

FY 2026-27 Employment Measure FAQ

OVERVIEW

Q1. What is the Quality Incentive Program (QIP)?

A1. The Quality Incentive Program (QIP) is a Department of Developmental Services (DDS) program to improve individual outcomes, service provider performance, and quality of services. Participating service providers that meet or exceed quality measures developed with input from stakeholders, are eligible up to 10% of a Quality Incentive rate. The [Employment data collection](#) is one of three measures informing the FY 2026-27 rate. See the [QIP webpage](#) for more details and the QIP FAQ for measure specific frequently asked questions.

Q2. What is the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Employment Measure?

A2. The Employment measure asks eligible service providers to report two kinds of information:

- **Staff Training** – how many paid staff completed ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) training or earned/renewed CESP (Certification of Employment Service Professionals) certification.
- **Employment Outcomes** – how many people achieved CIE (Competitively Integrated Employment), group employment, paid internships, and job retention milestones. DDS will use this baseline data to plan future quality efforts and support more CIE.

Q3. Is participation mandatory?

A3. No, participation in the QIP or any of the quality measures is voluntary. However, eligible service providers will not earn their FY 2026-27 Quality Incentive rate if they do not participate in the Employment measure.

Q4. When does data collection occur, and what rate year does it affect?

A4. DDS begins collecting data in Fall 2025 and it will inform the QIP portion of the rate model for FY 2026-27 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027).

Q5. What is the objective of the FY 2026-27 QIP Employment measure?

A5. The [Employment measure](#) has two objectives. Primarily, the goal is to encourage employment service providers to increase the proportion of their staff that has received either Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training or Certification for Employment Service Professionals (CESP) credentialing. Additionally, the measure aims to increase participation and job retention in competitive integrated employment (CIE) for all adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who want CIE.

ELIGIBILITY AND COMPLIANCE

Q6. What are the eligibility requirements to participate in the QIP data collection?

A6. Existing employment service providers that complete the following may participate, if:

- They delivered services and had a Purchase of Service of Authorization for eligible QIP services (see attachment B) during July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, and
- They were fully vendorized before July 1, 2025, and
- They were fully registered in the DDS Provider Directory by **October 30, 2025**.

Providers that were vendored or re-activated on or after July 1, 2025, are **NOT** eligible to participate in the Employment data collection. Guidance for newly vendored /re-activated service providers will be issued in a separate directive.

Q7. What are the compliance requirements to participate in the quality measure?

A7. Service providers must complete the following by **February 27, 2026**:

- Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) – be compliant in one of two ways:
 - Register at the [California Provider Self-Registration Portal](#) or,
 - Get confirmation from vendoring RC that service provider is exempt from EVV.
- Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) – Vendoring RC must:
 - Make an initial determination that you meet the HCBS settings final rule, and
 - Report that determination to DDS (per the [January 8, 2024, directive](#)).
- Independent Audits or Reviews
 - If total payments from one or more RC in a state FY equal \$2,000,000 or more, then an independent audit or independent review by an accounting firm must be conducted relating to payments made by RC(s).
 - If total payments from one or more RC in a state FY equal between \$500,000 and \$2,000,000, then an independent review by an accounting firm must be conducted relating to payments made by RC(s).
 - All service providers must submit their independent audit or independent review to their vendoring RC within 9 months after the end of the most recent fiscal year or have an approved exemption under [Welfare and institutions code 4652.5](#)

Q8. Who counts as an “eligible individual” to report on?

A8. If any of the following report on:

- Any individual that received employment services and,
- Any staff on payroll that delivered employment services, and
- Any staff that completed ACRE and/or CESP certification/recertification within FY 2024-25.

Q9. What if we cannot find the necessary information?

A9. Service providers should report what they know accurately. If an individual's information or certification is not available; report zero or leave it blank (as allowed by the survey) and keep notes in case DDS requests clarification during data validation phase.

Q10. Who will be eligible to earn a Quality Incentive rate in the FY 2026-27 Employment QIP measure?

A10. To be eligible to participate in the data collection for the FY 2026-27 Employment measure to earn their Quality Incentive rate, providers must be providing services under one of the following service codes:

- 950 - Supported Employment (Group)
- 952 - Supported Employment (Individual)

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Q11. What information is being collected?

A11. Service providers will be providing the following:
Consumer Information – UCI, Name, Gender, Date of Birth

Staff Training Information – The number and proportion of staff providing employment services who have obtained either of the following trainings/ certifications between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025:

- Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training
- Certification for Employment Service Professionals (CESP) credentialing/re-credentialing

CIE Placement Information – The number and proportion of individuals served who have achieved any of the following milestones between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025:

- Attain individual CIE, including but not limited to those who:
 - Transition from internships to individual CIE
 - Transition from group employment to individual CIE
 - Transition from day or educational programs to individual CIE
- Attain group employment, including but not limited to those who:
 - Transition from day or educational programs to group employment
 - Transition from an internship to group employment
- Attain a paid internship program (PIP)
- Maintain job for: 30 days, 6 months, 12 months, 18 months or 24 months.

Q12. Do partial trainings or other credentials count?

A12. Currently, only ACRE/CESP trainings and certifications completed during the time-period (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) data is being collected for will qualify for a Quality Incentive rate of 5% in FY 2026-27. The overall Quality Incentive rate across all measures can total up to 10% by submitting complete and accurate data and participating in all applicable QIP measures.

