

Polk County Health Services

2019 Community Employment

Outcomes Evaluation

IOWA | LAW

LAW, HEALTH POLICY & DISABILITY CENTER

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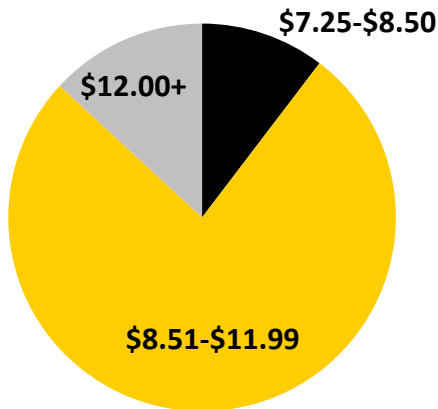
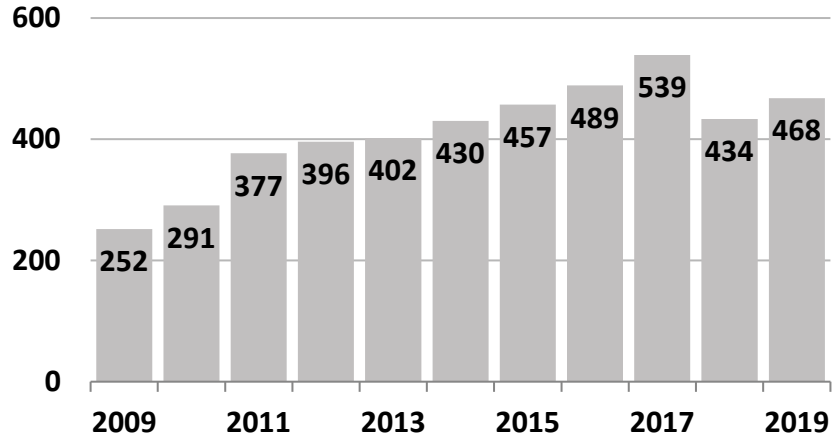
Executive Summary



Participation rates rallied in the Polk County Network, with a weekly average of

468

participants in 2019, an 8 percentage point increase from 2018



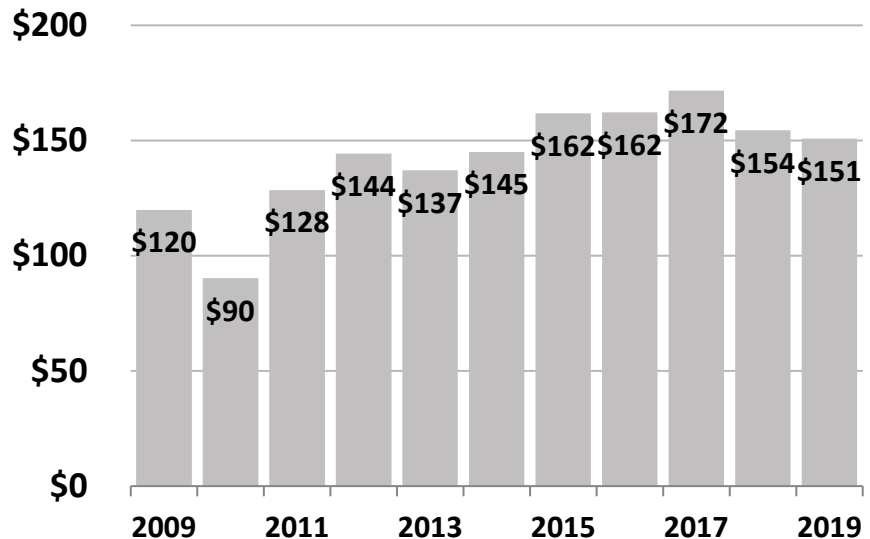
The average hourly wage of participants in 2019 was **\$9.89**, an increase from \$9.51 in 2018.

In addition, **73%** of supported employment participants in the Polk County Network reported hourly wages between \$8.51 and \$11.99, with 12% earning \$12/hour or more

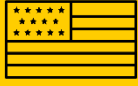


Weekly wages were slightly lower in 2019 relative to recent years, with participants in the Polk County Network reporting an average

of **\$151** in earnings each week

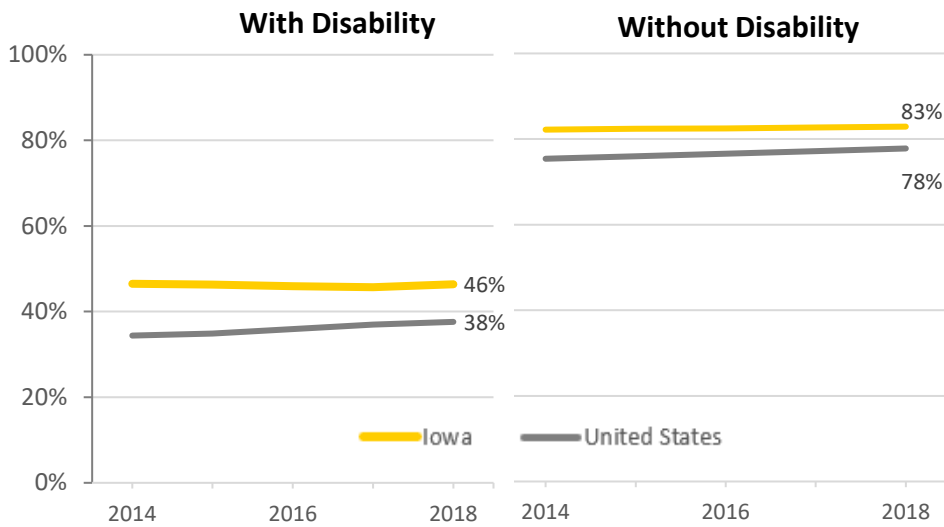


Supported Employment in Context



Full employment and economic equity for people with disabilities remains a challenge in the nation and state

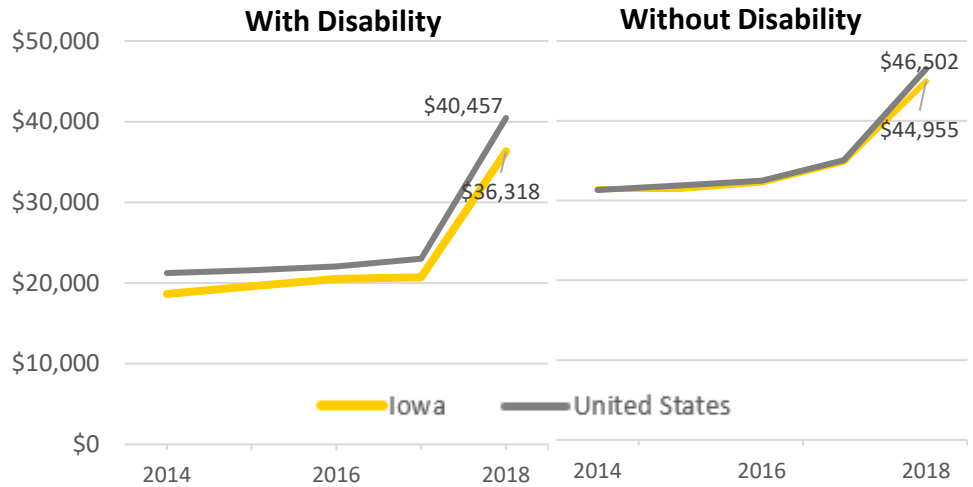
Employment rates for people with and without Disabilities in **Iowa** are higher compared to counterparts at the **National** level, and the **employment rate for Iowans with disabilities was greater than the national average by 8 percentage points in 2018¹**



46%
of Iowans
with a
Disability
were
employed
in 2018

While median **annual earnings** rose sharply in 2018 across groups, People with Disabilities in Iowa earn slightly less compared to Iowans and national averages for People without Disabilities¹

The median annual income for Iowans with Disabilities is \$36,318



1. Graphs based on Lauer et al., 2019, Annual Disability Statistics Compendiums

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Overview of the Community Employment Evaluation

Polk County advocates for people with disabilities to create lives not defined by their disabilities. Employment and education are important ways to open opportunities for all individuals, and Polk County Health Services (PCHS) supports individuals using an array of educational, training, and employment services. Employment is a means by which individuals can meet their basic needs and enhance their lives beyond the basic necessities. People work to bring personal meaning and satisfaction to their lives as well as benefits to the society around them. People have a need to work and to gain identity through that process. Currently, people with disabilities are largely unemployed and underemployed. Social isolation and poverty are two reasons that being unemployed is an unhealthy way to live. It is striking that adults with disabilities are the only group in the United States for whom not working is considered acceptable and who are not viewed as a significant economic resource. To end discrimination for people with disabilities, employment is crucial.

The benefits of employment are well documented. Working has been associated with reductions in mental health symptoms, hospitalizations, and improvements in medication compliance (Salyers et al., 2004; Bond et al., 2001a & 2001b), as well as a means to increased community integration (McGurrin, 1994), improved quality of life (Fabian, 1992; Knoedler, 1979) and higher self-esteem and self-efficacy (Van Dongen, 1996; Harding et al., 1987). Supported employment is a cost-efficient investment in regards to taxpayer expense; however, wages are still lagging in equity (Cimera, 2012).

Employment is a strategic priority for PCHS and governed by the following values:

- Employment is not a choice; it is an expectation.
- Employment services are strengths-based where the individual is treated respectfully.
- Employment equals minimum wage or greater.
- Employment in the community is preferred; however, if the individual needs greater support, employment services in a group setting at or above minimum wage is an individual choice.
- All participants' plans should address employment.
- Participants should both be employed and able to pursue their individual career goals.
- Businesses should employ people with disabilities as they would anyone else.

This evaluation of community employment services is a key component to measuring the effectiveness of employment services. The evaluation covers the 2019 calendar year (January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019) and is organized into four sections:

- 1) Individuals Served and Barriers to Employment (including the two outcome measures of Barriers to Employment and Negative Disenrollments),
- 2) Participant Earnings and Employment Outcomes (including the two outcome measures of Working Toward Self-Sufficiency and Total Engaged in Employment),
- 3) Employment Status and Participant Satisfaction (including the outcome measure of Participant Satisfaction), and
- 4) Administration (including the outcome measure of File Review).

This evaluation documents the community employment providers' efforts to increase the quality of life of individuals served, as well as their commitment to providing responsive, efficient, and effective services. The evaluation includes five providers of services during the calendar year: Candeo, Easterseals, Goodwill Industries, H.O.P.E., and Link Associates.

Data for the evaluation comes from the outcome data that the agencies provide to PCHS, reviews of agencies' files, and interviews with program participants. The agencies record employment and service data through PCHS's electronic system, the PolkMIS interface. At the time an individual is accepted into an employment program, the agency declares the types of services that the individual will be receiving (e.g., waiting list, employment preparation, job development, supported employment). Agencies report any changes in the type of employment services as they occur. Biannually, agencies enter participants'

earnings (hourly wages, hours worked, and job types) during a specific reporting period of two weeks (April 7 – 20 and October 6 – 19). These biannual data also become part of the network employment outcomes. Each fall, the Law, Health Policy & Disability Center (LHPDC) checks a random sample of agency files for agreement with the electronic system and adherence to PCHS guidelines and expectations. LHPDC also interviews community employment program participants to gather feedback and satisfaction information.

Results Summary

In this thirteenth year, the Community Employment Evaluation shows that the community employment network exceeded expectations in supporting individuals to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. The network and all five providers met or exceeded expectations for overall performance set by Polk County Health Services for the 2019 calendar year.

In 2019 the Polk County Regional Network served an average of 468 participants per reporting week, an increase of 8% from 434 in 2018. Agencies served more participants with intellectual or other disabilities (4 more, about 1%) and with mental health disabilities (28 more, about 44%). In 2019, about four of every five supported participants (79%) had an intellectual or other disability, compared to about two out of five (20%) with mental health disabilities. Consistent with last year, the system scored Needs Improvement for serving participants most likely to qualify for Level 3 supports or higher (73% of the participants).

