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Report on the Impact of the Conversion from Sheltered Workshops to Integrated Employment

The CHIMES Foundation and The George Washington University Release a Case Study on Maine Public Law Chapter 101

Washington, DC (June 23, 2015) – ACCSES applauds the recent case study undertaken by the CHIMES Foundation and researchers from The George Washington University regarding the impact of Maine Public Law Chapter 101, which directed state agencies to increase supported and integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities and ultimately close its sheltered workshops. This report, [Transitions: A Case Study of the Conversion from Sheltered Workshops to Integrated Employment in Maine](#), studied the experience of people with significant disabilities who were employed by sheltered workshops as well as providers who formerly operated sheltered workshops in Maine. Approved by the GWU University Institutional Review Board, this study outlining the experience in Maine can serve as a guidepost for policymakers in other states.

The study was undertaken to address the following questions:

1. Was Maine's transition successful in moving people who had been working in sheltered workshops into integrated employment settings?
2. Were people who were transitioned from sheltered to competitive employment between 2002 and 2007 when the transition was taking place still competitively employed in 2014?
3. How do the wages of those people who were able to successfully transition compare pre and post transition?
4. Did the provider cost of providing employment services increase or decrease pre and post transition?

Key findings in the report include:

- People who had been employed in sheltered workshops have seen their hours worked per week **decline**. **2/3rds of those previously employed are no longer employed** and those who are working **earn less per week** because of the reduction in the number of hours worked.
- In 2008, the year Maine Public Law Chapter 101 went into effect, 39.5% of people with disabilities were employed. That number **dropped** to 34.1% by 2012.
- Sheltered workshops in Maine were employing 558 people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in 2001. There were no people employed in sheltered workshops in 2010. The number of people with IDD who were served in integrated employment in Maine also **declined** during the years from 2001 to 2014.
- Employment data for people with intellectual disabilities in Maine show an average of only 12 hours worked per week in 2011, **the lowest in the nation**.
- After the passage of the law, **non-work placements increased dramatically** from 550 to 3,178.
- Level of disability was one characteristic commonly cited as a factor impeding placements for some people who are **no longer employed**.

ACCSES, the voice of more than 1,200 disability service providers across the nation, urges lawmakers and the public to learn more about the impact of eliminating work opportunities.

“When you look at what happened in Maine – overall employment rates declined, hours worked per week declined, day habilitation rates increased – you really have to wonder how this benefits people with disabilities – particularly those with multiple, significant disabilities,” said Terry Farmer, CEO of ACCSES. Many of the organizations that helped craft the Transition to Independence Act actively lobby to eliminate sheltered workshops and the employment opportunities that come with them. ACCSES looks forward to working with Senator Grassley and the co-sponsors of the Transition to Independence Act to ensure that the benchmark outcomes truly support positive transition so that those in the demonstration states don’t end up like those in Maine.

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[ACCSES](#) represents more than 1,200 disability service providers serving over 3 million people across the country. ACCSES works to promote and enhance community-based solutions that maximize person-centered employment, health care, education, and independent living opportunities for people with disabilities. Through collaboration with government and other stakeholders, ACCSES assures that services recognize and support the full potential of each person with a disability.