

Polk County Mental Health & Disability Services Region
2021 Community-Based Employment
Outcomes Evaluation



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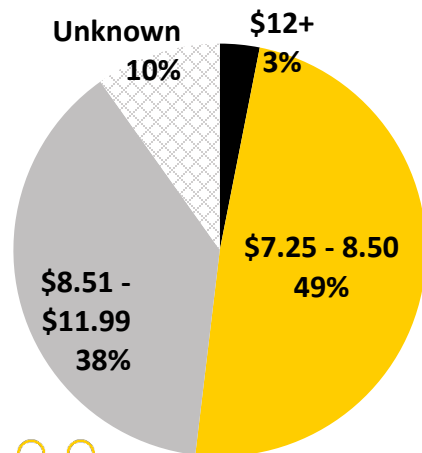
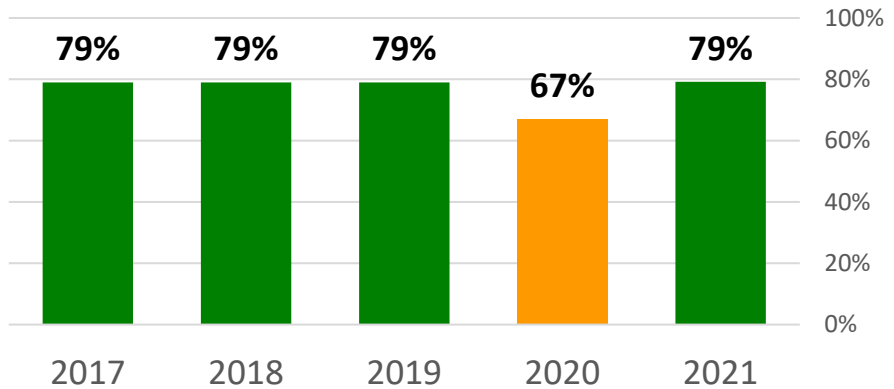
Executive Summary



Overall system performance

increased by 12% in 2021, returning to the pre-pandemic system performance averages to **Meeting Expectations**.

This notable increase may be attributed to a rebound in employment opportunities following the first year of the pandemic.



The average hourly wage of participants in 2021 was **\$10.52, a 26% increase** from \$8.37 in 2020.

Pandemic related job disruption may have led to new opportunities, 43% of participants were employed for *less than a year*, a 15% increase in this group from 2020.

In 2021, participants shifted job settings, with **growth in employment in *Retail Sales***, which surpassed *Food Service* to become the most common employment sector at 39% in 2021 (at 26% in 2020).

Additionally, ***weekly wages* and *weekly hours worked* were higher in 2021** compared to 2020.



Despite unprecedented challenges, participant satisfaction with services (95%) remained high and stable, increasing by 1% in 2021.

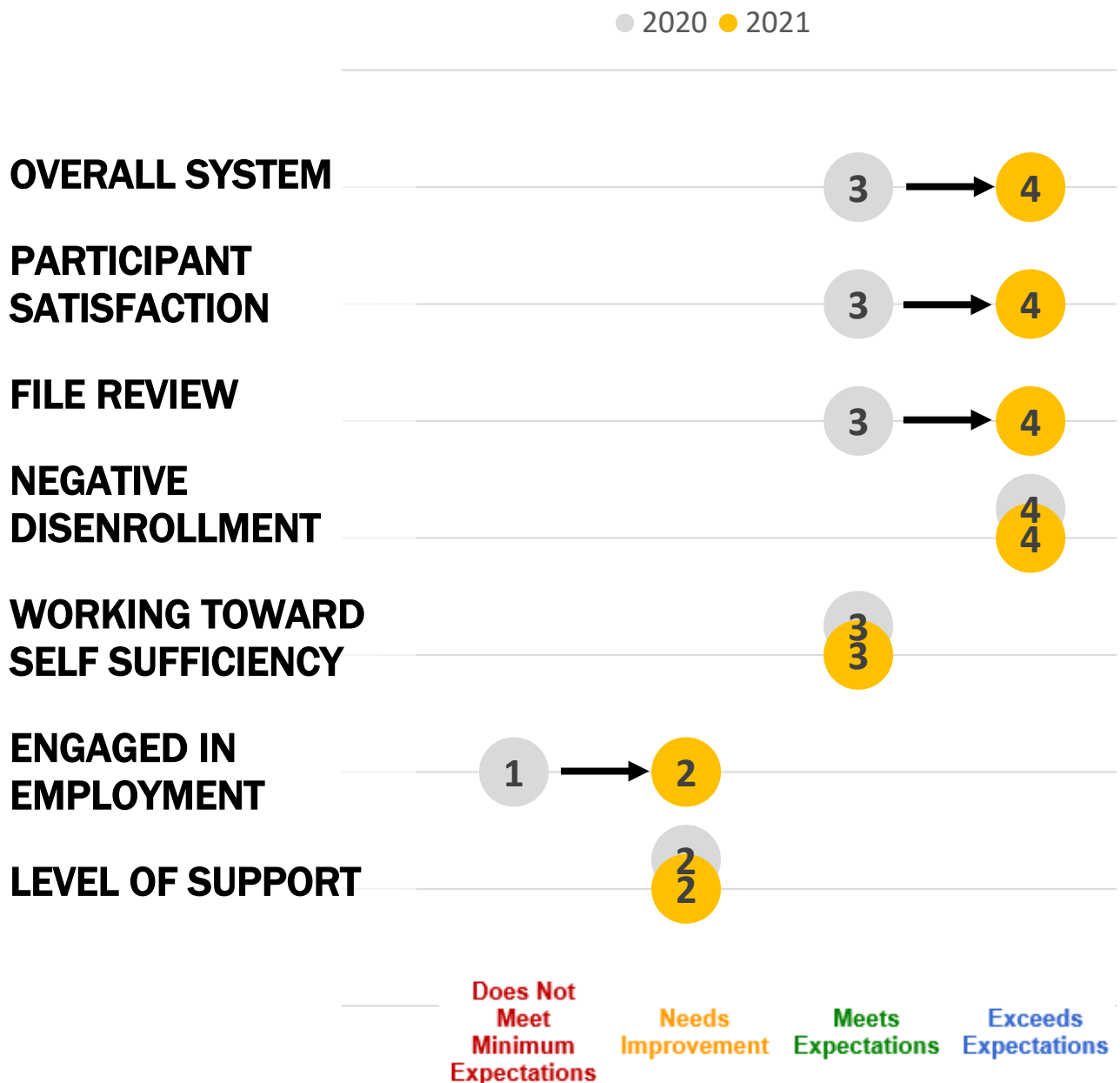
89% of participants interviewed said *All* their needs were met during the pandemic, a 20% increase from 2020 (69%).

“I meet my goals. I like to have help meeting my goals it's always nice to have help with that.”

“Well, they respect me, and they treat me like a regular person. Just love and compassion and understanding.”

In 2021, the Polk County MHDS Region Community Based Employment outcomes **improved in 5 of 6 areas compared to 2020.**

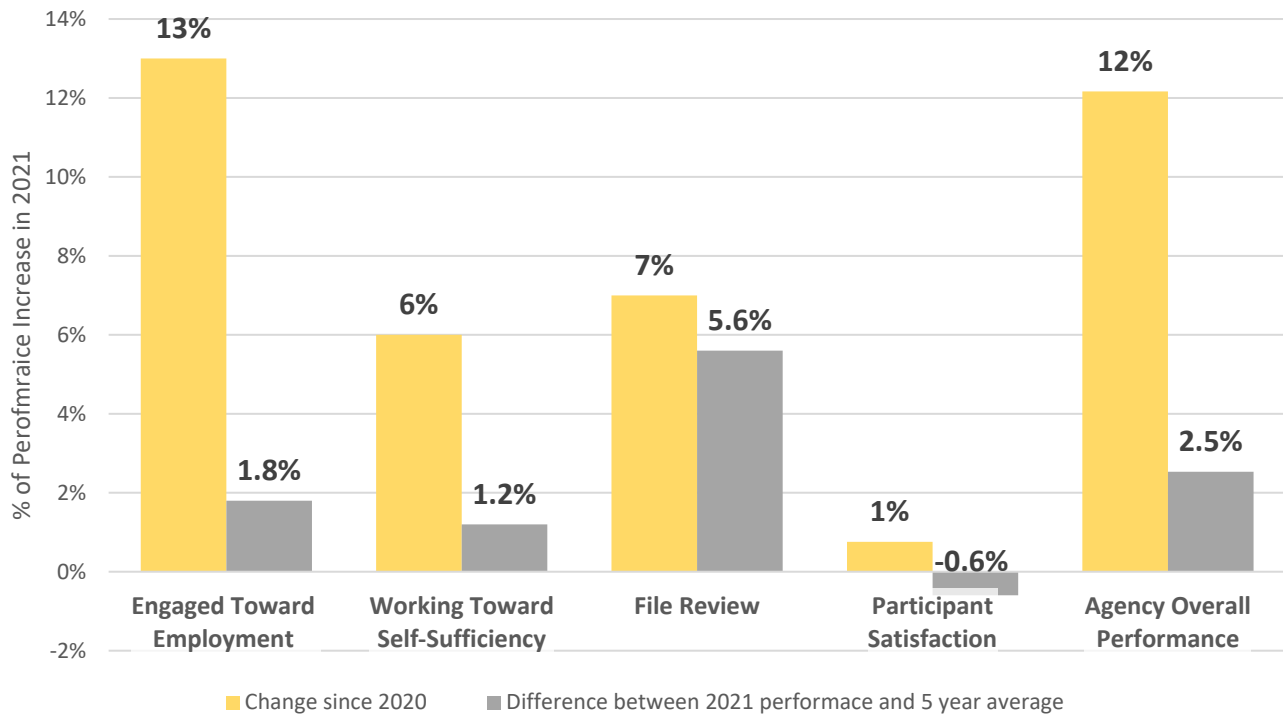
Performance in four outcome areas increased enough to change the outcome score, and the 2021 *Working Towards Self Sufficiency* outcome performance fell short of the *Exceeds Expectations* threshold by 1%.



The Polk County MHDS Region made significant gains in performance across outcome areas over the last year, which could be attributable to lower-than-average performances due to the pandemic-related challenges in 2020.

However, the Polk County MHDS region not only improved compared to 2020 results, the **2021 performance in five outcome areas is higher than the system performance compared to the average of the last 5 years (2017-2021).**¹

Of note, the 2021 File Review performance was almost 6% higher than the five-year average and the 2021 performance in the Participant Satisfaction outcome was less than 1% lower than the 5-year average.