Programs were likely to retain participants. The system average exceeded expectations for the Negative Disenrollments with all agencies meeting or exceeding expectations. The high retention rate can partly be explained by the participant satisfaction. The satisfaction outcome exceeded expectations this year with a system average of 97%, maintaining its consistently high level of positive responses from participants.

For participants who were employed, average weekly earnings decreased for the second year in a row to \$150. As most likely a determining factor in this decrease, participants' average weekly hours also decreased to 15 in 2019, compared to 17 in 2018. In contrast, participants' average wage increased to \$9.89 per hour, compared to \$9.51 in 2018.

- ✓ The system met expectations for the Working Toward Self-Sufficiency outcome, with about one of every three (34%) of participants employed for 20 or more hours per week and earning at least minimum wage.
- ✓ The system also met expectations for the Engaged in Employment outcome with almost nine of every ten participants (86%) working at least 5 hours per week and earning minimum wage or higher.

The Administration-File Review outcome met expectations for the network for the second year in a row. Four of the five agencies met or exceeded expectations for this outcome area. Accurate data is crucial for monitoring the functioning of and responding to the employment needs of Polk County residents. Data inaccuracies may result in reductions of availability and funding for services. Thus, having accurate data is important not only for PCHS and other stakeholders but to participants as well. Provider agencies are encouraged to establish effective quality assurance practices, provide ongoing training for staff on best practices and expectations for documentation, and to seek technical assistance from PCHS to improve or sustain the accuracy of information.

This report documents not only the hard work and success that Polk County Regional Network community employment agencies provide but also the appreciation that program participants have for the services, staff, and programs that help them to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment in their communities. As with previous years, agencies continue to support a large number of individuals in their pursuit of meaningful, sustaining employment. This report supports the conclusion that the Polk County Regional Network continues to meet the need for individualized and quality community employment services for the residents of Polk County.

Context from Exit Interviews

During the 2019 reporting period, Iowa’s Medicaid management underwent a transition between Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). In July 2019, UnitedHealthcare withdrew from the state and another MCO, Iowa Total Care, began Medicaid management.¹ In 2017, another MCO contracted for Medicaid management, AmeriHealth Caritas Iowa, withdrew from the state, causing a similar disruption.

Transportation

In December 2017, the reimbursement model for SCL services shifted from provider-specific rates to Tiered Rates for members enrolled in Iowa Medicaid’s ID waiver.² The implementation of the tiered system included transportation in the tiered reimbursement rates, so transportation can no longer be billed separately for members receiving daily SCL.³ Regarding Supported Employment services, IDHS states “Some HCBS Waiver services, like supported employment may include the cost of transportation in the service reimbursement rate. When transportation is provided through the SE service, the SCL provider would not be responsible for paying.”⁴ Service providers in the Polk County Network report that transportation to employment has been a challenge, specifically mentioning delays in establishing transportation arrangements after application sometimes up to months-long waits, lower reimbursement rates for transportation provision, complications in securing employment because of transportation and conflicts with members’ SCL status. Providers report also that sometimes SCL staff may transport participants to their employment, but if they do so, they are not being reimbursed for their time.

MCO Transition

Agency administrators overseeing service provision to Medicaid eligible Iowans have noted repercussions of the MCO transitions in the form of

- service delays because of unresponsive case managers,
- lengthy authorization processes,
- agency costs for providing safety net coverage when consumers are disenrolled and go through the (often lengthy) re-enrollment process.

Agency administrators report indirect impacts as well, including loss of staff to higher paying MCO positions, which depletes the pool of experienced hires. The turnover requires onboarding and training of new staff.

Managed Care Ombudsman Report

The 2019 Iowa Managed Care Ombudsman Report⁵, summarizing the most frequent reasons Managed Care Ombudsman Program (MCOP) was contacted during the year, included the following issues:

- Services reduced, denied, or terminated
- Care planning
- Case management
- Consumer Choice Options and Consumer-Directed Attendant Care

The programs that most frequently resulted in contact of the MCOP were the Intellectual Disability and Elderly waivers. For example, from July through September (the most recent quarter with compiled data) of the 95 complaints submitted for Iowa Total Care 37 (39%) were for the Intellectual Disability Waiver and 24 of the 60 (40%) complaints submitted for UnitedHealthcare.

¹ https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/2035-MC_UHC_Exit_Billing.pdf?051320201355

² https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/2018%20Tiered%20Rates%20Report_FINAL.pdf?051820202016

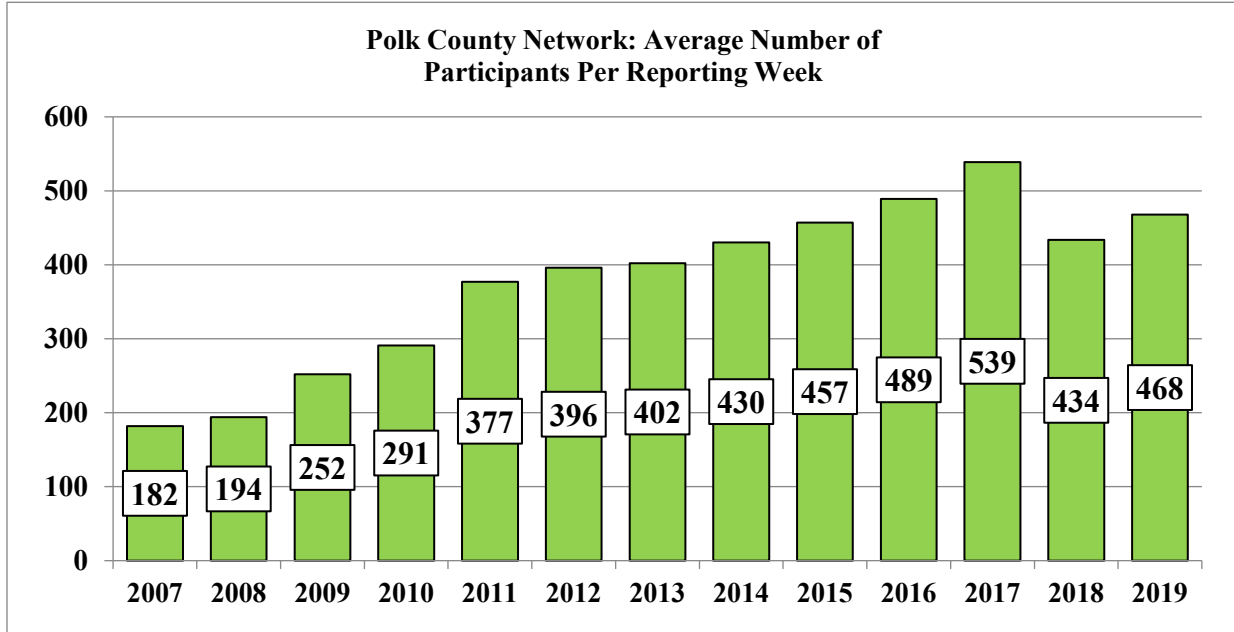
³ https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/1846-MC-FFS_TieredRatesforHCBS_ID_Waiver.pdf?051820202016

⁴ <https://dhs.iowa.gov/ime/providers/csrp/fee-schedule/hcbs-id-tiered-rates-faq>

⁵ https://www.iowaaging.gov/sites/default/files/library-documents/MCOP_Exec_Summary_2019.pdf

Individuals Served and Barriers to Employment

In the past, the Polk County Regional Network has served more individuals each year. After a drop in enrollment in 2018, the network again served more individuals in 2019. Compared to the previous year, an average of 468 participants per reporting week was reported in 2019, 34 more participants (8%). The increase was mostly experienced at Easterseals and Goodwill.



The system served predominantly individuals with intellectual disabilities, providing services to almost five individuals with intellectual disabilities for every one served with mental health issues. The increase in the system was attributable mostly to increases in the number of participants with mental health disabilities (note that the numbers in the table are averaged and rounded).

| Agency | Average Per Reporting Week | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|------|---|------|---------|------------------|------|------------------|-----|
| | Individuals with Intellectual & Other Disabilities | | Individuals with Mental Health Disabilities | | Unknown | All Participants | | Change 2018-2019 | |
| | 2018 | 2019 | 2018 | 2019 | | 2018 | 2019 | N | % |
| Candeo | 93 | 92 | 10 | 15 | 2 | 104 | 109 | 5 | 5% |
| Easterseals | 87 | 93 | 16 | 26 | 2 | 105 | 121 | 16 | 15% |
| Goodwill Industries | 73 | 77 | 35 | 46 | 3 | 109 | 125 | 16 | 14% |
| H.O.P.E. | 21 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 22 | 1 | 2% |
| Link Associates | 92 | 89 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 95 | 95 | -1 | -1% |
| System Totals | 366 | 370 | 64 | 92 | 7 | 434 | 468 | 35 | 8% |

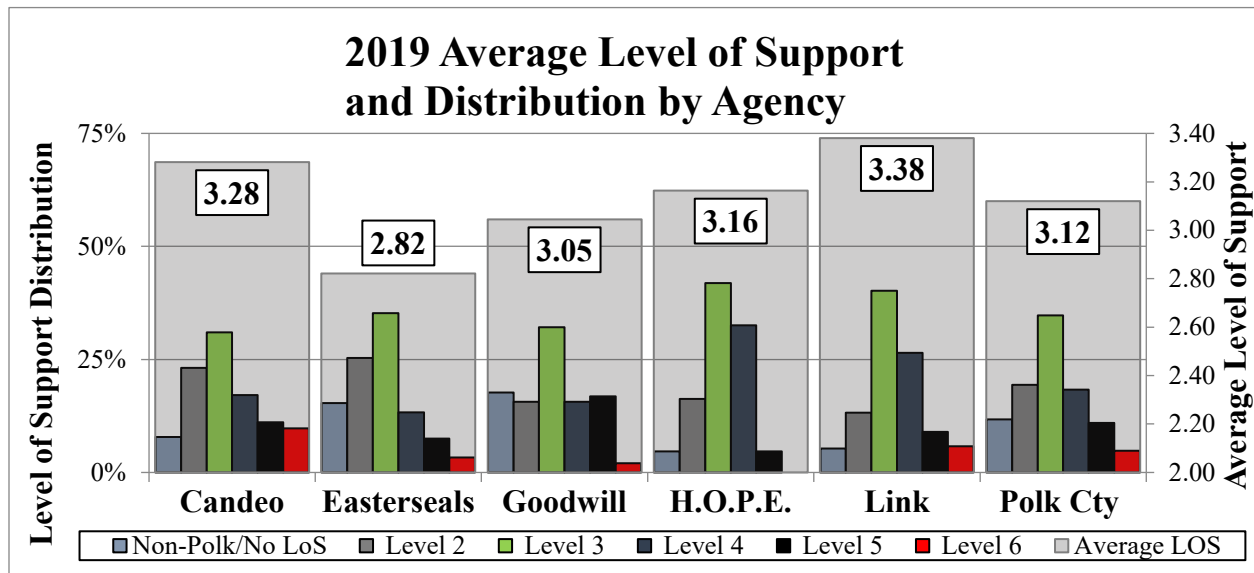
OUTCOME MEASURE: LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Regardless of the type of disability that an individual may have, participants present with a wide range of needs and challenges. The goal of this outcome is to encourage organizations to provide community employment services to all participants, including participants whose needs are complex or require more resources to accommodate adequately. PCHS has adopted assessments (e.g., LOCUS and ICAP) to quantify the challenges or barriers that individuals likely face in pursuing employment.

