



OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

# Recent Funding Opportunities to Expand Access to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) for Individuals with Disabilities

## Introduction

This fact sheet highlights exciting new funding and flexibilities under the Biden-Harris Administration that provide significant opportunities to increase access to competitive integrated employment (CIE)<sup>1</sup> for youth and adults with disabilities in support of their desire to live and work in the most integrated setting in their communities. The increased funding and flexibilities are provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)<sup>2</sup>; the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP)<sup>3</sup>; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA)<sup>4</sup>; the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 (FCAA)<sup>5</sup>; and through the work of multiple federal agencies providing services to individuals with disabilities. These include the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Administration for Community Living (ACL), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP); and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Stakeholders are encouraged to share the following funding opportunities to increase the availability of and access to competitive integrated employment for youth and adults with disabilities in their communities and the nation. These investments will help people with disabilities become income producers, savers, and asset-builders, contributing to the economy and helping our nation "Build Back Better." These efforts across federal agencies support the Biden-Harris Administration's strong and unwavering commitment to reach the Americans with Disabilities Act's promise of full participation and economic advancement.

<sup>1</sup> Competitive integrated employment refers to work that is (1) performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual is compensated at a rate that (a) is not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required under the applicable state or local minimum wage law for the place of employment, (b) is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills, (c) for self-employed individuals, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills, and (d) is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; (2) at a location (a) typically found in the community, and (b) where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and (3) presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions. See [ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/rehab/rehabilitation-act-of-1973-amended-by-wioa.pdf](https://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/rehab/rehabilitation-act-of-1973-amended-by-wioa.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) was enacted on March 27, 2020. See [congress.gov/116/plaws/publ136/PLAW-116publ136.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ136/PLAW-116publ136.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> ARP (P.L. 117-2) was enacted on March 11, 2021. See [congress.gov/117/bills/hr1319/BILLS-117hr1319enr.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr1319/BILLS-117hr1319enr.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> CRRSA was enacted on March 6, 2020. See [congress.gov/116/plaws/publ123/PLAW-116publ123.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ123/PLAW-116publ123.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> FCAA was enacted on December 20, 2019. See [congress.gov/116/plaws/publ94/PLAW-116publ94.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ94/PLAW-116publ94.pdf).

## 1. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS): Increased Federal Match for Home and Community Based Services

Home and community-based services (HCBS) provide opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities to receive services in their own home or community rather than in nursing facilities and other institutions. CMS released guidance on May 13, 2021 clarifying how states can expand, enhance, and strengthen Medicaid HCBS under section 9817 of the ARP, which provides qualifying states and territories a temporary 10 percentage point increase to the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for HCBS. FMAP is the rate that the federal government matches state Medicaid spending based on formulae reflecting per capita income for each state and varying by state accordingly. Examples of HCBS that states can provide to individuals with disabilities under the Medicaid program include supported employment services, personal care assistant services, respite care, specialized medical equipment and supplies, and non-medical transportation services to access community activities and resources. The increased FMAP under ARP section 9817 is available to a state if it uses the funds attributable to the increased FMAP to supplement, not supplant, existing state funds expended for Medicaid HCBS in effect as of April 1, 2021, and to implement or supplement the implementation of one or more activities to enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid program. The increased FMAP is available from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022. States may expend funds attributable to the increased FMAP during the three-year period from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2024. Examples of employment activities that states can implement with the additional funding include, but are not limited to:

- Providing caregiver training and education.
- Providing new or additional Medicaid HCBS (such as supported employment) or increase the amount, duration, or scope of HCBS; funding must be used to supplement not supplant existing services.
- Providing in-person or virtual training to beneficiaries, caregivers, and/or providers to support community integration (e.g., to support beneficiaries with seeking employment, or to train providers or caregivers to support individuals with behavioral challenges that can make it difficult to access community resources).
- Testing alternative payment methodologies or the delivery of new services that are designed to address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) that may include employment supports.
- Assisting eligible individuals in receiving mental health services, substance use treatment and recovery services, and necessary rehabilitative services to regain skills lost during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), including skills related to employment.
- Expanding self-directed programs to provide individuals with more employment options.