¹ Not shown in this figure are Negative Disenrollment and Level of Support, since those outcomes performance goals are in the negative direction (e.g., lower score is better), so they were not comparable in this chart.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 2

Community-Based Employment Evaluation Results Summary 6

Employment Metrics 10

 Demographics 10

 Participant Earnings 11

 Employment Status 13

 Employment Retention 15

 Employment Settings 16

Community-Based Employment Outcomes 18

 Level of Support and Barriers to Employment 19

 Barriers to Employment 21

 Engagement Toward Employment 23

 Working Toward Self-Sufficiency 25

 Negative Disenrollment 27

 File Review 29

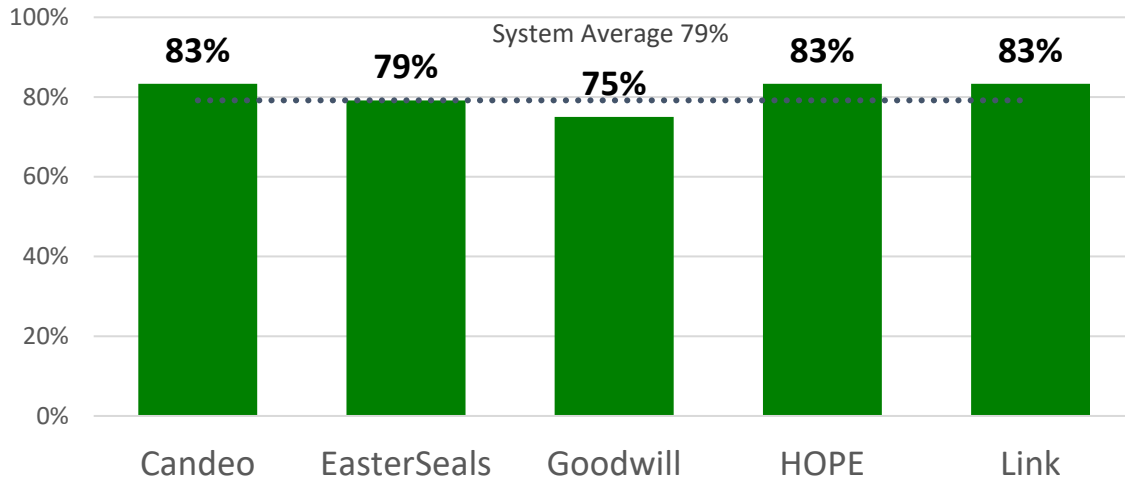
 Participant satisfaction 31

References 36

Community-Based Employment Evaluation Results Summary

In this fifteenth year, the Community-Based Employment Evaluation shows that the community-based employment network, with a system average of 79%, **Meeting Expectations** in supporting individuals to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment.

Figure 1. 2021 Overall Performance by Agency



All five Community-Based Employment agencies **Met Expectations** for Overall Performance in 2021 (Figure 1. 2021 Overall Performance by Agency).

Individuals with intellectual disabilities were the majority of the system population in 2021, comprising 84% of the overall population, an increase from 80% in 2020 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. 2021 System Participants by Disability Type

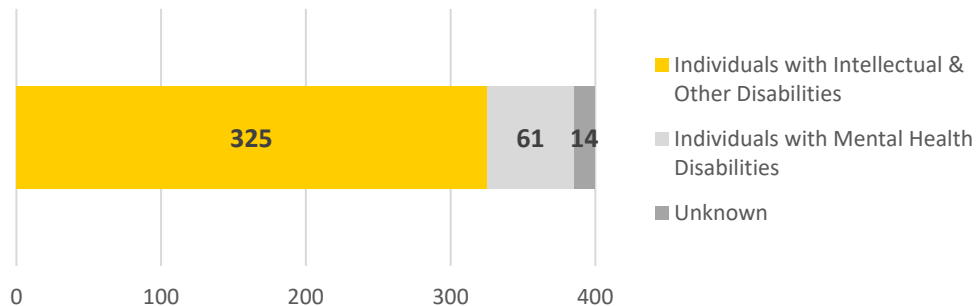


Table 1. 2021 Summary Table Performance

	Candeo	EasterSeals	Goodwill	HOPE	Link	System Average
Level of Support	3.24	2.77	3.21	2.77	3.27	3.05
Engaged Toward Employment	89%	83%	76%	83%	90%	84%
Working Toward Self-Sufficiency	23%	45%	32%	43%	22%	34%
Negative Disenrollment	0.00%	0.46%	1.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.37%
File Review	100%	98%	96%	98%	100%	98%
Participant Satisfaction	96%	91%	93%	96%	98%	95%
Agency Overall Performance	83%	79%	75%	83%	83%	79%

Table 2. 2021 Summary Table Scores

	Candeo	EasterSeals	Goodwill	HOPE	Link	System Average
Level of Support	3	2	3	2	3	2
Engaged Toward Employment	3	2	2	2	3	2
Working Toward Self-Sufficiency	2	4	3	4	2	3
Negative Disenrollment	4	4	3	4	4	4
File Review	4	4	4	4	4	4
Participant Satisfaction	4	3	3	4	4	4
Agency Overall Performance	3	3	3	3	3	3

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Directors of agencies providing Community Based Employment services shared insights about challenges and successes encountered during the reporting period.

Transportation, workforce support, and the impact on participants and staff were mentioned as overarching factors in service delivery.

Transportation issues

In 2017, Iowa DHS eliminated the longtime waiver program used to pay for transportation services and switched to a tiered rate, ultimately placing the responsibility for Community-Based Employment transportation on Supported Community Living (SCL) providers.

Since 2017, SCL providers have been responsible for providing transportation to participants receiving daily services when they no longer qualified for transportation waiver. So, SCL staff are responsible for providing transportation to some participants who do not need full support, they only need to be taken to work and taken home from work.

Limited options and capacity to meet needs

Directors concurred that SCL providers struggle to be solely responsible for providing transportation due, in part, to scheduling conflicts.

Directors reported a shortage in available transportation services as well as cabs being unreliable for participants, partially due to pervasive workforce issues affecting transportation capacity.

“It’s creating a lot of scheduling nightmares when you get a call from someone [participant] and they can’t get home.”

“With the MCOs trying to set up transportation for our hourly client caps and the transportation providers also facing a shortage, so they’re not wanting to take on the trips So we have a lot of staff providing transportation. A lot of SCL providers are saying they can’t do the transportation, and so we’ve had a few case managers be like, “Oh, well, we’re just going to up here, tier and you guys can start providing transportation,” and it’s like. “no, we actually that that’s not going to work for us because of our staff shortages and clients don’t need that full support that we should have to be there for their entire shifts to take them to work and take them home.” So we’re seeing struggles like, I mean transportation’s always been a struggle, but it’s like our previous struggles would be a dream compared to what we’re facing right now.”

“The message from transportation providers [is] that they, too, do not have drivers and so it’s just creating a lot of scheduling nightmares. When you get a call from someone and they can’t get home and so, yeah, just a lot of issues with transportation reliability.”

Impact on participants

Agencies reported seeing a trend in participants leaving employment settings for day habilitation programs. Directors suggested that this shift is partially due to limited staff capacity and transportation issues; *“It’s easier to take 3 roommates to a day program instead of 3 roommates to work.”*

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Staff support and retention

Directors from multiple agencies reported success in retaining long-term, dedicated staff. However, an upward trend in participant wages coupled with stagnant support staff wages continued to make it difficult for agencies to hire and retain staff.

- *“We’ve definitely seen those starting wages going up, which is great, but at the same time we do have a handful of persons that we support making more than their job coaches.”*

Despite recent years of pandemic hardship, an agency director reported feeling like they were *“getting back to normal from pandemic times”*

- *“People [staff] are doing pretty good”*

Increased support for mental health issues among support staff was a promising practice noted by an Agency Director

- *I think it's especially helpful that a lot of organizations have realized that mental health is a key part of retention for staff.*

Staff recruitment

Lack of applicants for open positions was identified by Agency Directors as a major issue.

- *“We can't grow our program without more staff and it is hard to get applicants, so it kind of shows why it's a great market for our clients. There's plenty of jobs to be had and lots of competition amongst employers to hire.”*

Providers also noted increased wages among other community employers was becoming more of a draw for prospective employees.

- *“It's getting to a point where it it's easy to go and flip burgers and make \$16, \$17 an hour, or you know, start out at you know an entry level job at \$20 an hour.”*

To address staff shortages, low wages, and agency underfunding from an advocacy perspective, a suggestion was continued discussions with legislators about raising rates for supported employment service providers to attract and retain workers, thereby more effectively supporting individuals receiving services and providing opportunities for increased support and work hours.

Staff Burnout

Among existing employees staff burnout was identified as an area of concern, though several providers noted improved retention of long-term employees after losses and reassignment of duties during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

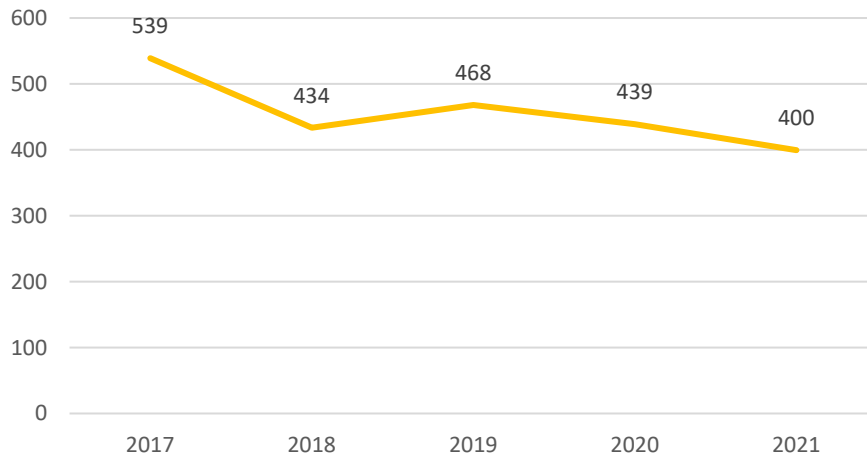
- *“The last year was the first year that we kind of felt like we were getting back to normal. The job coaches were doing job coaching, and not dayhab or residential, or whatever they needed to do during and throughout the pandemic, so I think that that has been refreshing for them.”*

Employment Metrics

DEMOGRAPHICS

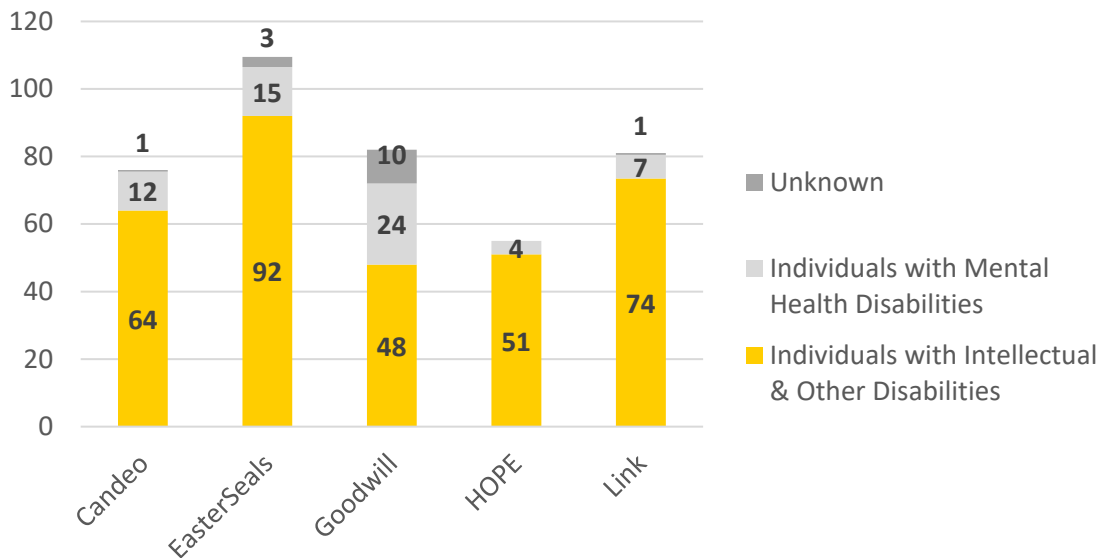
Historically, the Polk County MHDS Regional Network saw increases in individuals served every year until 2017 when that number began to decline. 2020 showed a marked decrease in persons served from 2019, from 468 to 439. The trend continued in 2021 when the number was reduced by 39. An average of 400 participants per reporting week was reported in 2021, compared to 439 in 2020, with 39 fewer participants.