In 2019, the network served individuals with an average level of support of 3.12 (mode of Level 3), compared to the average of 3.17 in 2018, keeping the system performance level at Needs Improvement. Level 3 qualifies participants for moderate intensity community support services, including supervised apartments, or ≤ 150 hours of Supported Community Living services per month. This decrease in level of support score reflects a pattern that has occurred over the last four years.

| Level of Support Targets | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal | Rating | Points |
| > 4.3 | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 3.20 - 4.30 | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 2.00 - 3.19 | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| < 2.00 | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

| Level of Support Results | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Agency | 2018 Score | 2018 Score | 2019 Score | 2019 Score |
| Candeo | 3.33 | 3 | 3.28 | 3 |
| Easterseals | 2.99 | 2 | 2.82 | 2 |
| Goodwill | 3.05 | 2 | 3.05 | 2 |
| H.O.P.E. | 3.20 | 3 | 3.16 | 2 |
| Link | 3.31 | 3 | 3.38 | 3 |
| System | 3.17 | 2 | 3.12 | 2 |



OUTCOME MEASURE: NEGATIVE DISENROLLMENTS

The goal of this outcome is for organizations to develop trusting and meaningful relationships with participants to ensure continuity of services. PCHS recognizes that participants may disenroll or be disenrolled from community employment services. Neutral disenrollments occur when participants no longer need services, are no longer eligible for services, move out of Polk County, have a change in level of care, or pass away. Negative disenrollments occur when participants refuse to participate, are displeased with services, or the agency initiates the discharge. The intent of the outcome is to minimize negative disenrollments. However, the provider agencies and PCHS agree that an agency should be allowed one negative disenrollment and still meet expectations. Any agency with only one negative disenrollment will receive at least a *meets expectations* rating. The results of Negative Disenrollments is the number of negative disenrollments divided by the total enrollment for the program.

| Negative Disenrollments Targets | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal | Rating | Points |
| 0% - .99% | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 1% - 2.99% | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 3% - 3.99% | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| ≥ 4.00% | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

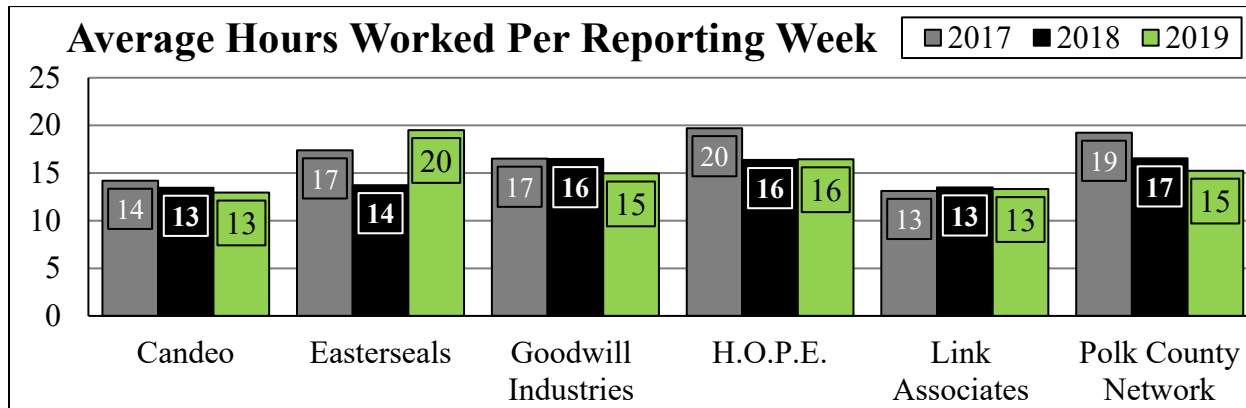
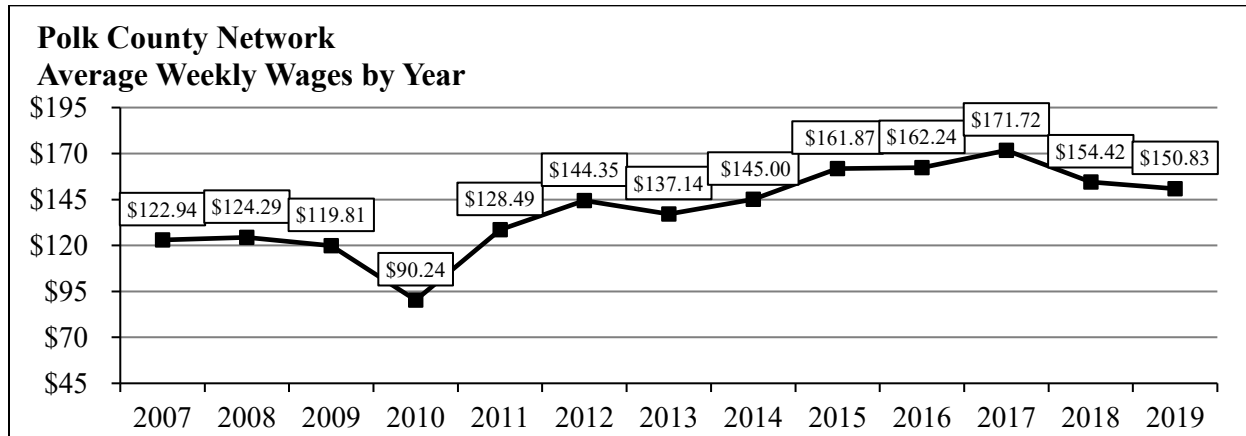
| Negative Disenrollments Results | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Agency | 2018 Results | 2018 Score | 2019 Results | 2019 Score |
| Candeo | 1.21% | 3 | 0.00% | 4 |
| Easterseals | 0.44% | 4 | 1.66% | 3 |
| Goodwill | 0.00% | 4 | 0.00% | 4 |
| H.O.P.E. | 0.00% | 4 | 0.00% | 4 |
| Link | 0.00% | 4 | 0.00% | 4 |
| System | 0.41% | 4 | 0.42% | 4 |

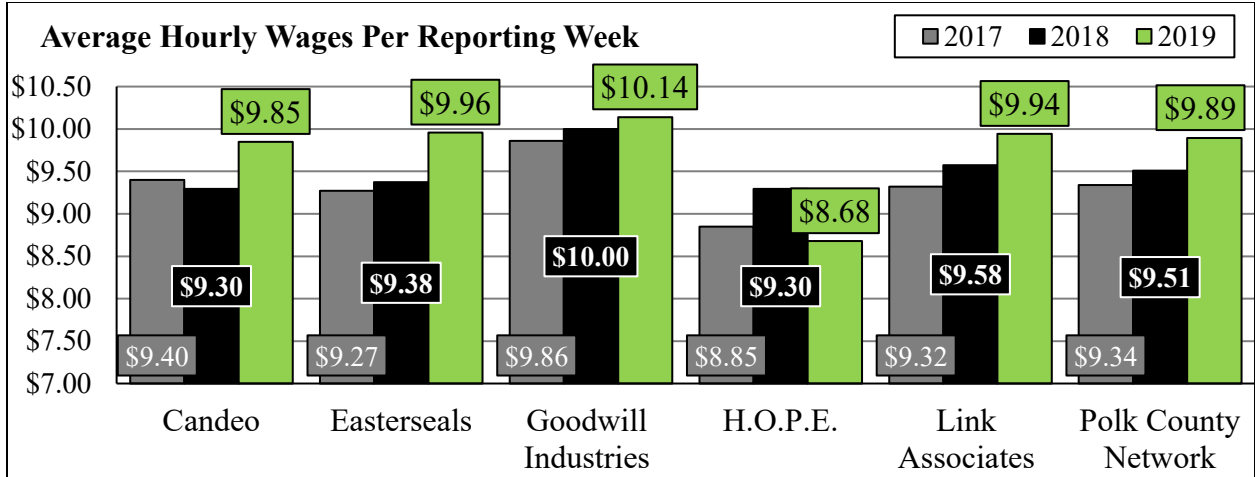
Results of the evaluation indicate that the system exceeded expectations for the Negative Disenrollments outcome for this year. Further, all agencies met or exceeded expectations this year. Only one agency reported negative disenrollments, reporting four, and three agencies did not report any negative disenrollments. The number of total disenrollments by the system increased considerably to 168 in 2019 compared to 99 in 2018. The majority of disenrollments from the system continue to be neutral (73%) or positive (24%).

Participant Earnings and Employment Outcomes

A key component of self-sufficiency is earning income to meet an individual's needs. Wage rates and hours worked are important measures of progress toward self-sufficiency. Because employment may vary during the year, Polk County has asked employment providers to gather wage and hour reports for participants for four weeks during two reporting periods during the year. In 2019, the wage reporting periods were April 7 – 20 and October 6 – 19.

Based on reported data, the network average weekly wages decreased in 2019 at \$150.83 per week from \$154.42 in 2018. The average number of hours worked per week went down to 15 in 2019 from 17 in 2018. In contrast, average wages reported during reporting weeks went up to \$9.89 from \$9.51 in 2018.



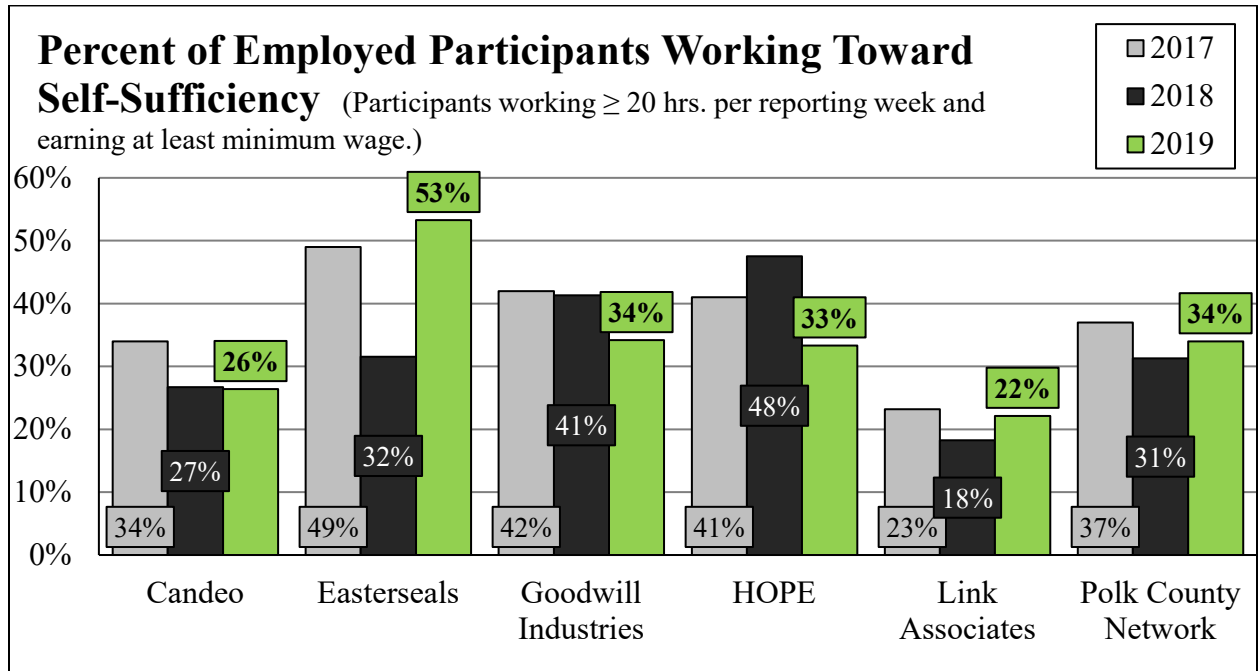


OUTCOME MEASURE: WORKING TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

PCHS uses two employment outcomes: Employment – Working Toward Self-Sufficiency and Engagement Toward Employment. The intent of these outcomes is to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities and increase earned wages. Working Toward Self-Sufficiency is measured as the percentage of employable individuals working 20 hours or more per week and earning the minimum wage or greater during the two specified reporting periods. PCHS’s expectation is that at least 26% of employed participants will be working toward self-sufficiency (see goals below). This year, the network met those expectations with 34%, or about one of every three participants working 20 or more hours per week. Most of the increase this year over last year can be attributed to an increase at one agency.

| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency Targets | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal | Rating | Points |
| 35%-100% | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 26%-34% | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 17%-25% | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| Less than 17% | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency Results | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Agency | 2018 Results | 2018 Score | 2019 Results | 2019 Score |
| Candeo | 27% | 3 | 26% | 3 |
| Easterseals | 32% | 3 | 53% | 4 |
| Goodwill | 41% | 4 | 34% | 3 |
| H.O.P.E. | 48% | 4 | 33% | 3 |
| Link | 18% | 2 | 22% | 2 |
| System | 31% | 3 | 34% | 3 |

