



## Customized Employment for Individuals with Disabilities Act

Illinois Department of Human Services  
Division of Rehabilitation Services

# 2021 Annual Report



# **Customized Employment for Individuals with Disabilities Act, (820 ILCS97) IL Division of Rehabilitation Services**

## **Annual Report**

April 2022

Customized Employment for Individuals with Disabilities Act was enacted effective January 1, 2020. The Act required that the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), through its Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and in collaboration with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), shall establish a 5-year Customized Employment (CE) Pilot Program that serves a minimum of 25 individuals by the second year of the Pilot Program.

The Customized Employment for Individuals with Disabilities Act, (“820 ILCS 97”) is to assist individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities or a similar condition with a most significant disability who seek employment and require more individualized assistance to achieve and maintain integrated employment at competitive wages through a process of customized planning and negotiation. During the first six months of the Pilot Program, IDHS-DRS meet with members of the community, disability organizations, advocacy groups, the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD), and IDHS-DDD to develop a CE Pilot Program. A workgroup was established and called the Customized Employment Workgroup (CEW). The CEW met frequently and developed a contract for Customized Employment. The contract includes an intensive discovery phase, a customized person-centered planning process phase, and a job development and placement phase. The second portion of the contract focuses on support while on the job. There are six-phases of employment support that allow for individualization based on the customer’s needs. The CEW and DHS-DRS agreed, and the first CE contract took effect July 1, 2020, with six organizations from four of the five DHS regions.

Each contract was funded to serve at least five customers from start to finish. Vendors were required to have at least one staff certified in Customized Employment through either Marc Gold & Associates or Griffin-Hammis. In 2020, ICDD, sponsored Customized Employment Gateway Trainings to professionals across the state and to staff from DDD and DRS. Over 100 individuals received training and were certified as a result.

## **Contract Description:**

Customized Employment, which is a part of Supported Employment, this is defined in 34 CFR § 361.5(c)(11)

Customized Employment is designed to meet the unmet needs of the employers, that also match with the skills and interests of the individual. This includes job creation, self-employment, and a business within a business. This must be consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Since this is a statewide program, assistance is provided through a variety of methods to individuals with Most Significant disabilities in maintaining competitive, integrated community employment. Competitive employment is considered, integrated employment within the community which pays the Customer (employee) at least minimum wage or a wage commensurate to the prevailing wage for those individuals without a disability, applicable fringe benefits, and the opportunity for advancement. Individuals are eligible for Customized Employment SEP once they have been determined Most Significant and have a demonstrated need for this service. This is determined by the Rehabilitation Counselor answering a set of questions about the customer's work history.

During service provision, staffings between the customer, DRS, and CRPs are expected to occur every 8 weeks and continue during the length of the case.

Any CRP doing business with DHS-DRS must meet and maintain national accreditation standards through the likes of the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation facilities (CARF), the National Accreditation Council (NAC), the Joint Commission (TJC), The Council on Accreditation (COA) or The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) for all programs and services identified in the CRP's contract.

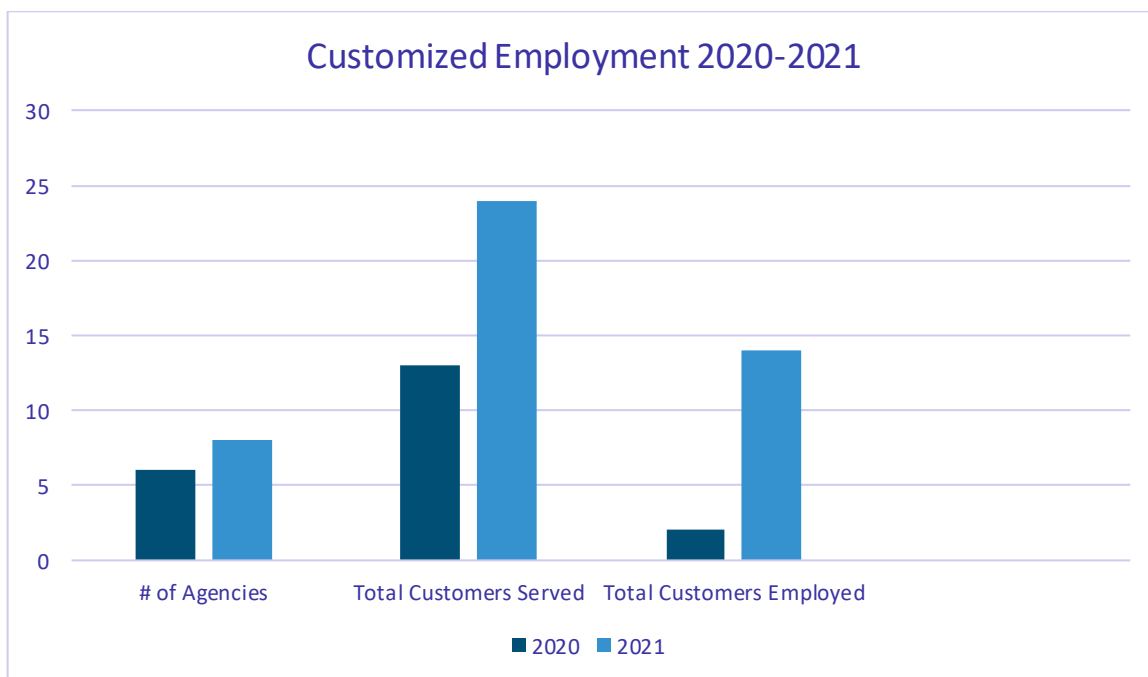
## **First Year Participation of Customers:**

- Six CE Contracts (4/5 regions represented)
- Total Cost for Six Contracts \$451,350.00

- Total Customers Served Through 12/31/20: 13
- Total Customers who Achieved Competitive Integrated Employment Through 12/31/20: 2

**Second Year Participation of Customers:**

- Eight CE Contracts (4/5 regions represented)
- Total Cost for Eight Contracts for 2021: \$655,200
- Total Customers Served in 2021: 24
- Total Customers who Achieved Competitive Integrated Employment in 2021: 14
- There were 12 customers that were served in both FY21 (January-June 2021) and FY22 (July-December 2021).



The contract performance is measured by reviewing the following criteria:

- # and % of customers that are receiving Customized Employment services.
- # and % of customers that are receiving supported employment services.
- # and % of customers that are maintaining competitive, integrated community employment.
- At least 70% of customers will retain their competitive, integrated community employment for at least 90 days after case closure.

## **Conclusion**

The CE Pilot has been in effect since 1/1/20. The process has led to the implementation of a CE contract that took effect 7/1/20 to serve at least 25 new CE individuals. The year results through 1/1/21 shows a total of 13 individuals served with 2 of those individuals in integrated competitive employment. The second-year results through 12/2021 shows a total of 24 individuals served. The first year of the CE Pilot took effect in a pandemic environment but has demonstrated that the pilot should continue to capture more data over the next four years. DRS is committed to supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in obtaining competitive integrated employment through increased access to Customized Employment services statewide. DRS will continue to track data on impact and outcomes so that trends, successes, and course corrections can be evaluated and implemented to strengthen Customized Employment services within DRS.