Figure 3. Annual Average Participants Enrolled [Count]



The system predominantly served individuals with intellectual disabilities, providing services to almost four individuals with intellectual disabilities to every one person with a mental health disability (Figure 4).

Figure 4. 2021 Participant Disability Status by Agency



PARTICIPANT EARNINGS

Figure 5. Average Weekly Hours Worked

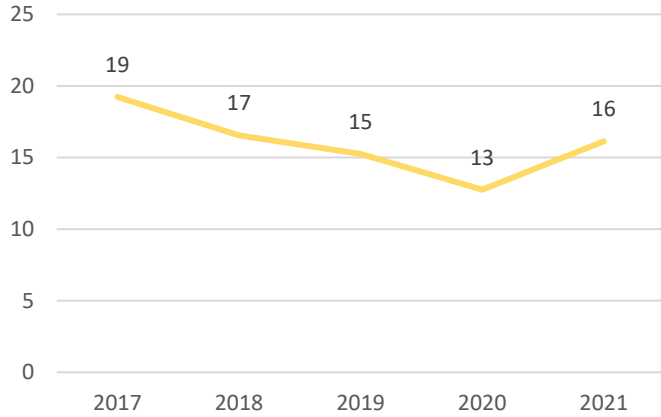


Figure 6. Average Hourly Wages

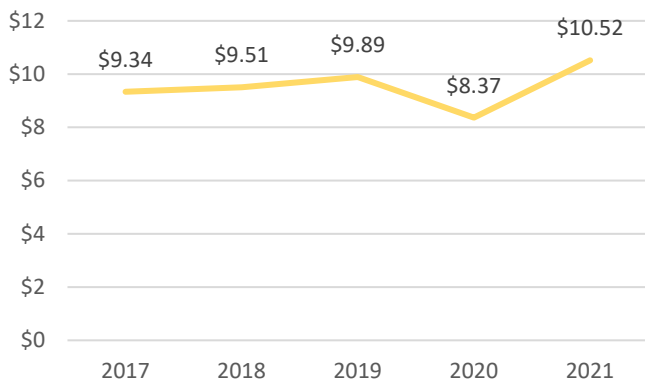


Figure 7. Average Participant Weekly Wage

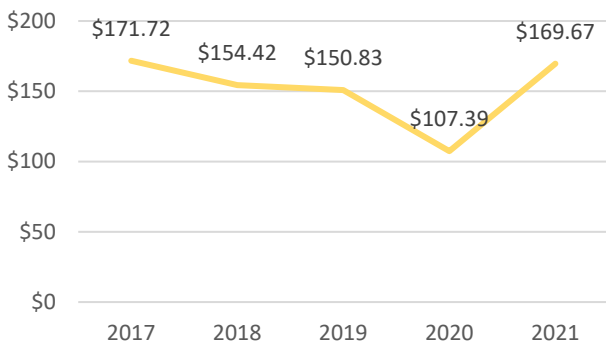


Figure 5 - Figure 7 show 5-year trends (2017-2021) in three employment measures for Polk County MHDS Region Community-Based Employment participants.

Participant hours worked per week increased by 3 hours, to average 16 hours per week.

Figure 5 shows a deviation in the 2017-2020 trend of fewer hours worked per week each year, with a 2021 average of 16 hours worked per week.

Average hourly wages showed a steady, incremental upward trend through 2019, with a notable decrease in 2020 to \$8.37 per hour (Figure 6). **In 2021, average hourly wages increased by 26% to \$10.52 per hour, the highest hourly wage in the 5 year-period.**

While hourly and weekly wages increased from 2020, the overall trend of **working fewer hours** resulted in a lower weekly wage compared to 2017.

The combination of an increase in hourly wage and hours worked per week resulted in higher weekly wages for Community-Based Employment participants, with average weekly wages **\$62 higher compared to 2020 (Figure 7).**

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Overall downward trend in participant enrollment in services

- Directors explained that decreased participant enrollment is attributed to lack of applicants for staff positions, transportation barriers, and staffing shortages
- Directors linked transportation issues and lack of available staff, specifically, as impacting services delivered to participants
- Directors reported not being able to grow their programs without more staff, especially with MCO referrals remaining the same
- *“You can’t even get them [participants] in the door because you can’t get them the support.”*

Pandemic impacts on participant hours and wages

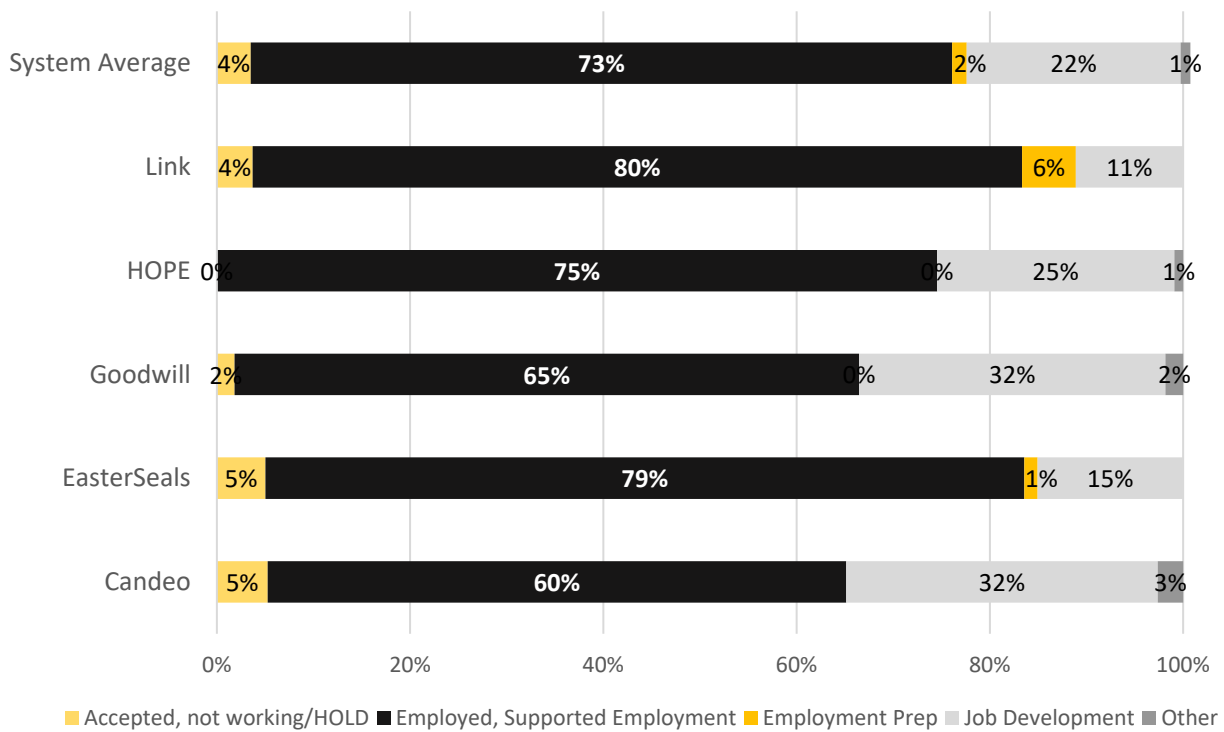
- The annual average decrease in hours worked was attributed to pandemic circumstances. Providers perceived an increase of hours worked in the last 6 months as businesses began to recruit and rehire workers
- It was noted that some businesses which hired frequently during the pandemic, were now beginning to lay workers off.
- *“Some of the clients that worked higher hours are the ones that also ended up being laid off during the pandemic.”*
- *“Just kind of as a historical perspective, Hy-Vee is very famous for employing is many people as they possibly can, and then cutting their hours, so people will have a lower, you know, they're still employed, but then instead of working 20 to 25 hours, they're working 10 and 15, yet still hiring people so they'll have more and more working in their locations.”*

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Timely delivery of employment services is critical to maintain participant engagement and leverage participants' readiness for employment towards a positive transition into employment. To assess the efficiency of services, the Polk County MHDS Region asks agencies to report data on how long individuals wait to access services (i.e., agency wait 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 2021, almost three-quarters (73%) of Community-Based Employment participants were employed, a 5% increase from 68% in 2020
- About another quarter of participants were in *Job Development* (22%).
- A few (2%) were enrolled in *Employment Prep*
- No participants were on waitlists
- Less than one percent of participants were discharged
- One percent of participants graduated to become independent workers.

Figure 8. Polk County MHDS Region Network Employment Status 2021 by agency²



² The following statuses were either not reported or reported as <2% in 2021 and were included as combined statuses to create the *Other* category in Figure 8: Agency wait list, unemployed, discharged, exempt, graduated, unknown. Also, included, Candeo reported 1% as Graduated (Within *Other* category). The System Average total percentage exceeds 100% due to rounding.

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Employment status and staff capacity

Employment First¹ is an initiative to improve and expand integrated employment services and outcomes through supported employment for persons with disabilities. Agency directors noted the emphasis on Employment First seems to have waned in this reporting year because of limited staff capacity and low service discharge rates to independent employment. Some individuals who may have previously explored employment services options are, instead, participating in day programs via automatic placement there by managed care organizations.

- *“We’re having to fight MCOs to say “no, they can work, and here are the options instead of just making the easy referral into a day program ... and sometimes that’s not the right fit for people.”*
- *“We have a big wait list right now for [participants funded through the] ID waiver because there’s not spots [on the waiting list] for them to move into.”*

Agency directors agreed that MCO referrals for supported employment services had stayed the same in the past year except for an uptick in referrals of individuals needing high levels of ongoing support that are difficult for agencies to accept and sustain amidst staffing shortages.

- *“I feel like often the referrals I get for job coaching or job development from an MCO need a 100% job coaching with no chances of fading ... and to add on that I’m just seeing this kind of gap in services of I don’t think many of us can especially take that on and it’s gotten worse with staffing capacities.”*

Agency staff reported resources, including staff time, are directed to supporting individuals who are already employed.

Without support staff to provide services to employed participants, agency job developers are not able to place people and are often recruited to provide job coaching services to participants already employed *“simply because we didn’t have the staff to transition.”*

- *“Supporting people that we have employed takes priority over job developing those that are ready to look.”*
- *“When your job developers are having to provide the job support there’s no reason to get anybody a job because if you can’t provide the support, what’s the use? So again, really, that goes all the way around. We can’t even get ‘em in the door [to a job] because we can’t get ‘em the support.”*

EMPLOYMENT RETENTION

Employment retention is a metric of continuous employment (not necessarily in the same job) for Community-Based Employment participants.

- In 2021, 57% of Community-Based Employment participants were continuously employed for a year or more.
- Compared to last year, the category for participants with less than 3 months of continuous employment nearly doubled, growing from 5% in 2020 to 9% on average in 2021. Disruption in employment continuity is likely related to the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine (Figure 10).
- For the Polk County MHDS Region Network, more than one in seven participants (14%) have been employed continuously more than 5 years.