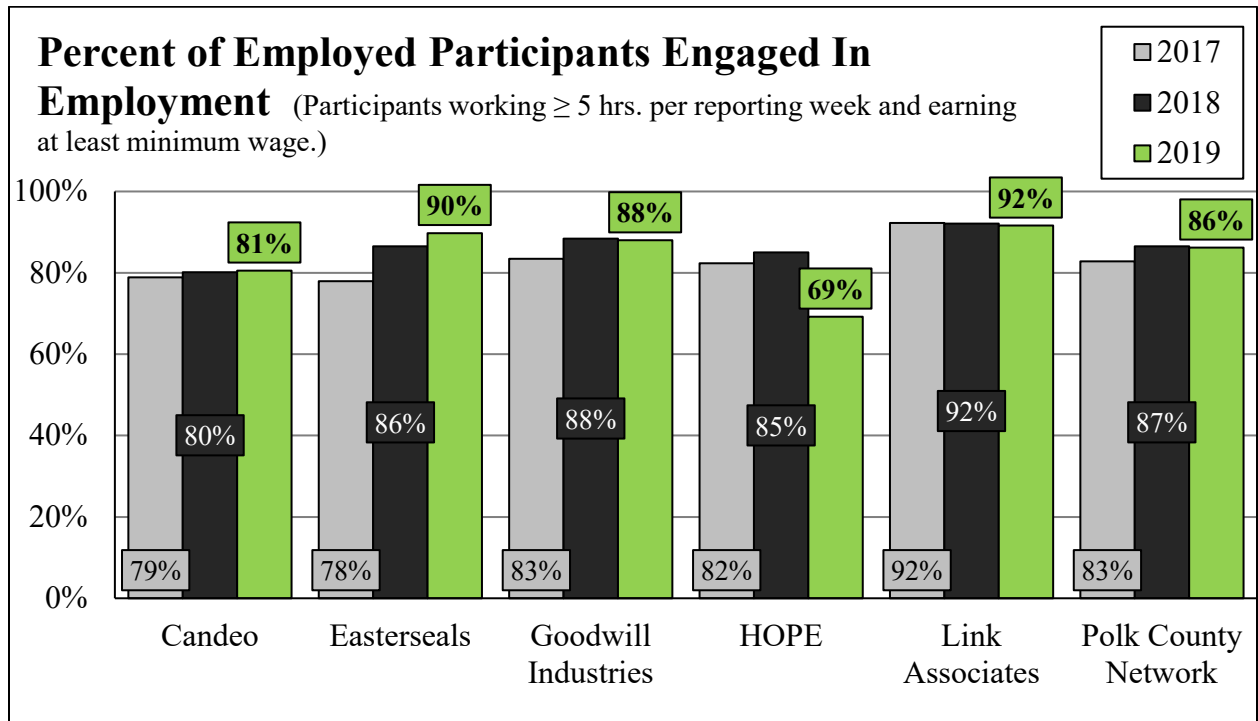


OUTCOME MEASURE: TOTAL ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT

Total Engaged in Employment is measured as the percentage of employed program participants working at least 5 hours per week and earning minimum wage or greater during the four specified reporting weeks. PCHS’s expectation is that a minimum of 85% of working program participants will be engaged in employment (see goals below). This year, the network met expectations with almost nine of every ten employed participants (86%) working at least 5 hours per week. Three agencies met expectations, with the two of the agencies challenged to meet this outcome.

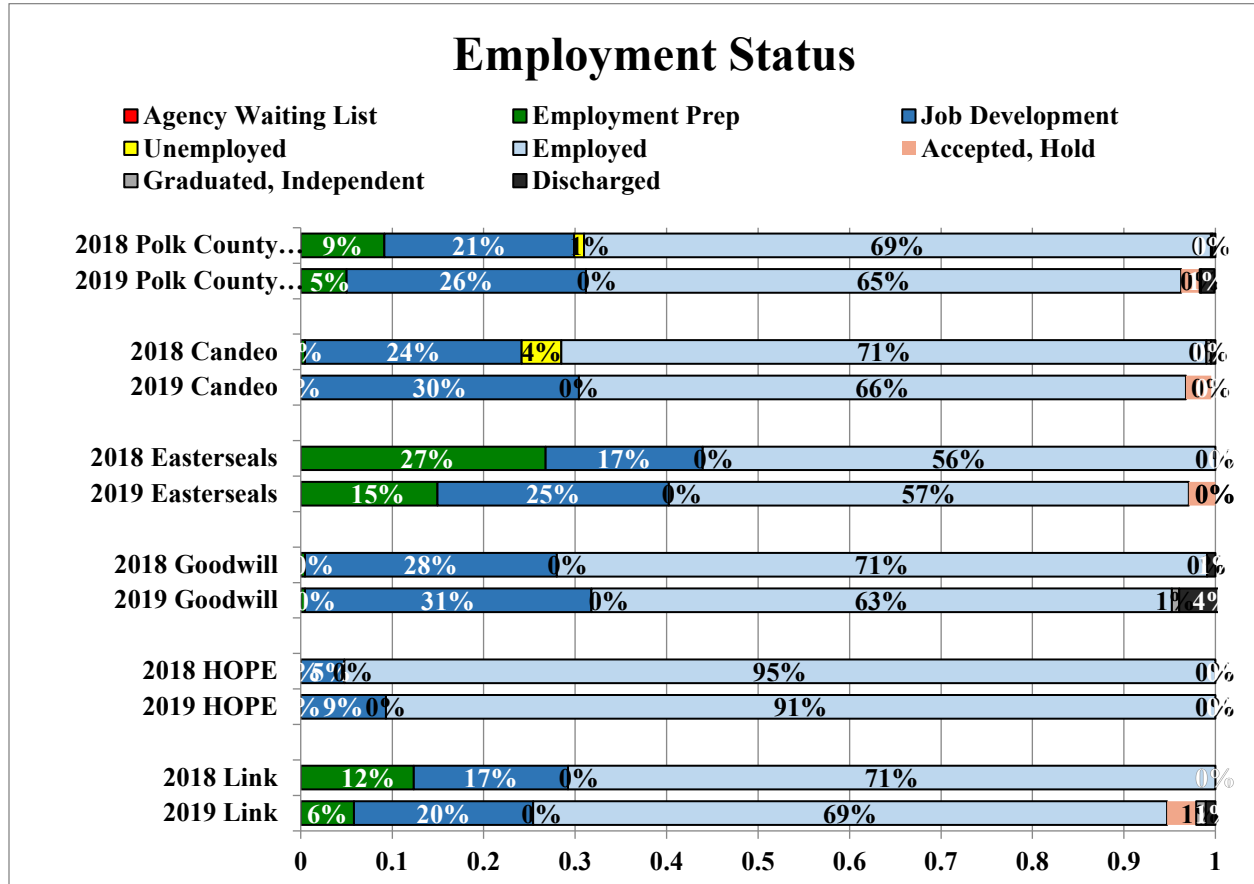
| Total Engaged in Employment Targets | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal | Rating | Points |
| 95%-100% | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 85%-94% | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 75%-84% | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| Less than 75% | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

| Total Engaged in Employment Results | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Agency | 2018 Results | 2018 Score | 2019 Results | 2019 Score |
| Candeo | 80% | 2 | 81% | 2 |
| Easterseals | 86% | 3 | 90% | 3 |
| Goodwill | 88% | 3 | 88% | 3 |
| H.O.P.E. | 85% | 3 | 69% | 1 |
| Link | 92% | 3 | 92% | 3 |
| System | 87% | 3 | 86% | 3 |



Employment Status and Participant Satisfaction

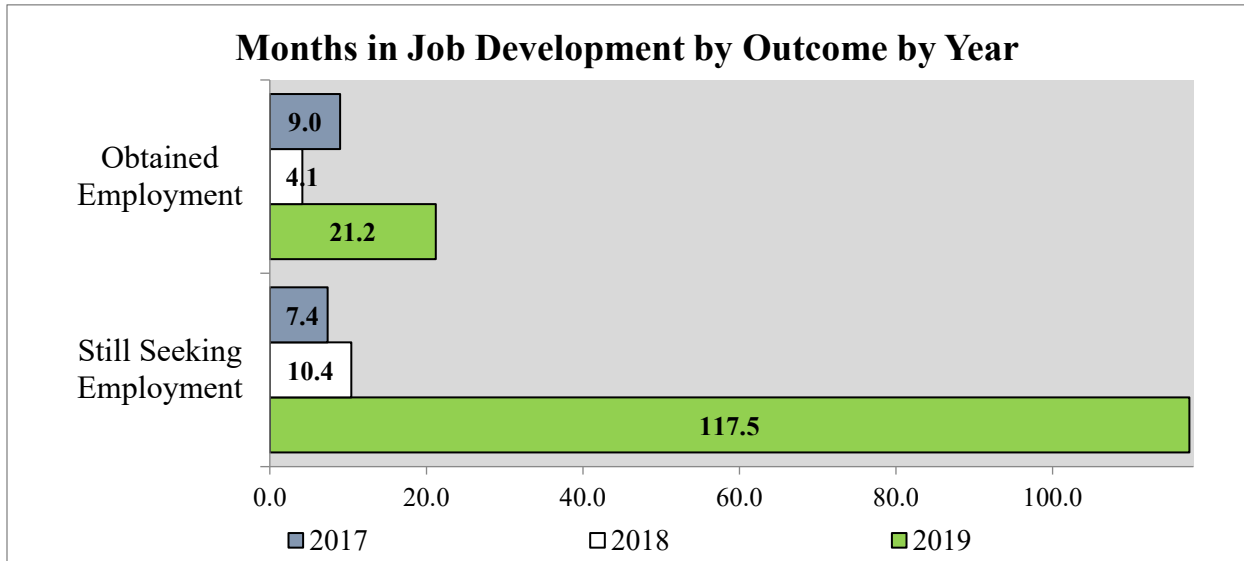
Success in employment services is, in part, dependent on timing. Employment agencies must act quickly when individuals show interest and capitalize on initial enthusiasm. To assess the efficiency of services, PCHS asks agencies to report data on how long individuals have to wait to access services (i.e. agency waiting lists), time to find employment, status of participant employment preparation and search, length of retention once employment is secured, and types of jobs where participants are employed. In 2019, about two-thirds of the participants were employed (65%), and about another quarter of them were in Job Development (26%). A few (1%) were accepted into Supported Employment but were not working. No participants were on waitlists. Four participants graduated to becoming independent workers.



This annual evaluation provides information on the amount of time between participant enrollment in supportive employment services and establishment of employment. This year, however, this metric appears to have been affected by several factors, which have made the data appear unrealistic. In 2019, Months in Job Development for those who obtained employment during the year was 21.2. This is compared to 4.1 months in 2018 and 9.0 months in 2017. More notable was the Months in Job Development for those who were still seeking employment during the year. This total was 117.5 months, as compared to 10.4 months in 2018 and 7.4 months in 2017.

