unpaid activities in facility-based settings.

### Jobs & Activities by Setting

- **Unpaid activity in facility-based setting**: 46%
- **Unpaid activity in community-based setting**: 15%
- **Paid job in facility-based setting**: 12%
- **Paid job in community-based setting**: 12%

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Volunteering & Employment

Volunteering can be a useful part of an individual’s journey towards employment, as it can help individuals to build work skills and explore job interests. It is also a valuable way to contribute to a local community and build community relationships. Over one quarter of individuals volunteered, most of whom were not employed.

### Summary of Key Findings

- The greatest proportion of individuals participated in unpaid activities in facility-based settings (46%). Relativeley fewer individuals participated in unpaid activities (15%) or had a paid job (12%) in the community.
- Over one-quarter of individuals (29%) volunteered.
- The majority of individuals (56%) were not employed and did not volunteer. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of individuals were not employed but did volunteer.