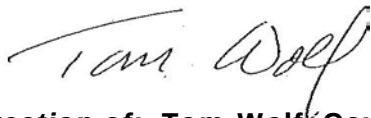


Executive Order

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Office

Subject:
**Establishing "Employment First" Policy and
Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment
for Pennsylvanians with a Disability**

Number:
2016-03



By Direction of: Tom Wolf, Governor

Date: March 10, 2016

- WHEREAS, Pennsylvanians with a disability are valued members of society and all members of society deserve to have the opportunity to work; and
- WHEREAS, there is dignity in work, as it provides an individual not only the income necessary to meet basic living needs but can help contribute to his or her self-identity, self-worth and self-respect, and offer a sense of accomplishment; a job can also provide opportunities for social interaction, meaningful friendships, and to be and feel included; and
- WHEREAS, efforts to increase the hiring of Pennsylvanians with a disability should be based on the principle that Pennsylvanians with a disability make-up a largely untapped labor pool, and that workers with a disability add value to the workplace, whether it is because they can be dedicated, loyal, and productive members of a team or because they can increase productivity and contribute to new product and service innovations that improve a company's bottom line; and
- WHEREAS, the unemployment rate for Pennsylvanians with a disability is consistently twice that of the general population, and such a rate is even worse than it appears because it is based on a workforce participation rate of about 20 percent for Pennsylvanians with a disability compared to about 70 percent for all individuals; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has a history of valuing employment for people with a disability and providing services intended to promote each person's ability to live, contribute and achieve status in their communities; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania government is actively committed to promoting improved competitive integrated employment outcomes through its involvement as a core state selected by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, and participation in the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services' State Employment Leadership Network; and

WHEREAS, the 21ST Century has brought a significant change in public policy regarding employment of individuals with a disability recognized by the passage of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA), new federal rules for home and community based services, amendments to the *Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008*, and new federal rules that implement Section 503 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws, do hereby order and direct as follows:

- 1.** “Employment First” is the policy of all Commonwealth executive branch agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor. This policy reflects the Commonwealth’s goal of making the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a model state when it comes to creating a climate hospitable to workers with a disability.
 - a.** The definition of Employment First is that competitive integrated employment is the first consideration and preferred outcome of publicly-funded education, training, employment and related services, and long-term supports and services for working-age Pennsylvanians with a disability, as “disability” is defined in each agency’s governing statutes and rules.
 - b.** The definition of competitive integrated employment for purposes of this Executive Order is the definition contained in the WIOA, which is work performed on a full or part-time basis (including self-employment) for which a person is:
 - (1)** Compensated at not less than federal minimum wage requirements or State or local minimum wage law (whichever is higher) and not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by people without a disability;
 - (2)** At a location where the employee interacts with people without a disability (not including supervisory personnel or people who are providing services to such employee); and
 - (3)** Presented, as appropriate, opportunities for similar benefits and advancement like those for other employees without a disability and who have similar positions.
- 2.** The Office of Administration will explore the means to reduce barriers to Commonwealth employment for Pennsylvanians with a disability.
- 3.** The Secretaries of the Departments of Education, Human Services and Labor and Industry, working with other Commonwealth agencies or executive office officials as appropriate, will develop a written plan to address the implementation of the following goals:
 - a.** Implement Employment First as the policy of all Commonwealth executive branch agencies;

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