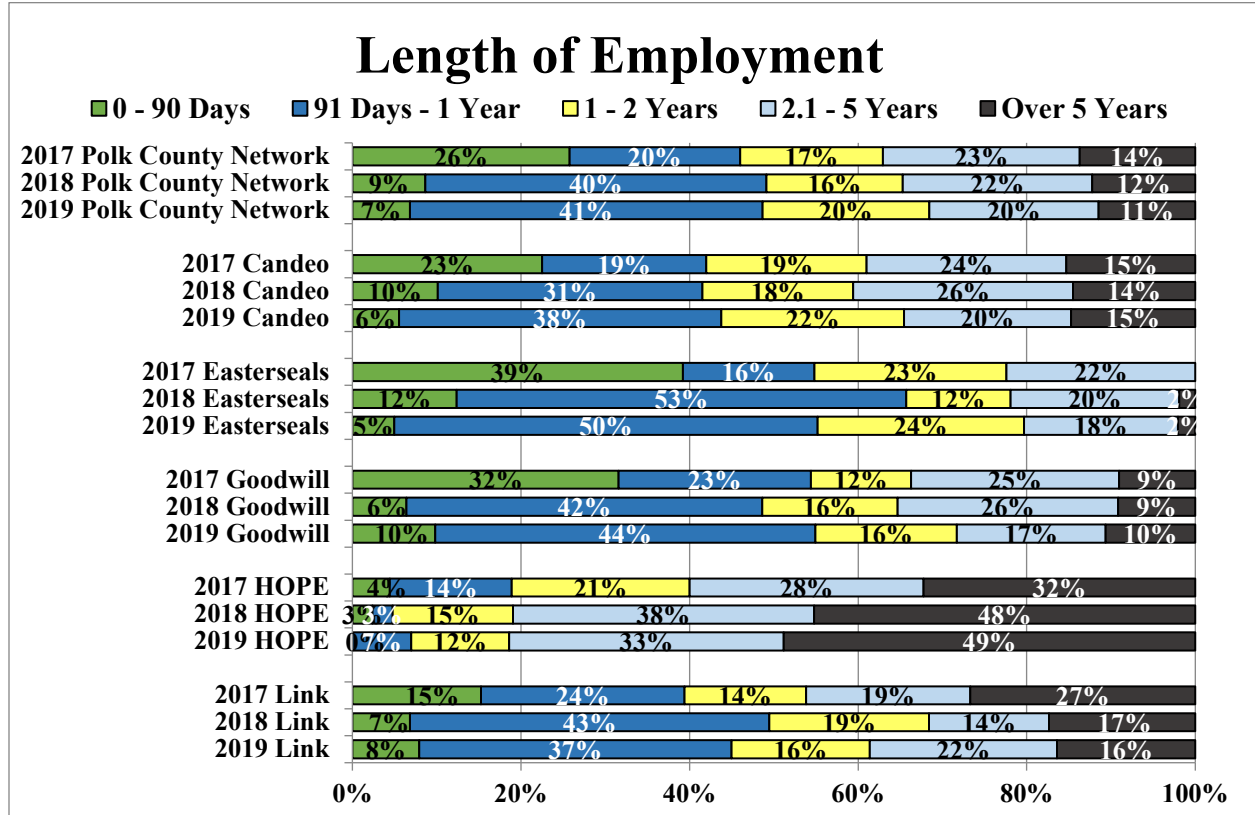
An analysis of the data by a PolkMIS administrator showed that there may be complications in how the analyses accounts for time in status, which can affect the results. For example, if the date for entry into the employment program is not entered into the database, the time cannot be calculated. In addition, if a participant is recorded in the database as being on hold, the calculation cannot take into account whether the individual had employment prior to the hold or whether the individual continued to work during the hold.

In a discussion of file review results, directors indicated that some participants were dropped from Medicaid while working and were put on hold, with the hold removed once the Medicaid was restored. This could take several months. The database administrator indicated that this year showed a dramatic increase in the use of the hold status in PolkMIS, with 11% of the system’s participants put on hold during the year. This compares to up to 2% to 3% in a typical year prior to 2019. Further, over the entire history of the program when this data point has been recorded, 2019 accounts for 33% of all Hold entries.



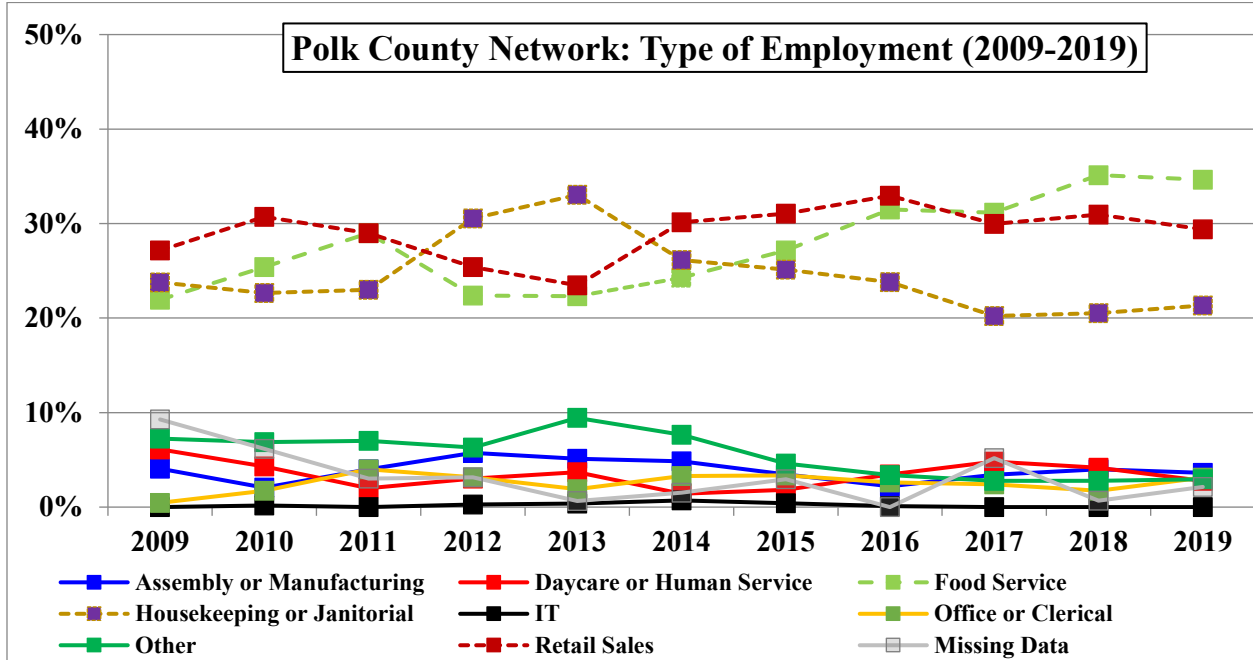
Employment Retention

Retention shows a trend for workers employed for longer, with more workers tending to keep their employment for longer than three months over the last two years. Approximately 31% of participants were employed for more than two years, and more than half of working participants (51%) were employed for at least a year. Only 7% were employed for less than 90 days. A few participants are long-term employees. For the network, over one in ten participants (11%) have been employed more than 5 years.



Employment Settings

Across the network, food service (35%) was the dominant area of employment for the third year, with retail sales (29%) and housekeeping or janitorial (21%) remaining the most frequent market shares in which participants are and have been employed over the past ten years. Employment in other sectors (e.g., assembly or manufacturing, daycare or human services, IT, office or clerical) remains infrequent (< 10%).

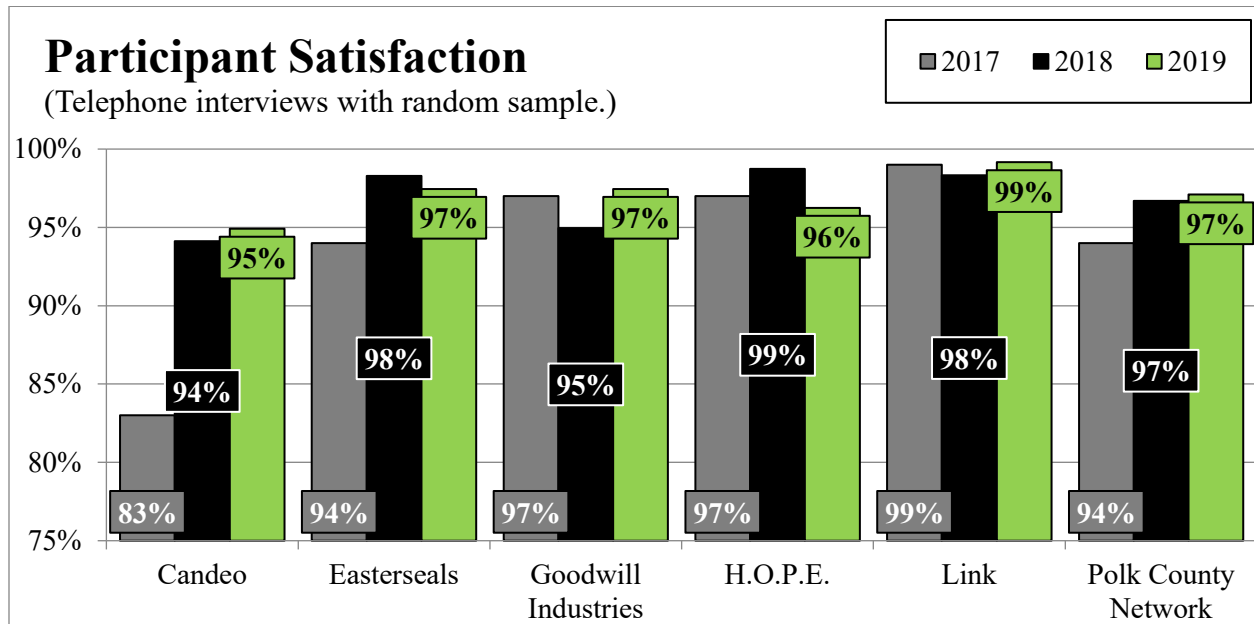


OUTCOME MEASURE: PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

To gather the perspectives of program participants, community employment members were asked to participate in telephone interviews. The ten interview questions (see Appendix C for interview questions) asked participants about how they were treated by the agency and how they were prepared for and supported during employment.

| Participant Satisfaction Targets | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal | Rating | Points |
| 95%-100% | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 90% - 94% | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 85% - 89% | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| < 85% | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

| Participant Satisfaction Results | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Agency | 2018 Results | 2018 Score | 2019 Results | 2019 Score |
| Candeo | 94% | 3 | 95% | 4 |
| Easterseals | 98% | 4 | 97% | 4 |
| Goodwill | 95% | 4 | 97% | 4 |
| H.O.P.E. | 99% | 4 | 96% | 4 |
| Link | 98% | 4 | 99% | 4 |
| System | 97% | 4 | 97% | 4 |



Overall, participant satisfaction was high, exceeding expectations, maintaining a 97% score from 2018. All programs individually exceeded expectations. Within the network, participants were most likely to report that staff told them about services that were available and answered their questions, that they participated in their selection of employment and development of their employment plan, and that they were satisfied with services overall. If displeased, participants were most likely to report that they were not adequately prepared for employment (4.5%). Representative comments from participants are included

in each agency's summary at the end of this report. To protect the identity of respondents, references to gender of respondents and staff have been randomized.

Administration

Participants, stakeholders, and PCHS rely on information provided by the provider agencies. Provider agencies report the dates on which participants are enrolled in services, change services, or discontinue services. While participants are employed, provider agencies report the hours worked and wage rate earned for the two reporting periods for the year. PCHS and stakeholders rely on this information to monitor the functioning of and response to the community employment needs of Polk County residents. Ultimately, data inaccuracies affect the availability and funding of services for participants.

OUTCOME MEASURE: FILE REVIEW

To monitor the accuracy of outcomes data reported by the providers, evaluators have conducted reviews of provider agencies' files with each evaluation and included those results in the annual reports. For the 2015 evaluation, PCHS formalized the file review as an outcome measure of administrative processes. A total of six files from each provider were reviewed this year, stratified by type of service. This year, there were no participants enrolled on waitlists as of the selection of files at the end of 2019. The files are reviewed to assess the consistency of information in PolkMIS with documentation in the file. File review criteria are listed in Appendix B.