Additional information is available at [medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/smd21003.pdf](https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/smd21003.pdf).

## 2. Administration for Community Living (ACL): Grant Opportunities to Advance CIE

Three grant opportunities will be available through ACL that aim to expand CIE for students, youth, and young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The grants include the Community Based Transition (CBT) Partnership Planning Grants, CBT Implementation Grants, and Community Collaborations for Employment (CCE) Grant.

- CBT Partnership Planning Grants:** ACL will fund CBT Partnership Planning Grants to existing University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDDs) to partner with non-profits and other stakeholders to pilot transition models to increase sustainable community-based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the community. One of the focus areas that grantees can include is to *advance competitive integrated employment*. ACL will award between three to six new one-year CBT Partnership Planning grants at \$100,000. These funds are available from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022. Additional information is available at [grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=331953](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=331953).

- B. **CBT Implementation Grants:** ACL will award between four to five three-year CBT Implementation Grants to support existing UCEDD CBT planning grantees. As background, *three of the ten UCEDDs included a community-based transition plan focused on advancing competitive integrated employment in FY 2021.* The awards will range from \$125,000 through \$250,000 to support the implementation phase of its CBT plan over the next three years. These funds are available from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2024. Additional information is available at [grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=332702](https://grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=332702).
- C. **CCE Grant:** ACL's CCE Grant program aims to increase and enhance collaborations across existing local systems to maximize a seamless experience and improve outcomes of youth with ID/DD as they transition between school and work in the community. ACL anticipates awarding approximately eight grants at \$200,000 for each grantee to support a five-year performance period. Overall, this grant supports community demonstration projects to increase the number of youth with ID/DD who:
1. Find and keep long-term, career-focused CIE;
  2. Graduate from post-secondary education programs; and
  3. Live and participate fully in their communities.

These funds are available from September 30, 2021 through September 29, 2026. Additional information is available at [grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=332427](https://grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=332427).

### 3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

Opportunities under three initiatives are available through SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS). These initiatives are the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG) Program, the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic – Expansion (CCBHC-E) Program, and the Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Program.

- A. **MHBG Program:** MHBGs are noncompetitive formula grants that provide funding for substance abuse and mental health services. States/territories can use the block grant programs for prevention, treatment, recovery support, and other services to supplement Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance services. Although the MHBG program aims to ensure access to a comprehensive system of care, state priorities may include implementation and sustainability of evidence-based supported employment. Funds are available from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022 for the annual appropriations. The COVID Relief Supplement funds are available from March 15, 2021 through March 14, 2023. The American Rescue Plan Act funds are available from September 1, 2021 through September 30, 2025. Additional information is available at:
1. [samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/202105181200](https://samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/202105181200)
  2. [samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg-covid-fy21](https://samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg-covid-fy21)
  3. [samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg](https://samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg)
- B. **CCBHC-E Program:** The CCBHC-E program aims to increase access to, and improve the quality of community mental and substance use disorder treatment services through the expansion of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CBHCs). The CCBHC-E program offers grantees an opportunity to implement Individual Placement and Support Supported Employment, where it aligns with community needs, individual preferences, and, as applicable, state Medicaid plans. Having concluded the performance periods for grantees in Cohorts 1 and 2, funds are available for grantees in Cohort 3 from May 1, 2020 through April 30, 2022. Funds are available for grantees in Cohort 4 from February 15, 2021 through February 14, 2023. Funds for Cohort 5 grantees have not been announced, but are anticipated to be available from August 31, 2021 through August 30, 2023. Additional information is available at [samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-21-013](https://samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-21-013).

- C. **Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Program:** The Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Program is designed to support state and community efforts to refine, implement, and sustain evidence-based supported employment programs and mutually compatible and supportive evidence-based practices (e.g., supported education) for transition-aged youth/young adults (ages 16-25) with serious emotional disturbance (SED), and adults with serious mental illness (SMI) or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders (COD). Grant funds may also be used to:
1. Link to and collaborate with the Social Security Administration's Supported Employment Demonstration Program.
  2. Link to and/or leverage successful strategies from the Department of Labor's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program or Provider Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment (VOICE); and
  3. Integrate compatible and mutually supportive programs/services (e.g., supported housing, supported education) to facilitate the goal of individuals securing competitive employment.