Q13. What is the definition of CIE?

A13. [CIE](#) is full or part-time work for an individual is paid minimum wage or greater in a setting with other individuals who do not have disabilities. CIE offers individuals with I/DD benefits and opportunities for advancement comparable to those offered to employees who do not have I/DD. See [Welfare and Institutions \(W&I\) Code section 4868](#) for more information about CIE.

Q14. What Is “Group Employment”?

A14. Group supported employment (typically delivered under service code 950) is when a small group of individuals with I/DD work with ongoing support.

Q15. What is a “paid internship”?

A15. A time limited paid work experience designed to build skills and leads to employment; and is often referred to as Paid Internship Program (PIP).

Q16. What does “proportion” mean in this quality measure?

A16. It is a percentage of:

- The number of paid staff that achieved ACRE or CESP certification/ recertification during FY 2024-25 divided by the total number of individuals served by provider during FY 2024-25.
- The number of individuals who met a listed outcome during FY 2024-25 divided by total number of individuals served by provider during FY 2024-25.

Q17. When do job retention milestones get reported?

A17. Whenever an individual reaches one of the following milestones during FY 2024-25 it should be reported: 30 days and/or six (6), twelve (12), eighteen (18) or twenty-four (24) months. The initial placement may have occurred before July 1, 2024.

Q18. If no one met any milestones, should it be reported?

A18. Yes, to establish an accurate baseline all information for employment services delivered should be reported. Complete and accurate reporting is what qualifies a service provider for the FY 2026-27 Quality Incentive rate.

Q19. Does an individual have to keep their job for a service provider to earn a Quality Incentive rate?

A19. Quality Incentive rate is earned based on complete and accurate reporting, including retention milestones where applicable. Service providers do not lose an incentive if an individual has not retained employment, so long as all applicable employment data is reported accurately.

Q20. Is the upload of documentation necessary?

A20. No. If additional information is required to validate data submitted in the collection form, DDS will contact the service provider during the validation phase.

REPORTING PROCESS

Q21. How will information be collected?

A21. Beginning **November 3, 2025**, eligible employment service providers (i.e., those operating 950 and/or 952 service codes) will receive an email with a survey link inviting them to participate in this QIP measure.

To help ensure that information is entered correctly a blank worksheet with all the survey fields will be available to service providers on the QIP webpage. Service providers are encouraged to download a copy of the worksheet and input individuals' and staff information prior to accessing the survey link to minimize the need for multiple submissions and ensure accurate data entry.

Q22. What can Employment service providers do to prepare?

A22. Service providers can best prepare by:

- Confirm provider directory information is current and correct.
- List all paid staff that delivered employment services in FY 2024-25 or obtained ACRE or CESP certification/recertification.
- List all individuals served in FY 2024-25 and mark those that have reached employment outcomes or retention milestones during the fiscal year.
- Save documentation in case DDS requests validation.
- Ensure all eligibility and compliance requirements are met by deadlines.

Q23. When must all reporting be submitted by?

A23. All information for qualified individuals and staff must be submitted by **February 27, 2026**.

Q24. For what periods of time is DDS collecting employment information?

A24. Participating service providers are asked to submit all employment and staffing certification information occurring through June 30, 2025.

Q25. Under what circumstances will an employment service provider fail to earn their Quality Incentive Rate after participating in the data collection?

A25. Providers will not earn their Quality Incentive rate if they:

- Do not meet criteria for vendorization under Subchapter 2, Chapter 3, Division 2 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations by **July 1, 2025**
- Did not submit up-to-date information to the Provider Directory by **October 30th, 2025**.
- Do not report data on an eligible individual or, if no data is available then select "None of the Above".
- Do not meet compliance with Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) regulation, Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule regulations and independent audits/reviews by **February 27, 2026**.

Q26. Do we report staff that obtained ACRE or CESP certification/recertification before July 1, 2024?

A26. No, only report certifications or recertification that occurred during FY 2024-25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

DATA VALIDATION & PAYMENT PROCESSING

Q27. How can an employment service provider verify/update their information?

A27. To verify/update information or ensure that a service provider is recognized as an employment service provider (950 or 952), please email QIPquestions@dds.ca.gov.

Q28. If a program had no CIE or internships in FY 2024-25; can service providers still earn a Quality Incentive rate adjustment?

A28. Yes, service providers can earn Quality Incentive rate adjustments by submitting complete and accurate data (which may include zeros).

Q29. When will the Quality Incentive rate payments be disbursed?

A29. After data submitted by service providers has been reviewed and validated, the Department will instruct regional centers to issue Quality Incentive rate payments, as appropriate, to vendors by **July 1, 2026**.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Q30. If a service provider was not able to attend the training webinar; is there a recording of the training webinar available?

A30. Yes. A video of the training webinar can be accessed on the [QIP webpage](#).

Q31. Will there be resources on how to report Employment information using the data collection survey?

A31. Yes. A user guide will be provided to service providers in the email inviting them to participate in the FY 2026-27 Employment measure.

Q32. Who do service providers contact if they do not receive the survey link or need to update information?

A32. Service providers can email QIPquestions@dds.ca.gov to update information or for data collection assistance.