Figure 9. Polk County Network Employment Retention Status 2021 by Agency

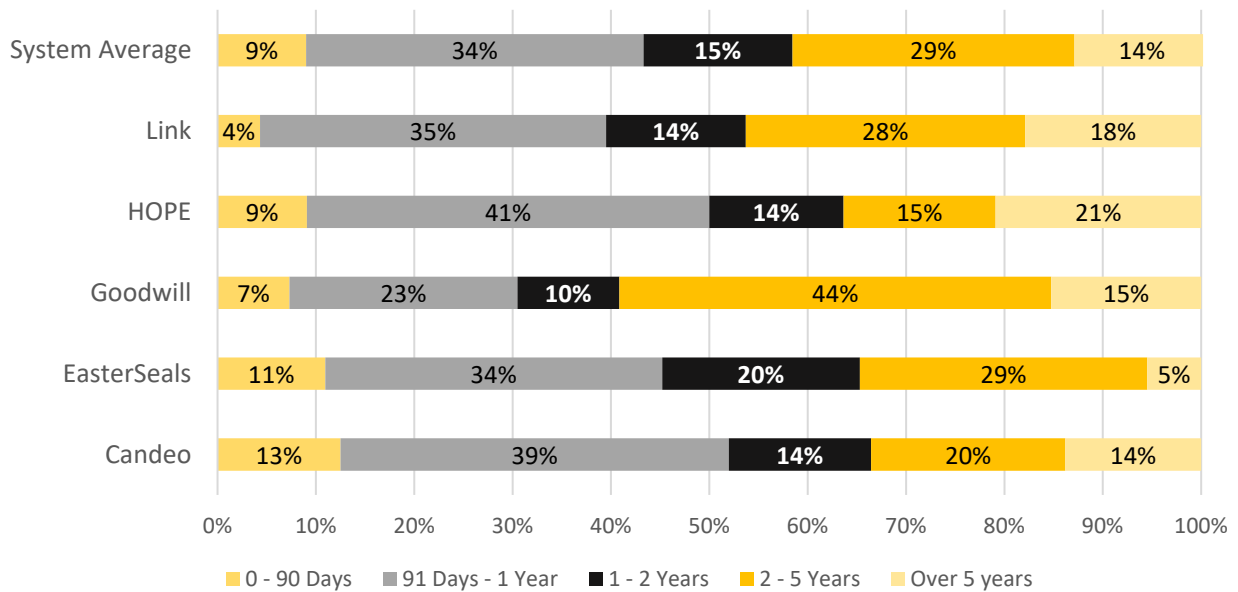
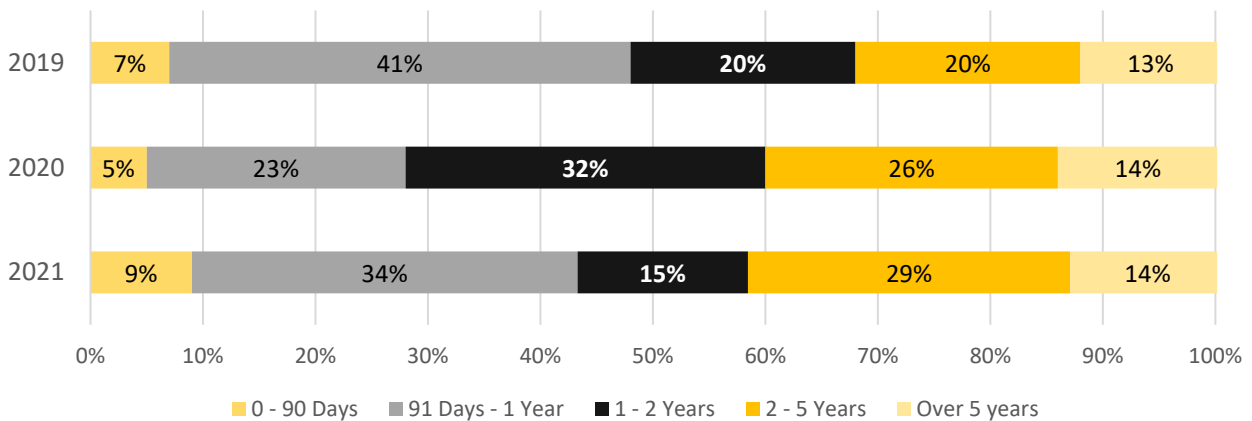


Figure 10. Employment Retention 2019-2021

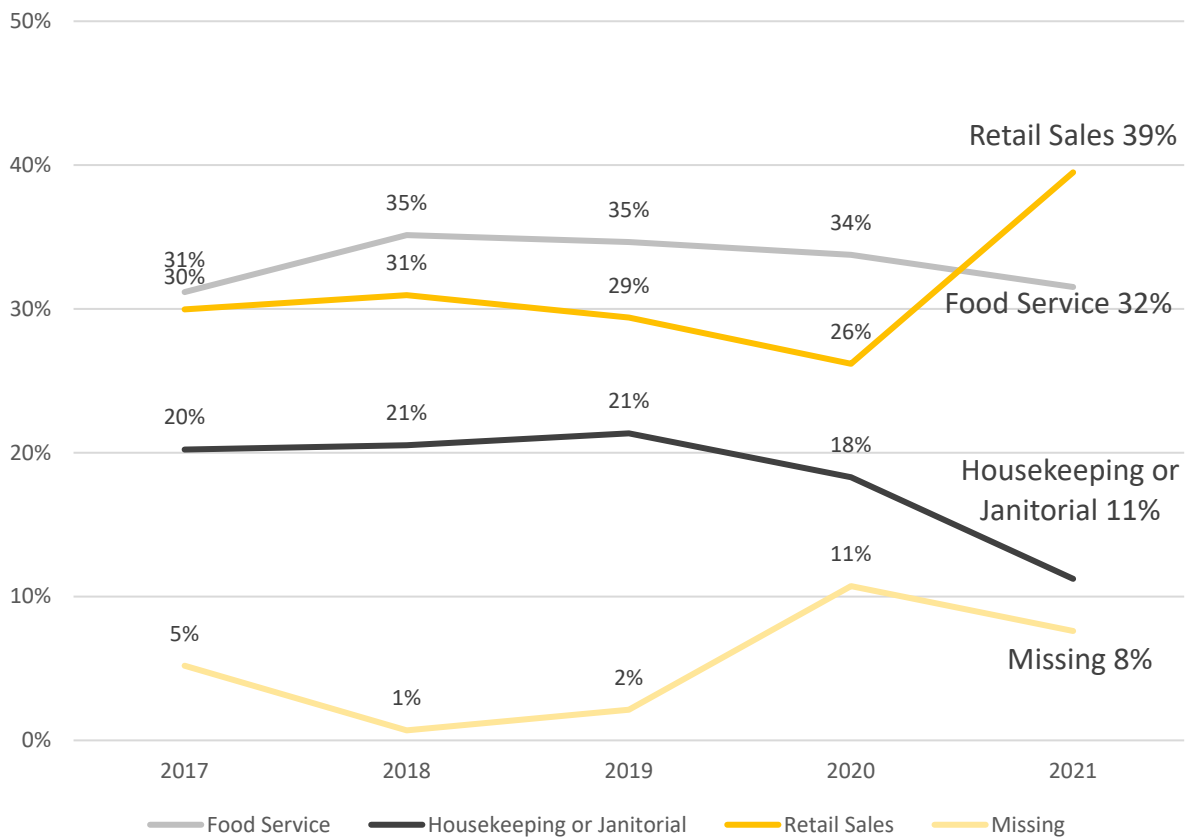


EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS

2021 Community-Based Employment participants worked in a variety of settings.

- Compared to previous years, **the proportion of participants working in a *Retail Sales* setting increased by a notable 13%** in 2021, surpassing *Food Service* to become the most common employment setting for Community-Based Employment participants.
- The proportion of **participants working in *Housekeeping or Janitorial* settings decreased by 7%** compared to 2020.
- The number of participants working in *Food Service* decreased by 2% compared to 2020, and Missing data decreased by 3%.
- Employment in other sectors including *Assembly or Manufacturing*, *Daycares or Human Services*, and *Office or Clerical* remains infrequent at <5%.

Figure 11. Employment Settings 5-year trend (2017-2021)*



*Sectors with low participation are not shown, and include Daycare or Human Service (2%), Assembly or Manufacturing (4%), Office or Clerical (1%), and Other (3%)

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Participant employment retention

A lack of long-term funding has impacted the level of support agencies are able to provide to clients. In turn, some clients without long-term funding have had their cases closed after establishing stability – which partly explains why agencies cannot show the same retention statuses as in the past. Other clients, who are unable to be checked-in on regularly due to inadequate long-term funding, have fallen off agency radars altogether. Waitlists for ID waivers, which would extend funding, have exacerbated the issue of participant employment retention.

- *“I’ll go back in the day a little bit, and you had, it was typically referral from Voc Rehab, and then they would have like, maybe the ID waiver in place. So again, you’d get to that point where maybe you were at a tier once you’re just doing that check-in. And we do have cases like that, and they’re very successful, we give them minimal support, but then, without that ongoing funding to check-in on them, we’re not able to show the data because we don’t necessarily know where they’re at.”*

One agency representative stated, *“we are taking referrals from IVRS, and because of waitlists, they [clients] might not have long-term funding available to them,”* and another agency representative agreed that funding is time limited with waitlists for ID waivers.

Additionally, the loss of employment due to the pandemic, and a subsequent boom in employment during 2021, has since tapered off, has disrupted employment retention.

Shift in employment settings

The increase in participants working in retail is possibly attributed to stores reopening since 2020 and retail skills training programs restarting.

There was a consensus that multiple agencies do not have the staff capacity to take on participants needing high levels of support which is creating gaps in services.

One agency has reported efforts to fully fund a skills training program, but have not been successful citing redirection of funds towards MCO case management

Community-Based Employment Outcomes

To evaluate agency performance, the Polk County MHDS Region uses six outcome areas to assess service delivery. Each outcome area has thresholds established that determine four performance ratings and corresponding point values, namely *Exceeds Expectations* (4), *Meets Expectations* (3), *Needs Improvement* (2), and *Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations* (1). Thresholds for each outcome are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Performance Thresholds by Outcome

Outcome	Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations 1	Needs Improvement 2	Meets Expectations 3	Exceeds Expectations 4
Barriers to Employment	< 2	2 - 3.19	3.2 - 4.3	> 4.3
Engagement in Employment	< 75%	75%-84%	85%-94%	95%+
Working Toward Self- Sufficiency	< 17%	17%-25%	26%-34%	35%+
Negative Disenrollment	≥ 4.00%	3% - 3.99%	1% - 2.99%	<.99%
File Review	< 85%	85% - 89%	90% - 94%	95%+
Participant Satisfaction	< 85%	85% - 89%	90% - 94%	95%+



LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Regardless of the types of disabilities individuals may have, participants present with a wide range of needs and challenges.

Purpose/Goal

The goal of this outcome is to encourage organizations to provide community-based employment services to all participants, including participants whose needs are complex or require more resources to accommodate adequately.

This person-centered emphasis of the Polk County MHDS Region promotes services that are inclusive of all, including participants with the highest levels of needs. This approach does not necessarily aim for a high needs population but an inclusive and balanced population to avoid creating a barrier to services by selectively enrolling only those who are most likely to be successful in employment and require fewest services.