Funds are available from September 30, 2019 through September 29, 2024. Additional information is available at [samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/pdf/supported\\_employment\\_foa\\_3.13.19.pdf](https://samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/pdf/supported_employment_foa_3.13.19.pdf).

#### 4. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA): Demonstration Funding for State VR Career Pathways Services

**Disability Innovation Fund:** The Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) program funds demonstration projects that support innovative activities that improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities under FCAA. Demonstration activities focus on improving the education and post-school outcomes of children receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families that may result in long-term improvement in the SSI child recipient's economic status and self-sufficiency.

DIF provides an opportunity and flexibility for a state VR agency to demonstrate the effectiveness of providing the career pathways services needed by VR eligible individuals, including those participating in the VR program and those who are not receiving services in the VR program for reasons such as assignment to closed priority categories under an order of selection. This includes previously served VR participants in employment who reenter the VR program to obtain, change careers to, advance in, or maximize employment in fields that provide a true living wage and freedom from public support. Demonstration funding is available from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2026. Additional information is available at [federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/19/2021-03430/applications-for-new-awards-disability-innovation-fund-career-advancement-initiative-model](https://federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/19/2021-03430/applications-for-new-awards-disability-innovation-fund-career-advancement-initiative-model).

#### 5. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): Career Support for Recent High School Graduates

**Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund:** OSEP provides two funding pathways that support CIE for transition-age youth who have recently graduated from high school. These two funding mechanisms are the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, which includes the American Rescue Plan ESSER (ARP ESSER) program, and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.

ESSER-GEER funds from the CARES Act, CRRSA, and ARP can be used for any activity authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)<sup>6</sup>, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)<sup>7</sup>, or the Perkins Career Technical Education Act (Perkins V)<sup>8</sup>. This includes, but is not limited to, implementing transition programs, including coordination of services with agencies involved in supporting the transition of children with disabilities to postsecondary activities. For students who graduated high school in the class of 2020 and students who will graduate in the class of 2021 (i.e., during the pandemic), but have not yet successfully transitioned to college or careers, GEER-ESSER funds may be used for college or career counseling, assistance with college applications, entry into job training programs, and financial literacy. Funding is available through September 30, 2023. Additional information is available at [oese.ed.gov/files/2021/03/FINAL\\_ARP-ESSER-FACT-SHEET.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/03/FINAL_ARP-ESSER-FACT-SHEET.pdf).

## 6. Social Security Administration (SSA): Funding to Coordinate Employment and Self-sufficiency Research and Interventions

**Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program:** This SSA funding opportunity establishes the Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP). ICAP is a new cooperative agreement program that allows SSA to collaborate with states, private foundations, and other non-federal groups and organizations who have the interest and ability to identify, operate, and partially fund interventional research. The research and interventions under this program will target the increased employment and self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities (whether beneficiaries, applicants, or potential applicants of the Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs); coordinating planning between private and public welfare agencies to improve the administration and effectiveness the DI, SSI, and related programs; assisting claimants in vulnerable populations to apply for or appeal decisions on claims for DI and SSI benefits; and conducting outreach to children with disabilities who are potentially eligible to receive SSI. SSA plans to award ICAP grants in late FY 2021. Additional information is available at [grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=333062](https://grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=333062).

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<sup>6</sup> IDEA was reauthorized on December 3, 2004. See [congress.gov/108/plaws/publ446/PLAW-108publ446.pdf](https://congress.gov/108/plaws/publ446/PLAW-108publ446.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> AEFLA was reauthorized on July 22, 2014 under Title II of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act. See [govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf](https://govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Perkins V was reauthorized on July 31, 2018. See [congress.gov/115/plaws/publ224/PLAW-115publ224.pdf](https://congress.gov/115/plaws/publ224/PLAW-115publ224.pdf).