Consistent with 2018 results, the network met expectations for the File Review outcome measure this year. The overall system performed at a 92% accuracy, resulting in a Meets Expectations rating. Four programs met or exceeded expectations. The remaining program found this outcome area challenging. The most likely discrepancy noted in the review included the maintaining regular contact with the participant even when on hold or not employed. Other discrepancies included timeliness and thoroughness of case notes, completeness of case notes, and accuracy of participant status information in PolkMIS. Information on the performance of individual programs is included as part of their agency summary.

| File Review Targets | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal | Rating | Points |
| 95%-100% | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 90% - 94% | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 85% - 89% | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| < 85% | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

| File Review Results | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Agency | 2018 Results | 2018 Score | 2019 Results | 2019 Score |
| Candeo | 100% | 4 | 95% | 4 |
| Easterseals | 88% | 2 | 95% | 4 |
| Goodwill | 88% | 2 | 81% | 1 |
| H.O.P.E. | 96% | 4 | 91% | 3 |
| Link | 100% | 4 | 100% | 4 |
| System | 94% | 3 | 92% | 3 |

2019 Evaluation Performance Summary Tables

| Overall Performance | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Overall Agency Goal | Rating | Points |
| 76%-100% | Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| 67%-75% | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| 50%-66% | Needs Improvement | 2 |
| Below 50% | Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations | 1 |

| 2019 Score Summary Table | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------------|----------|----------|------|---------------------|
| Outcome Area | Candeo | Easterseals | Goodwill | H.O.P.E. | Link | Polk County Network |
| Barriers to Employment | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Participant Satisfaction | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Administration-File Review | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Total | 20 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 19 |
| Total Possible | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 |
| Overall Performance | 83% | 83% | 71% | 71% | 83% | 79% |
| Overall Rating | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |

| 2019 Results Summary Table | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------------|----------|----------|-------|---------------------|
| Outcome Area | Candeo | Easterseals | Goodwill | H.O.P.E. | Link | Polk County Network |
| Barriers to Employment | 3.28 | 2.82 | 3.04 | 3.16 | 3.38 | 3.12 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 0.00% | 1.66% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.42% |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 26% | 53% | 34% | 33% | 22% | 34% |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 81% | 90% | 88% | 69% | 92% | 86% |
| Participant Satisfaction | 95% | 97% | 97% | 96% | 99% | 97% |
| Administration-File Review | 95% | 95% | 81% | 91% | 100% | 92% |

Individual Agency Summaries

CANDEO

The results of the 2019 evaluation indicate that Candeo’s Community Employment Program improved its evaluation expectations for the calendar year. The program received an overall performance of 83%, resulting in an Exceeds Expectations rating. The program exceeded expectations for the Negative Disenrollments, Participant Satisfaction, and Administration – File Review outcome areas and met expectations in Barriers to Employment and Working Toward Self-Sufficiency. The program was challenged in Total Engaged in Employment.

| Outcome Area | 2018 Result | 2019 Result | 2018 Score | 2019 Score |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Barriers to Employment | 3.33 | 3.28 | 3 | 3 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 1.21% | 0.00% | 3 | 4 |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 27% | 26% | 3 | 3 |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 80% | 81% | 2 | 2 |
| Participant Satisfaction | 94% | 95% | 3 | 4 |
| Administration-File Review | 100% | 95% | 4 | 4 |
| Overall Performance | 75% | 83% | 3 | 4 |

Candeo program participants reported being satisfied this year with the community employment services they received and the staff who worked with them. The evaluators interviewed 15 program participants (14%) of the 108 Candeo program participants for whom contact information was provided. They were asked a series of questions to assess their agreement or disagreement with certain statements. Among those structured questions, program respondents generally agreed that they were told about services, that they participated in setting of their employment goals, and that the agency treated them with courtesy. However, participants were somewhat less in agreement about whether they would recommend the agency to a friend.

“They treat me like a person... if I need somebody to talk to they will be there to help me. If I am upset, I talk to them about what is on my mind.”

In interviews, respondents described ways in which agency job coaches supported their goals in finding and retaining employment. Specifically, respondents described services that prepared them for job interviews and developing professional skills along with help in logistical arrangements like transportation to work and scheduling preferences. Respondents also commented on the way services were delivered, with most reporting positive experiences with job coaches whom they considered to be helpful, respectful, understanding, knowledgeable, and supportive. Specifically, respondents described how job coaches provided participant-centered services by prioritizing participants, offering choices, and being responsive to individual needs. Because of the services received, respondents reported improvements in job performance and increased independence and confidence at work.

Representative comments included:

Just the helping me find jobs and they were just really supportive in listening to me and letting me tell them what I wanted and just the type of jobs that I needed and just being really supportive. One of [the things I like best] is them just being really supportive. Two is just listening to my needs and like what type of job I was looking for and listening to just what I was really interested in doing as far as jobs.

Yes, like job shadowing and helping me get better with my job and that if I had any problems ... they would help me. If [I] had any problems with an employee or co-worker that they would help me just like do my task better and give me pointers and stuff that would help me do my job better.

They help me keep my job.

They are helping me become independent. They are helping me get up by [my] alarm and making sure that I watch for my ride and that I am dressed and ready and [have good] hygiene.

They are really caring, supportive, respectful. Listening to my needs, making sure what I wanted, making sure it was the right job for me, and if I did not want to do it, they didn't press. They just make sure it is a good fit before going further.

They are just really kind and listen to what you want on the job, and they are super supportive.

They helped me by looking for jobs online related to my ability and interest.

Well, they helped me to get a resume started. They helped me finish it. We went to a couple of job places and we went and did like a tour and they asked some questions. This one job they asked them questions and made sure I understood what I would be doing and what the tasks were and just made sure that it was something that I would want to do.

They treat me like a person that if I need somebody to talk to they will be there to help me. If I am upset, I talk to them about what is on my mind.

Yeah [they helped prepare me for] like dressing code and ... organizing.

Usually like even if I ask them to help me with something, they do it immediately.

A few participants raised concerns, including staff turnover, delays in service enrollment, and inconsistent responses from job coaches.

It is like each time I get a job coach and then they quit after a month or whatever.

It took forever to be accepted to Candeo employment, over a year, because they have a long waiting list. Once I was accepted, it still took a couple of weeks for employment service.

That they had connections with other companies to being able to serve their clients. Lately I have not been too happy with them. I really felt like you pretty much had to get on them just for them to be able to help you out, so like I would ask them if we could meet up, and it would take them weeks.

One participant offered suggestions, such as extended duration of the employment preparation programming and more effort from staff to be attentive and consistent:

[I would like] for them to listen more, and for them to be loyal to their word. They worked with me in the Discovery Program, which I felt like could be a little longer.

Candeo serves an average of 109 participants per reporting week. It serves both participants with intellectual disabilities and those with mental health disabilities. The program continued to enroll

challenged participants, reflected in an average level of support (mean of 3.28), above the network average (mean of 3.12).

Those who were employed reported working an average of 13 hours per week, comparable to 13 in 2018, and they were earning more per hour (\$9.85 in 2019 compared to \$9.30 in 2018). Participants were earning a lower average weekly wage of \$127, compared to \$133 last year. For Candeo participants, over a quarter of employed participants were working toward self-sufficiency (26%), with an additional one out of every two (55%) working 5 to 19 hours per week. The remaining 19% were working less than 5 hours per week.

EASTERSEALS

The results of the 2019 evaluation indicate that Easterseals’ Community Employment Program performed well for the calendar year. The program exceeded overall expectations in 2019 with an 83% overall performance rating. The program exceeded expectations in Working Toward Self-Sufficiency, Participant Satisfaction, and Administration – File Review outcome areas and met expectations for the Negative Disenrollments and Total Engaged in Employment outcome areas. The program was challenged in the Barriers to Employment outcome area.

| Outcome Area | 2018 Result | 2019 Result | 2018 Score | 2019 Score |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Barriers to Employment | 2.99 | 2.82 | 2 | 2 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 0.44% | 1.66% | 4 | 3 |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 32% | 53% | 3 | 4 |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 86% | 90% | 3 | 3 |
| Participant Satisfaction | 98% | 97% | 4 | 4 |
| Administration-File Review | 88% | 95% | 2 | 4 |
| Overall Performance | 75% | 83% | 3 | 4 |

Easterseals’ program participants reported being very satisfied with the services that they received and the staff who worked with them. The evaluators interviewed 15 program participants (12%) of the 122 Easterseals program participants for whom contact information was provided. In response to structured satisfaction questions, participants indicated that they felt that the agency told them about the services available to them and answered their questions, that they participated in the employment process, that services were appropriate, that services were provided in a reasonable time, and that they were satisfied with the quality of the services. The most disagreement was whether they were adequately prepared for employment.

“I have staff who are always like willing to help whenever I call them and they consistently check on me.”

In interviews, respondents described ways in which agency job coaches supported their goals in finding and retaining employment. Specifically, respondents described services that prepared them for job interviews and developing professional skills along with help in logistical arrangements, like completing required trainings. Respondents also commented on the way services were delivered, with most reporting positive experiences with job coaches whom they considered to be helpful, respectful, responsive, understanding, knowledgeable, and supportive. Specifically, respondents described how job coaches provided participant-centered services by prioritizing participant aims, offering choices, and being responsive to job-specific and individual needs. Because of the services received, respondents reported improvements in job performance and increased independence and confidence at work.

Representative comments included the following:

I am satisfied that it is the opportunity to have job coaches and actually having someone help you step-by-step, especially those who are having first-time jobs.

I have staff who are always like willing to help whenever I call them, and they consistently check on me.

They understood my situation at my job and they really tried to solve it.

They actually give advice as far as doing things more efficiently.

I know for like job services, help with studying for my test. [The test was to be certified for their job.]

They are willing to work with me on whatever issue I might have or if I need a service. I can always call them.

They usually get back to me like that day or the next day.

We did a lot of things like how to fill out an application and stuff like that. And we did role playing. Like somebody would be asking you employment questions and that to each other.

They always ask what I want, and they always ask my opinion on the matter, whatever it involves.

They are always there for me when I need them. Like if I need to call them, and I have a job coach. I normally call them if I need to find a new job. Like this job is not working out for me. I talked to my dad, and my job coach, and I put in my two weeks. I got a new job. I did the application and the interview all on my own.

They always respect my opinion, and they agree with me. And when I tell them stuff, they always respond in a positive way. They never say anything bad about me, and they respect my opinion.

A few participants raised concerns, including a lack of awareness of the array of services available and inconsistent responses from job coaches.

They did not tell me [about] the programs or anything. Just the services like jobs and stuff because I had one a few years ago with my old case manager, and she gave me a thing for different activities, but I have not gotten one recently or anything.

[To get a response] sometimes it could be a little bit longer than normal. I think it is actually more due to [that] they are understaffed. It could vary [on how long it takes to get their help].

A few participants offered suggestions, including more exposure to diverse work opportunities, strategies to improve efficiency at work, respectful interactions, more frequent support at the work site, and serving a liaison role between participants and managers.

Possibly expanding into getting jobs in other lines of work different from what I am doing now.

And they would help me with what I would have to do. I actually would like more improvement in that area of Easterseals. Getting more advice for completing tasks on time.

Well, there is times when I think they are not being respectful, and I would like them to work on it more with me, how they talk.

That I could have them come over and talk to me more. I have a worker, [staff], and I have noticed that she does not come as often. She used to come every two weeks, or something, but she has not come in a while.

[More] assisting me with communications and managers at places of employment

Program participants had reason to be satisfied. The program exceeded expectations in three of the six outcome areas. over half of employed participants were working toward self-sufficiency, employed 20 or more hours a week and earning at least minimum wage (53%). Nine of every ten (90%) of employed participants were working at least five hours per week. Besides exceeding expectations in the Participant Satisfaction outcome area (97%), Easterseals exceeded expectations in the Administration-File Review outcome.

Easterseals' participants averaged 20 hours per week, well above the network average, and earning somewhat more per hour than the network average (\$9.96 vs. \$9.89). Easterseals' average weekly wage for 2019 was \$194, notably more than their 2018 average of \$136 and more than the network average (\$151). In 2019, the Easterseals Community Employment increased the average number of participants served to 121 compared to 101 in 2018.

Easterseals was challenged in Barriers to Employment with an average level of support at 2.82, suggesting that participants generally needed somewhat less support than the average in the system.