Metric

The Polk County MHDS Region has adopted assessments, in particular the LOCUS (Level of Care Utilization System) and ICAP (Inventory for Client and Agency Planning), to quantify the challenges or barriers individuals may likely face in pursuing employment. The LOCUS assessment defines six levels of care in the service continuum according to four variables: 1) Care Environment, 2) Clinical Services, 3) Support Services, and 4) Crisis Resolution and Prevention Services. Higher scores on the LOCUS correspond with higher intensity of service provision (**Figure 12**). The outcome score is calculated as the average assessment scores (1-6) of all participants.

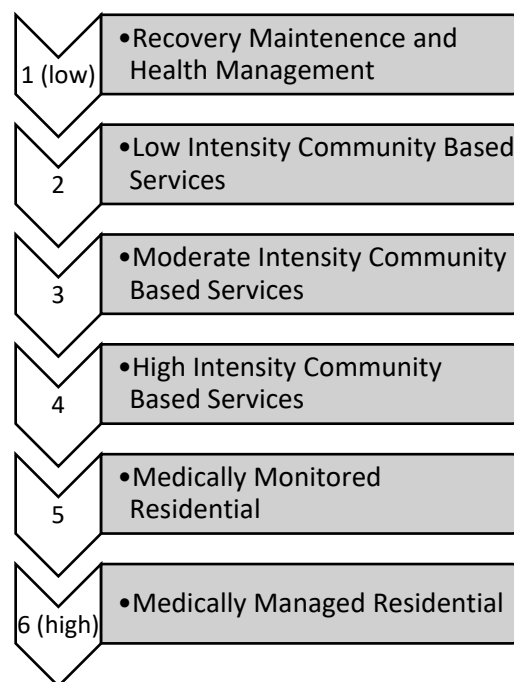
Scoring and Performance

In 2021, the network served individuals with an average level of support of 3.05 (mode of Level 3), compared to the average of 3.09 in 2020, keeping the system performance level at **Needs Improvement**. Level 3 qualifies participants for high intensity community support services, including supervised apartments, or ≤ 150 hours of Supported Community Living services per month. This decrease in level of support score is a continuation of a five-year trend (

The Polk County MHDS Region Network continues a trend of serving participants with lower Level of Support ratings on average, with a 3.05 overall average in 2021.

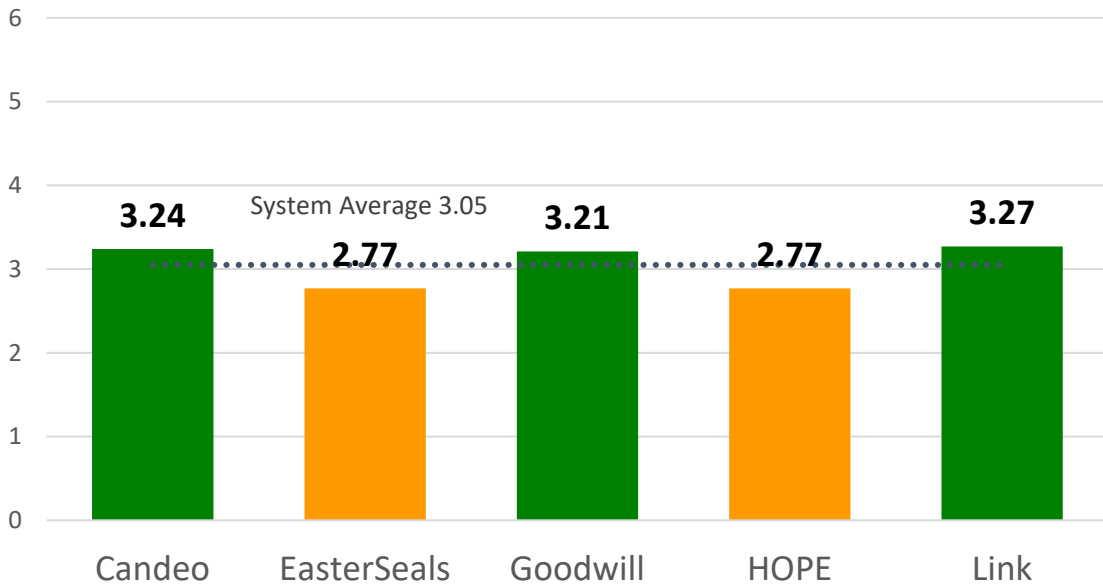
Figure 14).

Figure 12. LOCUS Levels of Support¹



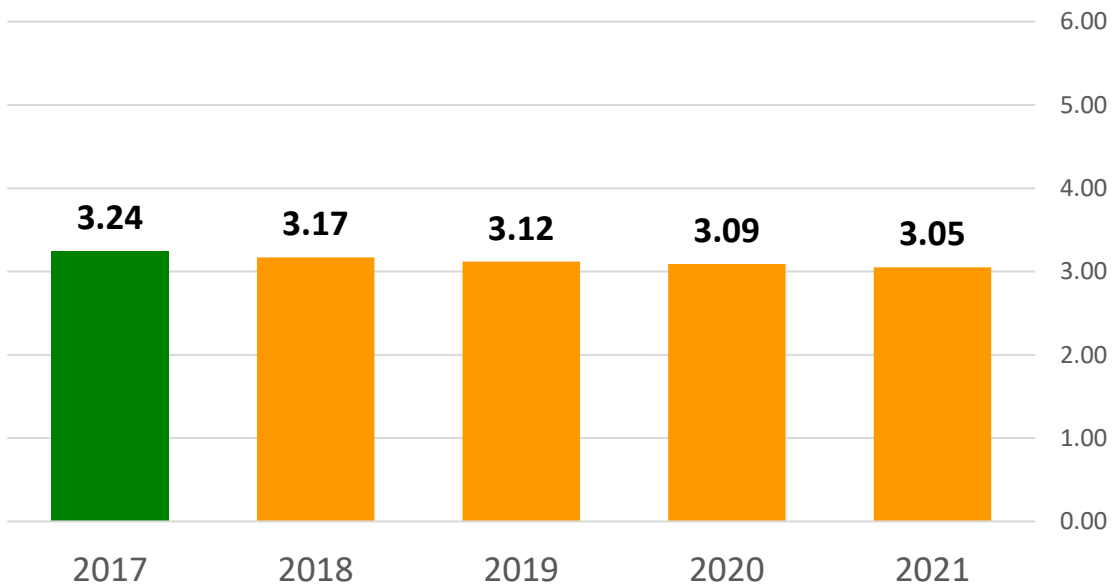
For 2021, three agencies *Met Expectations* and two received a *Needs Improvement* rating in Level of Support.

Figure 13. 2021 Average Level of Support by Agency



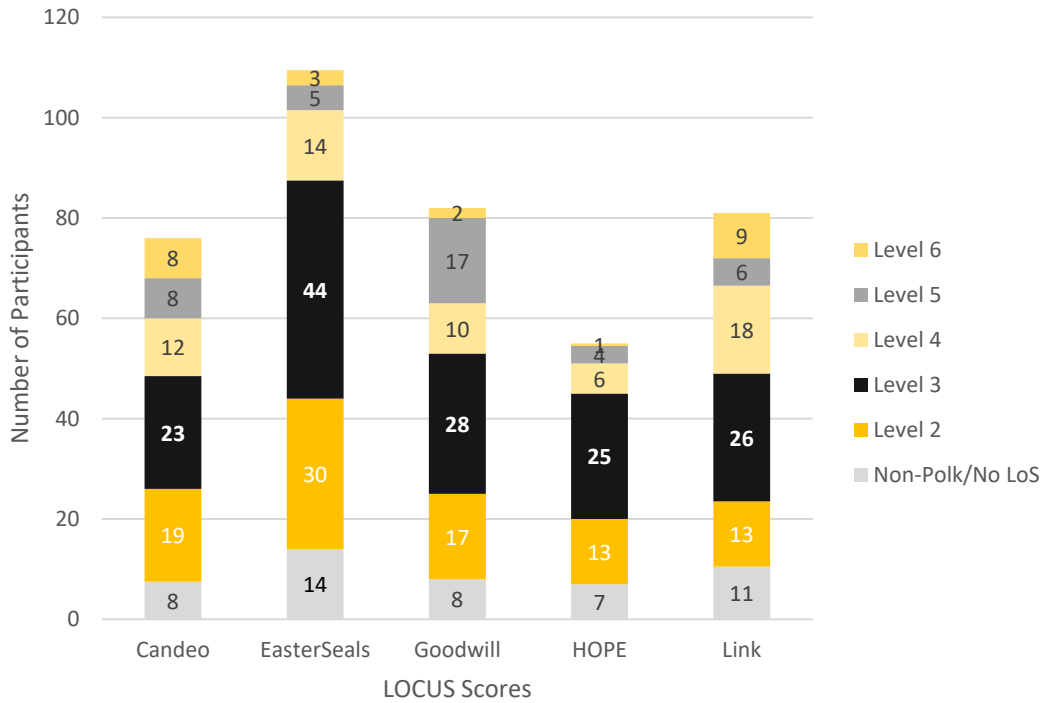
The Polk County MHDS Region Network continues a trend of serving participants with lower Level of Support ratings on average, with a 3.05 overall average in 2021.

Figure 14. Average Level of Support 2017-2021



Level three participants were the dominant group enrolled in employment services in 2021. Notably, Levels 5 and 6, requiring the most supports, comprised about 15% (an average of about 62 participants) of those getting services in Polk County MHDS Region (Figure 15. **Average Level of Support 2021**).

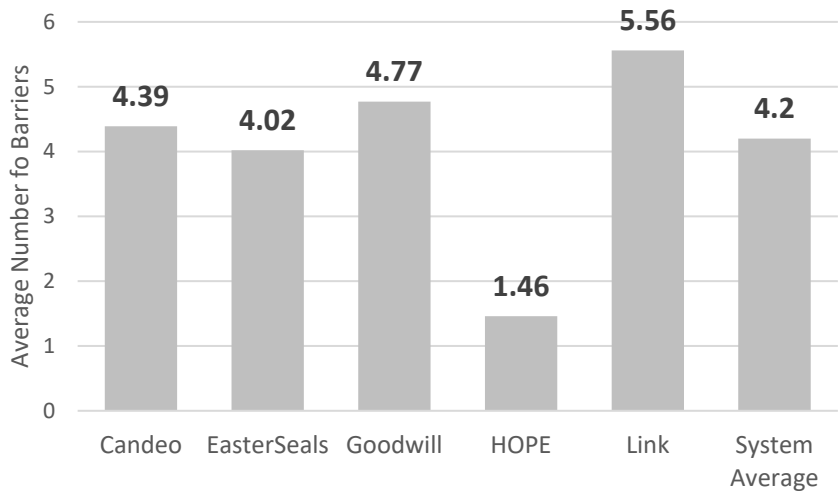
Figure 15. Average Level of Support 2021



BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Polk County MHDS Region monitors the count and types of barriers to employment, which include:³

- Age
- Child Care
- Criminal Background
- Education
- Financial Disincentive
- Homelessness
- Limited Work History
- Paid Living Assistance
- Transportation



