

Community Life Engagement

What is Community Life Engagement?

Community Life Engagement...

- Refers to all the ways that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities access and participate in their communities outside of employment.
- Includes volunteer work; postsecondary, adult, or continuing education; accessing community facilities such as the library, gym, or recreation center; any activities that people with and without disabilities do in their spare time.
- Sometimes is referred to as Community-Based Day or Community-Based Non-Work.
- May support career exploration, wrap around work time, or serve as a retirement option.

Our Community Life Engagement Initiative

The Institute for Community Inclusion is conducting research on Community Life Engagement (CLE) to develop guidance for states and service providers. Major activities include expert interviews, case studies, collaboration with the State Employment Leadership Network, and development and piloting of a CLE Toolkit.

Four Guideposts for Community Life Engagement

1. Individualize supports for each person.

To be individualized, supports must show understanding of personal preferences, goals, interests, and skills; emphasize person-centered planning and discovery; and consider creative grouping, staffing, and scheduling approaches.

2. Promote community membership and contribution.

Supports should start with inclusive settings and activities; ensure staff presence does not limit connections with other community members; place value on not just presence, but membership in the community; and always consider the individual's preferences.

3. Use human and social capital to decrease dependence on paid supports.

Individuals should be actively engaged in the community with the minimal supports that meet their needs. Supports must use social capital (connections with other community members) to create natural supports, and teach skills to build human capital (individual skills for employment and community living).

4. Ensure that supports are outcome-oriented and regularly monitored.

Supports must be oriented toward measurable outcomes related to life satisfaction, community membership and contribution, and decreased dependence on paid supports. States and providers should emphasize goals rather than processes; hold CLE supports to clear state and federal expectations; and ensure that CLE always leads to or complements employment.

Community Life Engagement is a project of:

ThinkWork!
Advancing employment and opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

www.CommunityLifeEngagement.org

For More Information:

Jennifer Sullivan Sulewski
Principal Investigator
Senior Research Associate
Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts Boston
jennifer.sulewski@umb.edu
(617) 287-4356

Community Life Engagement is a project of ThinkWork! at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston. ThinkWork! is a resource portal offering data, personal stories, and tools related to improving employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Funding Sources

The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under cooperative agreement #90DN0295. The National Institute for Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, US Department of Health and Human Services, Field Initiated Program, under grant # 90IF0075.