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

The results of the 2019 evaluation indicate that Goodwill Industries’ Community Employment Program performed well for the calendar year. The program met overall expectations in 2019 with a 71% overall performance rating. The program exceeded expectations in Negative Disenrollments and Participant Satisfaction outcome areas and met expectations for the Working Toward Self-Sufficiency Total Engaged in Employment outcome areas. The program was challenged in the Barriers to Employment and Administration—File Review outcomes.

| Outcome Area | 2018 Result | 2019 Result | 2018 Score | 2019 Score |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Barriers to Employment | 3.05 | 3.04 | 2 | 2 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 0.00% | 0.00% | 4 | 4 |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 41% | 34% | 4 | 3 |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 88% | 88% | 3 | 3 |
| Participant Satisfaction | 95% | 97% | 4 | 4 |
| Administration-File Review | 88% | 81% | 2 | 1 |
| Overall Performance | 79% | 71% | 4 | 3 |

Goodwill program participants reported being very satisfied with the community employment services they received and the staff who worked with them. The evaluators interviewed 15 program participants (13%) of the 116 Goodwill program participants for whom contact information was provided. In response to structured satisfaction questions, participants agreed that they were satisfied that they were told about services available and their questions were answered, that they were adequately prepared for employment, that services were provided in a reasonable time, that they were treated with respect, and that they would recommend services to a friend.

“They are very respectful, and they do not necessarily treat you like you are disabled. They focus on the positives and the things you are good at and the ways they can help you.”

In interviews, respondents described ways in which agency job coaches supported their goals in finding and retaining employment. Specifically, respondents described services that prepared them for job interviews and developing professional skills along with help in logistical arrangements, like scheduling preferences. Respondents also commented on the way services were delivered, with most reporting positive experiences with job coaches whom they considered to be helpful, respectful, understanding, knowledgeable, and supportive. Specifically, respondents described how job coaches provided participant-centered services by prioritizing participant aims, offering choices, and being responsive to individual needs. Participants reported receiving guidance in communicating with supervisors and coworkers to establish a supportive work environment. Because of the services received, respondents reported improvements in job performance and increased independence and confidence at work.

Representative comments included the following:

I got a job and I like it. I like the job. Let us see, [staff] is really helpful. And I can call anytime and ask questions. And if I got problems, he has got answers. He has been my person to help me through the whole thing, and I am delighted.

Yeah [they prepared me for work], they have met with my boss before. They were right there for the interview if I wanted them there, and I did want them there. They are just so great. With

[staff], I have had the same person all the way through the process and the know-how to talk me through stuff.

They are very respectful, and they do not necessarily treat you like you are disabled. They focus on the positives and the things you are good at and the ways they can help you.

[Staff] always has time to answer the phone and talk to me or set up an appointment. They do not make smart-aleck-y remarks about mental health or mental illness. They take my problems seriously; I think it is real good. They did not get the job that they thought would fit me best; they got the job I wanted. The first place I wanted to work, at the [job site], they were right there helping me. And they were the ones that said, "I think maybe it is too physical for you." And they were right. My back was hurting then. I am an old person and kind of overweight so it is not like I can clean for ten hours straight. It was too much, too fast, you know.

They helped me work on interviewing stuff basically. They helped me learn things that I could use not just at work but in my real life as well. That was really helpful.

We practiced interview questions before I did that. When I got the job and then my worker helped me get the clothes for the interview and make sure I got the right type of shoes. And when my worker knew my shoes were getting worn out, they helped me get new ones, boots, so they would not be more worn out. Hopefully, they get more funding so they can keep getting funding to help people like me.

They are very active and easy to talk to and approach.

They helped me work on my resume, and put on my interviews, and figure out what jobs were available and what I wanted to do. And she helped me prepare to ask questions when I got my interview. [Now] my work coach comes by once a week to see how I am doing, and they stayed longer until I was comfortable. They help me when I need a day off. I am Catholic, so my worker helped me get Sundays off.

Basically, they help me figure out where to apply. They help me out when I am working, like talking to the boss if I need days off, and they help me stay on task and understand what I am supposed to be doing.

A few participants raised concerns, including lacking rapport with job coaches and an unfulfilled request for task preferences at work.

Then when I switched to a new [job coach], [she] only saw me because she needed me to sign paperwork. The last two have never seen me.

It is kind of tough, because I did not have a job coach for a long time. I am getting a new one.

They just changed [the job] to being a cleaner, you know. I did not like that. It was hurting me a lot from mopping and bending down to fill up the mop. My sister did not like how the [job coach] changed my job from taking the shelves to cleaning right away because I had trouble doing that and it was hard for me. And the manager had me do cleaning all the time.

Two participants offered suggestions, including extended duration of the employment preparation programming and more effort from staff to be attentive and consistent:

I guess that they would be able to stay longer during my shift. They come in for like ten minutes and then they have to leave. That is the only thing I would say.

I would lengthen the training a little bit, at least for like two months. The people that have gone through training probably have more materials and skills.

Overall, Goodwill participants had reason to be satisfied. The program met or exceeded expectations in four of the six outcome areas. About one-third (34%) of employed participants were working toward self-sufficiency, employed 20 or more hours a week and earning at least minimum wage. Almost nine of every ten (88%) of employed participants were working at least five hours per week. Employed participants averaged about the number of hours per week as the network average (15), they earned more per hour than the network average (\$10.14 vs. \$9.89), the highest of the agencies, resulting in an average weekly wage of \$152, about the network average of \$151.

In 2019, the program reported a notable increase in overall participants (125 versus 109 in 2018) with most of this increase in mental disabilities (46 versus 35). In addition to network participants, Goodwill serves the highest percentage of non-Polk County network individuals through other programs. In addition, the program experienced no Negative Disenrollments.

In 2019, Goodwill was challenged in Barriers to Employment with an average level of support at 3.02, suggesting that participants generally needed somewhat less support than the average in the system. Also, the program was challenged in the Administrative – File Review outcome. Documentation of employment services met PCHS expectations for three of the six files. Issues were noted for gaps in documentation of services that were not reflected in information in PCHS’s electronic database and a case note incorrectly attributed to this participant.

H.O.P.E.

The results of the 2019 evaluation indicate that H.O.P.E.’s Community Employment Program rated Meets Expectations in 2019 with a 71% overall performance rating. The program exceeded expectations for Negative Disenrollments and Participant Satisfaction outcome areas. It met expectations in the Working Toward Self-Sufficiency and Administrative – File Review outcome areas. The program was challenged in Barriers to Employment and Total Engaged in Employment.

| Outcome Area | 2018 Result | 2019 Result | 2018 Score | 2019 Score |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Barriers to Employment | 3.20 | 3.16 | 3 | 2 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 0.00% | 0.00% | 4 | 4 |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 48% | 33% | 4 | 3 |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 85% | 69% | 3 | 1 |
| Participant Satisfaction | 99% | 96% | 4 | 4 |
| Administration-File Review | 96% | 91% | 4 | 3 |
| Overall Performance | 92% | 71% | 4 | 3 |

H.O.P.E. program participants continued to report very high satisfaction with the community employment services they received and the staff who worked with them. The evaluators interviewed 10 program participants (48%) of the 21 H.O.P.E. program participants for whom contact information was provided. In response to structured satisfaction questions, participants agreed that they were satisfied that they were told about services available and their questions were answered, that they participated in the selection of employment and development of their individual plan, that they were adequately prepared for employment, that they were satisfied with the quality of services, that they were treated with respect, and that they would recommend services to a friend.

“What I am satisfied with is that [staff] is on top of everything. Like if there is a problem at work, she will try to help me work through it the best way possible so it can go smoother for me basically.”

In interviews, respondents described ways in which agency job coaches supported their goals in finding and retaining employment. Specifically, respondents described services that prepared them for job interviews and developing professional skills along with help in problem-solving while employed. Respondents also commented on the way services were delivered, with most reporting positive experiences with job coaches whom they considered to be helpful, respectful, responsive, understanding, knowledgeable, and supportive. Specifically, respondents described how job coaches provided participant-centered services by prioritizing participant aims, offering choices, and being responsive to job-specific and individual needs. Because of the services received, respondents reported improvements in job performance and increased independence and confidence at work.

Representative comments included the following:

I do not have to wait too long to get help. They usually help within a certain amount of time.

HOPE is effective, they work on not only getting you a job that you enjoy but also will be able to work well at. Also, they will help you keep said job and finally just get you more effectively working independently with it.

Every step of the way, every day. Taking my suggestions and my ideas that I have to help better the job that I am doing. They do not knock it back. They do not criticize it. [They] try to find a way to incorporate them.

It is like every goal or every marker that I had set out they are there to ... they work really hard to make it work for me.

They helped me find the job and they helped me with interviews, like one-on-one practice interviews.

What I am satisfied with is that she is on top of everything. Like if there is a problem at work, she will try to help me work through it the best way possible so it can go smoother for me basically.

When [staff] comes out to my job she is very polite, courteous. She asks my boss how things are going. When she goes to her, she is very polite, courteous. She is not rude. She is very open to her when she comes to check in.

At HOPE they are very kind and do not push you to do things you do not want to do.

I like that my job coach is ... I like how she is persistent and takes care of the problem when it is necessary to get it addressed at the time. That is what I like about it.

HOPE has helped me in a lot of areas, like with job development, explaining how the interviews go, or what questions they would ask you. And my job coach is very polite and knowledgeable when she comes with me to interviews. [She] knows what she is doing and what she is talking about and that is why I like her. She knows what needs to be done at that time.

Yeah. I would do that. They are good persons and they take care of me. They help me out when I need it. They do not take care of me, "take care" means animals and babies. I am not no animal or baby to take care of. That is why I said help me. I want to be treated like a grown-up man.

A few participants raised concerns, including a lack of awareness of the array of services available, inadequate services to attain employment, inconsistent responses from job coaches, and staff not eliciting and incorporating participant goals.

[T]he employment specialist [did] not really [tell me about the employment services they would be working on with me].

Considering the fact that I have been unemployed for four months due to a lay-off, my mom and I have had to take it into our own hands. They kind of are helping me find a new job, but only when it is convenient for them. My mom and I have been looking for jobs without their help, and we have been more successful than what they have been doing.

[Staff] never returns the phone call. Sometimes she does; sometimes she does not.

Honestly, with the provider they gave me recently she is very controlling and expects me to do everything on my own without including my input and what I want to do.

A few participants offered suggestions, including access to educational opportunities and more frequent outreach.

Help find schooling, school. Help with just finishing school like if they want to go back to school. I mean that is how I would think if I could change it. Like add like educational goals for anybody that wants to go back to school.

Maybe just being a little more active with me, not just when they want to be. Stop being less convenient for them and be more convenient for me.

H.O.P.E. is the smallest program, serving an average of 22 participants per reporting week this year. H.O.P.E. works exclusively with individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in a wraparound model. This year, only two participants were receiving job development services at any time; the others were employed. Of those, about one-third (33%) were working at least 20 hours per week and earning minimum wage or higher. About a third additional participants (36%) were working at least five hours a week and earning minimum wage or higher. The remaining 31% of participants averaged less than five hours per week working. They had no Negative Disenrollments for 2019.

In 2019, employed participants reported a decrease in their average wage rate (\$8.68 in 2019 from \$9.30 in 2018), maintaining an average of 16 hours worked per week. Participants' average weekly wage also decreased from \$197 in 2018 to \$143 in 2019. H.O.P.E. met expectations in the Administrative – File Review outcome, with five of six files meeting expectations and one of the files showing dates inconsistent with the date posted in PolkMIS data.

H.O.P.E. was challenged in the Barriers to Employment outcome this year, with a score of 3.02, compared to a system average of 3.12, suggesting that participants generally needed somewhat less support than the average in the system.

LINK ASSOCIATES

The results of the 2019 evaluation indicate that Link’s Community Employment Program performed very well for the calendar year. The program exceeded overall expectations in 2019 with an 83% overall performance rating, the same score as 2018. The program exceeded expectations for the Negative Disenrollments, Participant Satisfaction, and Administration – File Review outcome areas. They met expectations for the Barriers to Employment and Total Engaged in Employment outcome areas but were challenged in the Working Toward Self-Sufficiency outcome area.

| Outcome Area | 2018 Result | 2019 Result | 2018 Score | 2019 Score |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Barriers to Employment | 3.31 | 3.38 | 3 | 3 |
| Negative Disenrollments | 0.00% | 0.00% | 4 | 4 |
| Working Toward Self-Sufficiency | 18% | 22% | 2 | 2 |
| Total Engaged in Employment | 92% | 92% | 3 | 3 |
| Participant Satisfaction | 98% | 99% | 4 | 4 |
| Administration-File Review | 100% | 100% | 4 | 4 |
| Overall Performance | 83% | 83% | 4 | 4 |

Link participants reported being very satisfied with the community employment services they received and the staff who worked with them. The evaluators interviewed 15 program participants (16%) of the 92 Link program participants for whom contact information was provided. In the structured satisfaction questions, only one respondent answered “no” to one question (that they were told about services and answered questions); all other questions received 100% positive responses.