³ Full definitions of Barriers to Employment in Appendix B

- Work Limited



ENGAGEMENT TOWARD EMPLOYMENT

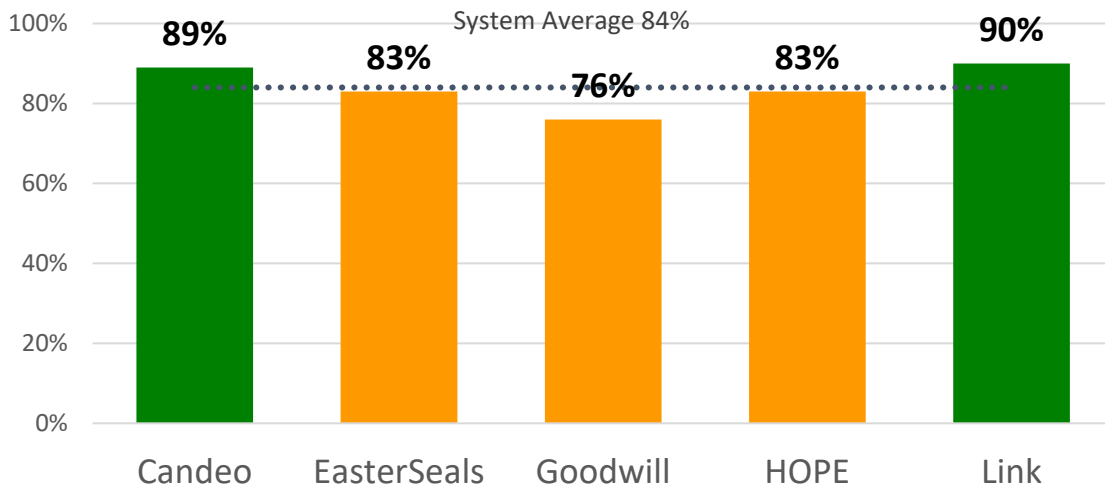
Metric	<p>The percentage of employable individuals working 5 hours or more per week and earning the minimum wage or greater during the four weeks in two specified reporting periods (October and April).</p> <p>Results are reported for programs with ten or more employment eligible individuals.</p>
Intent	<p>The number of program participants working toward self-sufficiency during the year will increase.</p> <p>The intent of the outcomes is to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities, increase wages, and increase assets.</p>
Rationale	<p>Unemployment is one of the most profound issues facing the disability community. Only 32% of Americans with disabilities aged 18 to 64 are working, but two-thirds of those who are unemployed say they would rather be working [source: The National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.)].</p> <p>The Polk County MHDS Region recognizes that employment is not only a profound issue for the disability community, but also a key to self-sufficiency. “Most people ... want to work, yet they face significant barriers in finding and keeping jobs, such as a limited number of jobs in communities, discrimination against people with mental illnesses, limited or compromised executive functioning skills among some consumers that hinder one’s ability to perform and attend work, lack of supported employment programs, and inadequate transportation. With support, they can work in competitive jobs or start their own businesses, enabling them to increase their work activity and earnings over time.” (SAMHSA.gov)</p>

Performance Ratings	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations
	4	3	2	1
	95%+	85%-94%	75%-84%	<75%

For the **Engaged in Employment** outcome, the system averaged a **Needs Improvement** rating of 84%

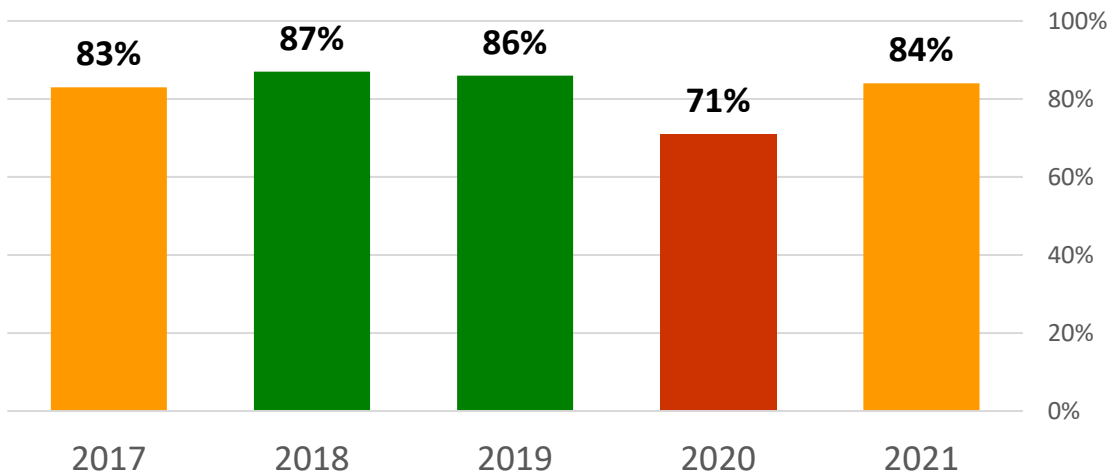
- Agencies varied in performance, with a range of 76%-90%
- Three agencies received a **Needs Improvement** rating
- Two agencies received a **Meets Expectations** rating

Figure 17. Participants Engaged in Employment by Agency



Compared to 2020, the overall system performance for the **Engaged in Employment** outcome **increased 13%**, from 71% to 84%, moving from the **Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations** category to **Needs Improvement** in 2021.

Figure 18. Participants Engaged in Employment 2017-2021





WORKING TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Metric The percentage of employable individuals working 20 hours or more per week⁴ and earning the minimum wage or greater during the four weeks in two specified reporting periods (October and April).
Results are reported and scored for programs with ten or more employment eligible individuals.²

Intent The number of program participants working at self-sufficiency during the year will increase.
The intent is to increase people with disabilities' assets.

Rationale Unemployment is a notable disparity experienced by many members of the disability community. Only 32% of Americans with disabilities aged 18 to 64 are working, but two-thirds of those unemployed would rather be working [source: The National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.)].
The Polk County MHDS Region recognizes that employment is not only a profound issue for the disability community, but also a key to self-sufficiency.

The unemployment rate among individuals with severe mental health conditions is between 80 and 90%. The financial strain of unemployment tends to exacerbate poor mental health. Psychological distress also increases the risk of being unemployed, which impedes perceptions of self-sufficiency. Setting vocational goals for employment can be a key factor in mental health recovery.³

Performance Ratings	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations
	4	3	2	1
	35%+	26-34%	17-25%	Less than 17%

⁴ Individuals working more than 20 hours per week, but not earn minimum wage as well as individuals working less than 20 hours per week and earning above minimum wage do not meet criterion.

Figure 19 represents the percent of employed participants at each evaluated agency considered to be *Working Toward Self-Sufficiency* (20 or more hours a week) in 2021.

- Two agencies **Exceeded Expectations**
- One agency **Met Expectations**
- Two agencies **Need Improvement**

Figure 19. 2021 Working Toward Self-Sufficiency by Agency

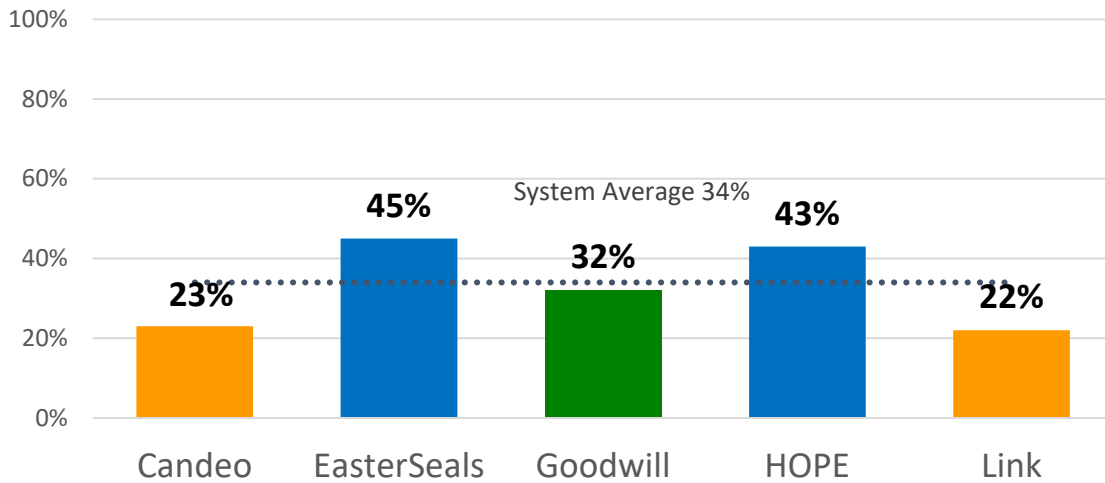
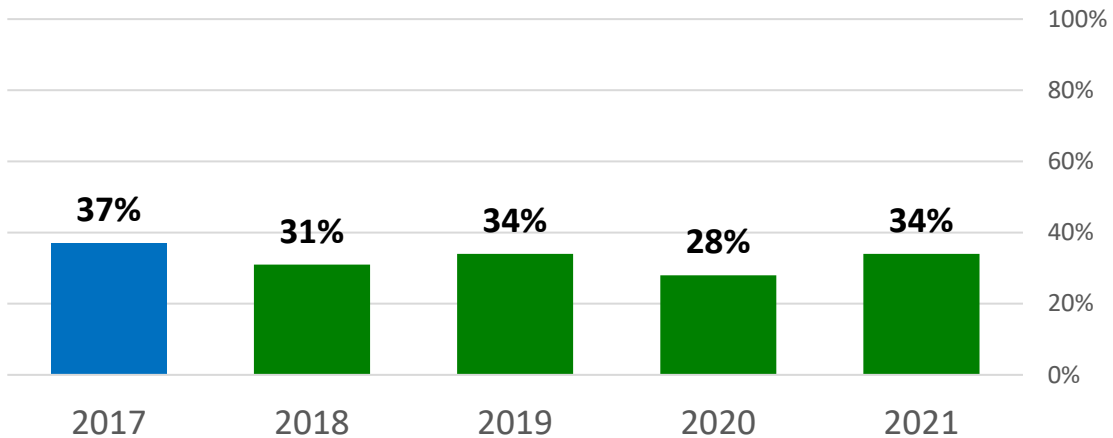
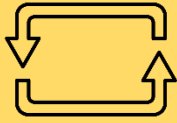


Figure 20 represents the system-level trends in *Working Towards Self-Sufficiency* from 2017 to 2021.

- 2021 recovered to pre-pandemic levels of *Working Towards Self-Sufficiency* with a 6% increase since 2020

Figure 20. Working Toward Self- Sufficiency 2017-2021





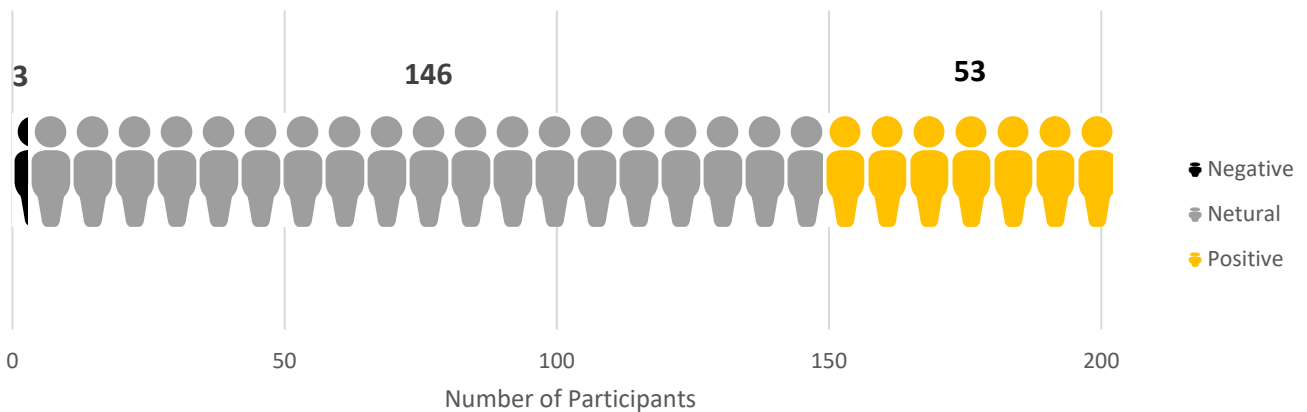
NEGATIVE DISENROLLMENT

Metric	The percentage of program participants negatively disenrolled
Intent	The organization will not negatively disenroll program participants. The intent of this outcome is for the agencies to develop trusting and meaningful relationships with their participants.
Rationale	Ensure continuity of care and avoid individuals with disabilities encountering barriers to accessing services because they are too difficult or expensive for the agency to assist. Service agencies report needing to provide services or a level of care that is not covered by state Medicaid benefits to address critical needs of clients, especially those with complex needs (NCQA).

Performance Ratings	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations
	4	3	2	1
	0% - 0.99%	1% - 2.99%	3% - 3.99%	Above 4%

The proportion of negative disenrollments across disenrollment types remains low, accounting for about 1.5% of all disenrollments. (Figure 21)

Figure 21. 2021 System Disenrollment by Type



⁵ Disenrollment is the termination of services due to an individual leaving the program either on a voluntary or involuntary discharge. Negative disenrollments are defined as individual refuses to participate, the individual is displeased with services, the agency initiates discharge, or the individual is discharged to prison for greater than 6 months.

In 2021, all but one agency *Exceeded Expectations* for the *Negative Disenrollment* Outcome.

Figure 22. 2021 Negative Disenrollment Rates by Agency

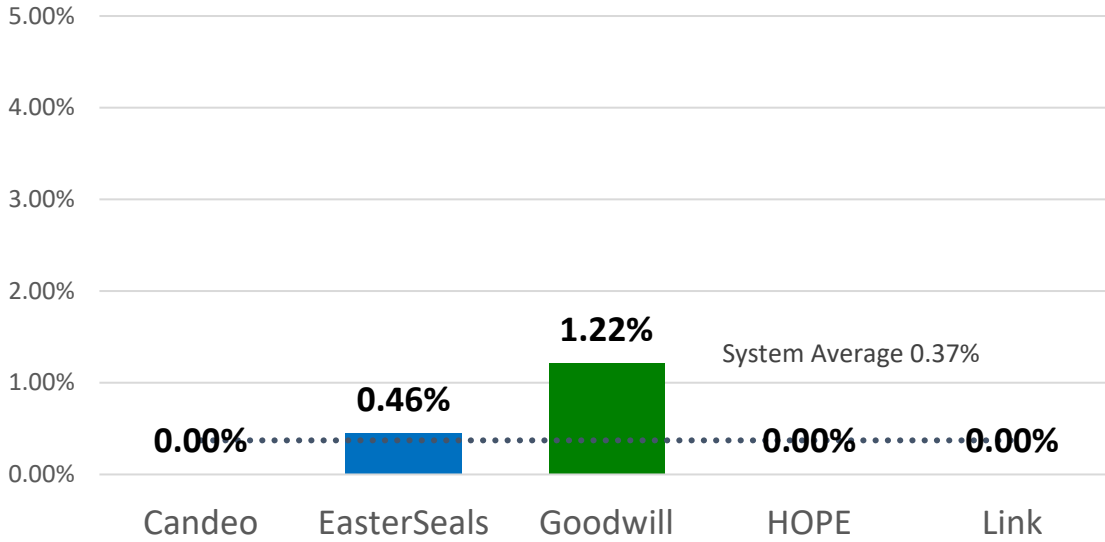
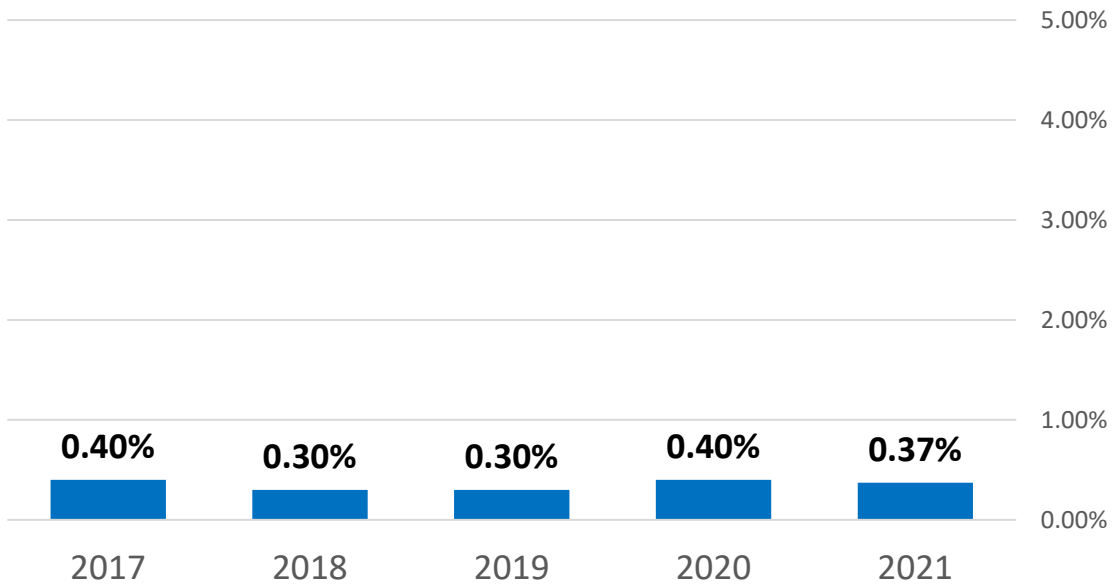
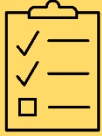


Figure 23. Negative Disenrollment Rates 2017-2021





FILE REVIEW

Purpose/Goal

Participants, stakeholders, and the Polk County MHDS Region rely on information reported by provider agencies. Provider agencies report the dates in 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 in the year. The Polk County MHDS Region and stakeholders rely on this information to monitor the functioning of and response to the community-based employment needs of Polk County residents. Ultimately, data inaccuracies affect the availability and funding of services for participants.

Accurate data are 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 the Polk County MHDS Region 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 Polk County MHDS Region to improve or sustain the accuracy of information.

Metric

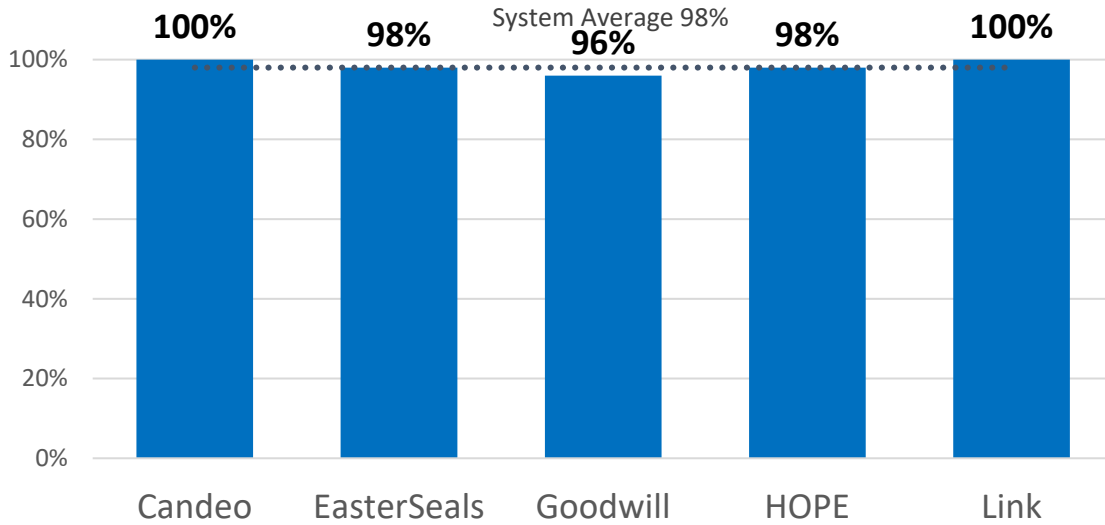
This outcome is based on expectations of documentation of service criteria by staff and found in participants' files. There are two kinds of documentation: 1) the documentation of services delivered, such as dates services begin and end, monthly contact at minimum, and services matching the needs of the participant, and 2) documentation of wages and hours worked for the reporting weeks. These expectations criteria vary based on type of service provided (e.g., employment prep, job development, supported employment). The outcome is scored as the percentage of service expectations criteria documented in the file based on the number expected.

Methods

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, the Polk County MHDS Region 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. File review criteria are listed in Appendix C.

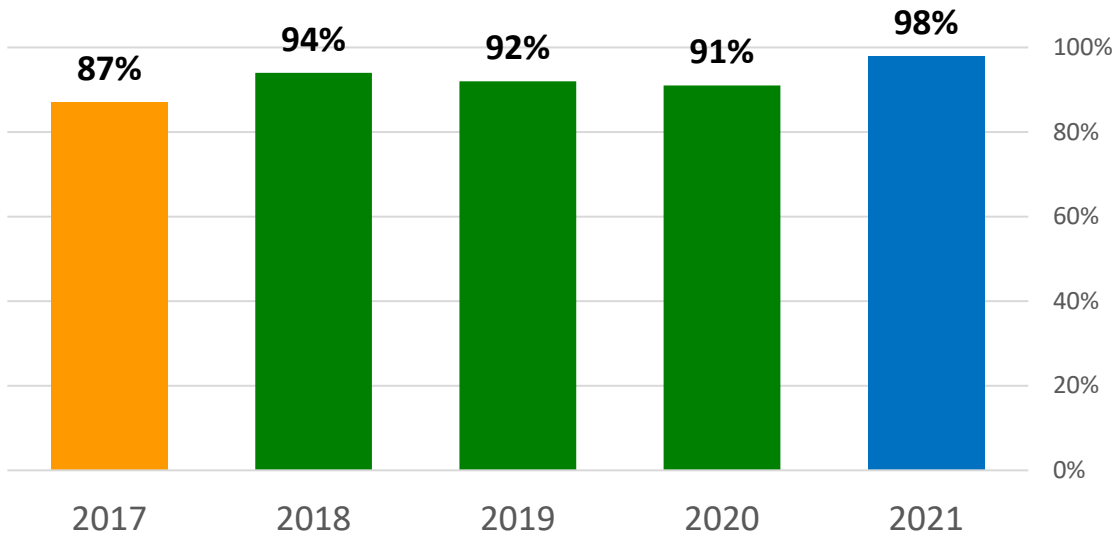
For the **File Review** outcome, all five agencies **Exceeded Expectations** in 2021.

Figure 24. 2021 File Review Accuracy by Agency



In 2021, the **System Average** (98%) earned the highest score in the **File Review** outcome amongst the previous 5 years.