“I like that they help you like when you are applying for a job and job applications like that, or they help you one-on-one to find a fit that works best for you.”

In interviews, respondents described ways in which agency job coaches supported their goals in finding and retaining employment. Specifically, respondents described services that prepared them for job interviews and developing professional skills, along with collaborative planning for next steps. Respondents also commented on the way services were delivered, with most reporting positive experiences with job coaches whom they considered to be helpful, respectful, responsive, understanding, knowledgeable, and supportive. Specifically, respondents described how job coaches provided family and participant-centered services by prioritizing participant aims, offering choices, and being responsive to job-specific and individual needs. Because of the services received, respondents reported improvements in job performance and increased independence and confidence at work.

Representative comments included the following:

I like that they help you like when you are applying for a job and job applications like that, or they help you one-on-one to find a fit that works best for you.

They support me and give me reminders on stuff that I may need to work on. There are days they do not show up because they want me to be on my own, and they think I am excelling. If I want to talk to my job coach, they are one hundred percent willing to talk to me. We are very connected. We are very co-connected with each other. He is very big on making sure that we get along and that I communicate well with him. He really finds it important as a job coach for me, and I really like that.

They help with employment, and they have services that help people to get a job. Or if you feel like it is difficult to do anything, or plan goals or get a job, they help you. So you do not feel like you are doing it all yourself. It is just too much for my parents to help me on their own.

My job coach can talk to my boss about what is going on because I have trouble communicating.

Courtesy of the people, you know, they are in it to make it better for the client and the family. They always include the family in it, and not all places do that. Some just say, "this is what we are going to do, like it or not."

It was a matter of a week or less to get everything in line to start looking for jobs. It was not a long process.

Oh yes, they asked me what type of position I wanted. If there was anything I needed help with, they helped me. They assisted with learning my job position, and I liked that. I got a clear understanding of what I needed to do at my employer.

They helped me to do the application. If there were questions I did not understand, they put it in words I could understand. I have to do online training, and they are there to help me if there is anything I do not understand. If there is anything I do not understand, they break it down to me so I can understand.

Everything, I mean, they are there to support me. I never have to wait long when I call them, even if they are closed. I really do not have any complaints or nothing. They are there for me.

Last week he [my job developer] came and talked to me. I see him this coming week for a meeting. He writes stuff down, and we talk about it. He answers my questions real fast. After we get done talking, we write everything down. He writes up the stuff, and if I need something he goes and gets it.

A few participants raised concerns, including inconsistent punctuality and a lack of rapport with job coaches.

I am just not sure about my new job coach. I do not really know him that well, and I do not have much confidence in him right now. I have not received much feedback from him.

Be on time. If I get there at my job, they always come late to meeting with me.

When asked about changes, the majority of participants reported they were satisfied and had no suggestions for improvement. One participant had a suggestion to add strategies to achieve their goals.

I have not really gotten a new job with the new job developer, but I have gotten leads and that was something that I wanted. There are things that I probably should be doing like practice interviews. I should have my job developer sit in on interviews and give me feedback. One reason that I am under-employed is that I do not do good at interviews.

Participants had reason to be satisfied with Link's community employment program. The program met or exceeded expectations in five of the six outcome areas. Those who were employed reported an increase in wage rates from \$9.58 in 2018 to \$9.94 in 2019. They maintained hours worked per week at 13 in 2019 and also maintained average weekly wages for Link participants from the previous year (\$132).

The program scored high on Barriers to Employment (3.38), indicating that participants needed relatively higher levels of support from the program. They had no negative disenrollments this year. In addition, the program demonstrated accuracy and completeness in documentation, in consistency in case notes with PolkMIS data, and in reporting wages and hours during reporting periods, scoring 100% in the Administration – File Review outcome area.

Although the program reported a high percentage of participants engaged in employment (92%), about two in ten (22%) were working toward self-sufficiency, the outcome in which they were challenged this year.

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Appendix A: Community Employment History

In 2007, Polk County redesigned its employment service system to align with its vision and core values to increase self-sufficiency, using a guiding coalition comprised of stakeholders to lead this effort. This effort focuses the purpose of employment services and supports on working toward self-sufficiency; addresses service gaps and funding misalignment; and continues to measure the effectiveness of services. From 2007 through 2014, PCHS produced the *Pathways to Self-Sufficiency Employment Scorecard* as a resource for potential and current participants. Although PCHS has discontinued the scorecard, this evaluation of employment services continues to be a key component to measure the effectiveness of employment services.

Historically, PCHS's employment outcome was based on the level of integration or location of employment (e.g., competitive, enclave, workshop, etc.). Employment rates were reported as part of annual evaluations for the integrated services, case management, and service coordination programs. In the spring of 2007, the employment guiding coalition suggested several changes to the county-wide employment outcome measure to maintain consistency with the future direction of Polk County employment services. While working in the community is highly valued, the coalition recognized that, for some individuals, support cannot be provided in a community setting in a cost-effective manner and that a major goal of employment was to provide for self-sufficiency. Coalition members recommended modifying the emphasis from integration and location to hours worked and wages earned, regardless of the work environment. In 2013, PCHS renamed these outcomes as a first step in aligning targets with the Ticket to Work trial work level. Employment – Working Toward Self-Sufficiency replaced Employment – Working At Self-Sufficiency and Engagement Toward Employment replaced Employment Total Working Toward Self-Sufficiency. There is no change in what is being measured. The results are directly comparable to outcomes from previous years. Individuals working 20 or more hours per week and earning at or above minimum wage are considered to be working toward self-sufficiency in employment. While earning \$7,131 annually may not provide for self-sufficiency, employment for individuals with disabilities is a challenging outcome. According to the Office of Disability Employment Policy (2016), only about 20% of individuals with disabilities in the nation compared to almost 70% of people without disabilities were employed in January 2016. Fear of losing disability benefits, limited education and work experience, and lack of reliable transportation, among other issues, are barriers that these individuals must overcome.

Appendix B: Community Employment File Review Form

Reviewer:

Employment Agency:

Name:

File Review Date:

PolkMIS ID:

Employment Status

| Waiting List Expectation (Documentation Supporting. ...) | Documented in File |
|---|--------------------|
| Wait List dates in PolkMIS consistent with file: | Yes No |
| Participant was notified of waiting list placement | Yes No |
| Participant was notified of estimated wait time | Yes No |
| Participant was notified at least every 30 days regarding status | Yes No |
| Comments: | |
| Employment Prep Expectation (Documentation Supporting. ...) | Documented in File |
| Employment Prep dates in PolkMIS consistent with file: | Yes No |
| Participant completed a skills assessment (N/A for structured programs) | Yes No NA |
| Participant's skills needs were addressed (i.e., services delivered) | Yes No |
| Comments: | |
| Job Development (Doc. Supporting. ...) | Documented in File |
| Job Development dates in PolkMIS consistent with file: | Yes No |
| Job developer discussed participant's employment preferences with participant and searched for jobs that were consistent with preferences | Yes No |
| Participant was involved in job placement (N/A if not placed yet) | Yes No NA |
| Services were delivered and documented | Yes No |
| Comments: | |
| Employed (i.e., job coaching) (Doc. Supporting. ...) | Documented in File |
| Employment dates in PolkMIS consistent with file: | Yes No |
| Services were delivered and documented | Yes No |
| Comments: | |
| Unemployed (Doc. Supporting. ...) | Documented in File |
| Unemployment dates in PolkMIS consistent with file: | Yes No |
| Program remained in contact with participant and discussed participant's plans to return to job development or employment prep. | Yes No |
| Comments: | |

| Wage and Hour Reporting | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|--------|----------------------|
| Reporting Period | PolkMIS Hours Worked | PolkMIS Wages | File Hours Worked | File Wages | Source | PolkMIS & File Agree |
| 4/7/19 - 4/20/19 | | | | | | Yes No |
| Job Changes/Comments: | | | | | | |
| 10/6/19 – 10/19/19 | | | | | | Yes No |
| Job Changes/Comments: | | | | | | |

Appendix C: Community Employment Participant Interview Questions

1. The staff at [Community Employment Agency] told me about the services that were available to me and answered my questions about the program.
2. What are one or two things about [Community Employment Agency's] service that you liked the best?
3. If you could change one or two things about [Community Employment Agency's] service to make it better, what would they be?
4. I participated in the selection of my employment goal and development of my individual employment plan.
5. The services I received from [Community Employment Agency] were appropriate to meet my employment needs. [Follow-up: The services I received from [Community Employment Agency] were able to meet my employment needs.]
6. [Community Employment Agency] adequately prepared me for employment. [Follow-up: [Community Employment Agency] helped me prepare for employment in a way that fit what I needed.]
7. [Community Employment Agency's] services were provided to me in a reasonable amount of time.
8. I was satisfied with the quality of services from [Community Employment Agency].
9. [Community Employment Agency] treated me with courtesy and respect.
10. I would recommend the services from [Community Employment Agency] to a friend.

Appendix D: Outcome Criteria

Administration-File Review: To monitor the accuracy of outcomes data reported by the providers, PCHS added a sixth outcome area in 2015 based on file review results. Evaluators have conducted reviews of provider agencies' files with each evaluation and included those results in the annual reports. Beginning with the 2015 evaluation, PCHS formalized the file review as an outcome measure of administrative processes. Evaluators randomly sampled files for participants enrolled in services in September 2016. Beginning with the 2016 evaluation, evaluators randomly select six files from each program, with an equal distribution across types of services when possible. The files are reviewed to assess the consistency of information in PolkMIS with documentation in the file. File review criteria are listed in Appendix B. The outcome score is the total criteria that the file met out of the criteria possible for that file, given the types of services provided.

Employment Outcomes: Employment– Working Toward Self-Sufficiency is measured as the percentage of employable individuals working 20 hours or more per week and earning the minimum wage or greater during the four specified reporting weeks. Engagement Toward Employment is measured as the percentage of employable individuals working at least 5 hours per week and earning the minimum wage or greater during the four specified reporting weeks. The employment outcomes do not apply to individuals between 18 and 64 who have been assessed a level of support of 5 or 6, involved in an ongoing recognized training program (secondary school, GED, or post-secondary school), or individuals 65 or older who choose not to work (i.e., are retired).

Because employment may vary during the year, the employment outcome was assessed during four specific weeks of the year. The final outcome is the average of participants who were working toward self-sufficiency or engaged toward employment during these four reporting weeks.

Level of Support: Level of support is the category of support from 1 (least amount of support) to 6 (most amount of support) that an individual qualifies for based on a standardized assessment. Coordination programs are responsible for completing a standardized assessment, either an Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP) for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, or a Level of Care Utilization System (LOCUS) for individuals with mental health issues. The ICAP assesses adaptive and maladaptive behavior. The LOCUS incorporates developmental, family, and community systems of care perspectives.

Participant Satisfaction: Participant satisfaction is based on interviews by the independent evaluator of fifteen program participants from each program. The interviewer asks program participants questions regarding access, empowerment, and service satisfaction. Participants are asked eleven questions concerning their satisfaction with their community employment staff, agency program and services. A point is awarded for each question for which the participant reports being satisfied (i.e., agrees with the question). Occasionally, people chose not to respond to all questions. A program's score is based on the percentage of points achieved out of the total possible points for the program given the number of responses.

Negative Disenrollment: This outcome is measured by the percentage of individuals who were negatively disenrolled. Disenrollment is the termination of services due to an individual leaving the program either on a voluntary or involuntary discharge. Negative disenrollments occur when an individual refuses to participate, is displeased with services, or when the agency initiates discharge. Neutral disenrollments occur when the individual no longer needs services, unable to engage in services, is no longer eligible, leaves Polk County, dies, or experiences a change in level of care.