Figure 25. System File Review Accuracy 2017-2021





PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

Metric

The percentage of program participants who reported satisfaction with services, including questions in the areas of access to services, staff support, empowerment, impact of services, suggestions for improvement, and unmet needs

Intent

Program participants will report satisfaction⁶ with the services that they receive. Program participants are the best judge of how services and supports are meeting their needs. Increasing literature finds that involving participants in the delivery or re-design of health care can lead to improved quality of life and enhanced quality and accountability of health services.⁴

Rationale

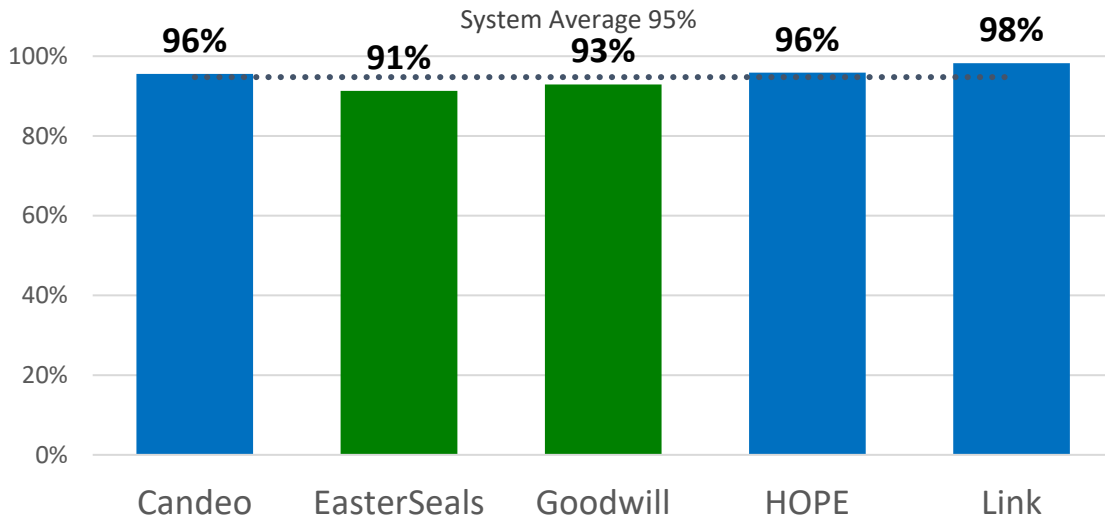
When asked, many people who have struggled with brain health or addiction voice that the most important part of their recovery was finding a support plan that worked with them as an individual and not just as part of a system. Strengths-based programs that are person-centered allow individuals to work toward recovery at their own pace and utilize resources that will help them improve (NAMI).

Performance Ratings	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Does Not Meet Minimum Expectations
	4 95% - 100%	3 90% - 94%	2 85% - 89%	1 Below 85%

⁶ Satisfaction is determined by the independent evaluator interviewing a 10% sample of program participants. A survey asking program participants questions regarding access, empowerment, and service satisfaction.

In 2021, all agencies **Met** (2 agencies) or **Exceeded Expectations** (3 agencies) in the *Participant Satisfaction* outcome.

Figure 26. 2021 Participant Satisfaction by Agency



Over time, the system average for *Participant Satisfaction* remains high and stable. Over the past five years, the system has **Met Expectations** or **Exceeded Expectations**.

Figure 27. Participant Satisfaction 2017-2021 System Average

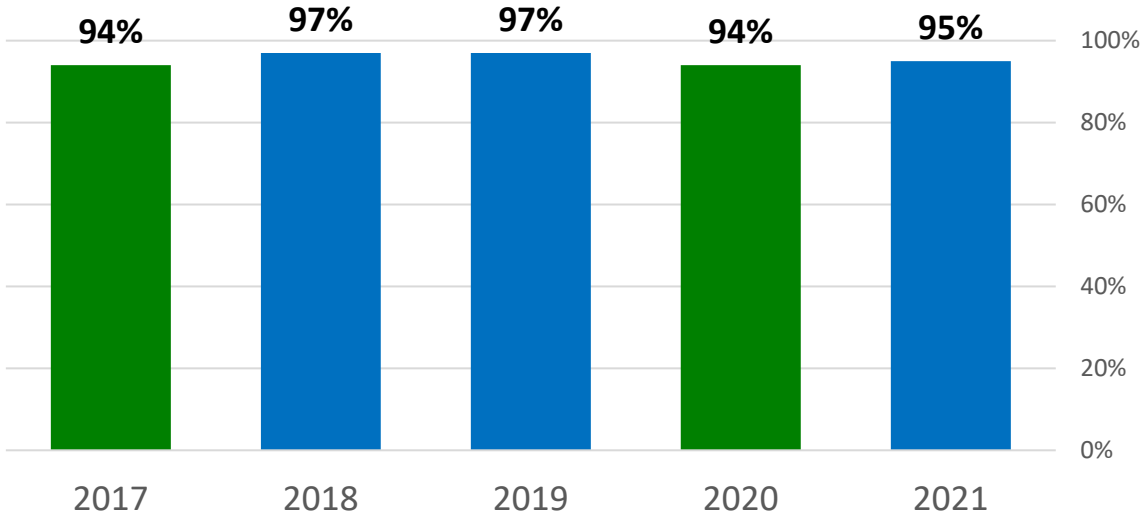
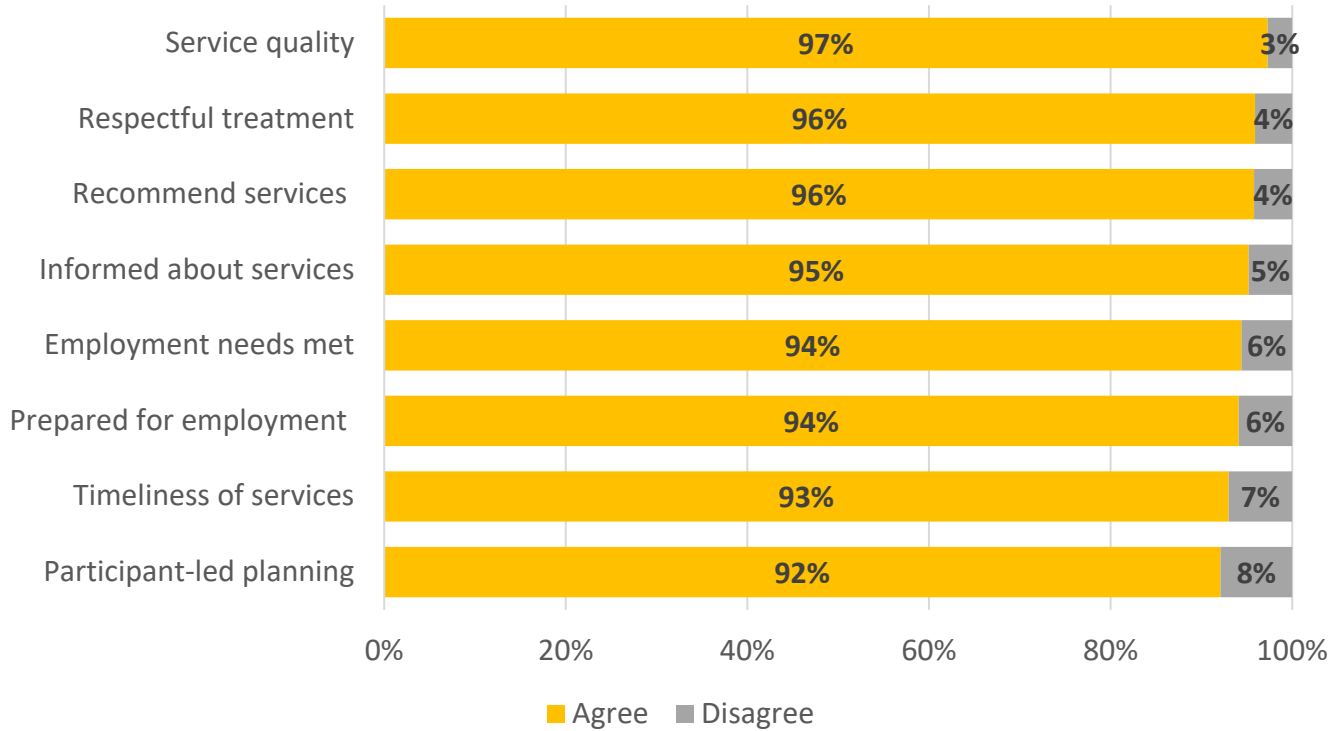


Figure 28 shows rates of agreement by item from the satisfaction survey. Rates of satisfaction were high overall, and, within the network, participants were most likely to report that

- They were treated with courtesy and respect (96%),
- Staff told them about services that were available and answered their questions (95%),
- That they were adequately prepared for employment (94%),
- That they participated in the selection of their employment and development of their employment plan (92%).

Figure 28. Participant Satisfaction System Average by item⁷



⁷ Full participant interview items listed in Appendix D

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Level of Support and Barriers to Employment

Agency representatives have seen a trend in participants with lower LOF (Level of Functioning)

Agency representatives are also seeing a trend in referrals of individuals needing 90-100% coaching on adult and school sides which is creating gaps in services.

The Barriers to Employment measure will become a baseline measurement in 2022 for agencies

Engagement Toward Employment

More clients have been reported as working 0-5 hours a week than is typical, with cutbacks, illness, and general contentment being cited as reasons why. Clients not wanting to work more hours have shifted their focus to graduating, but agencies continue to work with clients on adding more hours

- *“...A lot of clients are working under 5 hours...They were going to work more but their hours have been cut and we do have a handful of clients that we’re looking at just graduating because they don’t want to add more hours... they’ve been at these jobs where they’re only working a few hours a week, and you know, every year, for every so often we visit with that person about trying to get more hours.”*

When discussing cutbacks in relation to more clients working 0-5 hours than is typical, several agency representatives cited Hy-Vee’s hiring boom during the pandemic and subsequent layoffs, noting that Hy-Vee frequently employs people then cuts available hours to work.

PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

Working Towards Self Sufficiency

Significant gains were made in this area with more clients becoming self-sufficient and working 20 or more hours a week. The trend from Polk County case management to MCOs was mentioned by one agency representative as a potential reason agencies may have performed well in this area

- *“Look at that path to employment, which we used to really, really push with gentle hassling, kind of volunteering to employment, then employment to 20 hours, and if we kind of lost that push...you’re looking at some providers who didn’t meet the mark for the 5 to 20 [hours]. If we really lost some of that philosophy that was really embedded into our system...that’s maybe why we’re seeing a lot more of that 20+ [hours] than we are 5 to 20 [hours].”*

In contrast, several agencies fell short in this outcome. One agency representative noted that having more lower functioning clients who were not employed could help to explain this data

- *“Usually, the clientele that we serve is lower functioning. Every year we prepare to have a lower score in this area...We help people work as many hours as they can or want to.”*

Another agency representative agreed with the above statement, saying *“if you don’t want to work this amount of hours...we want you to work what you can.”*

Still, a different agency representative emphasized that, “you never look at an ICAP when you accept somebody, you just accept them and then move forward with the barriers that tend to be there,” citing the prioritization of clients primarily.

File Review

All agencies performed well in this area, despite it being a difficult with turnover causing periods of understaffing.

- *“I think this is the biggest success we’ve seen...this feels so good because it was a hard year for all of us,”* one agency representative said.

Another agency representative commented on how adjustments to the overall file reviewing process have helped to yield better scores

- *“I think it helped with... recommendation[s] from last year to encompass more metrics, or a higher score.” So, if you’re lacking in one area, it’s not going to take you down an entire level. Because this measure validates all other outcomes, this is essential.”*

References

¹ American Association of Community Psychiatrists. (2010). Level of care and utilization system of psychiatric and addiction services. <https://cchealth.org/mentalhealth/pdf/LOCUS.pdf>

² A participant's status may be defined as "employment eligible" if that individual is under 65 years of age and has a LOCUS score of less than 5 or 6

³ Hong et al., 2019

⁴ Bombard et al., 2018