

Retirement Policy for Persons with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Who Receive Services Through the Division of Developmental Disabilities

The State of Rhode Island has adopted an Employment First policy, which presumes that all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are capable of working and will have the opportunity to work in competitive integrated settings during their adult life. The State also recognizes that individuals with I/DD, like similar-age non-disabled peers, will want to retire. This policy addresses retirement of people with I/DD age 62 or older who are thinking of retiring or want to retire. The expectation is that individuals choose to retire after they have received information sufficient to support informed decision-making.

Services will continue to be available to individuals who choose to retire at age 62, the minimum retirement age. Services will continue to meet the individual's goals, interests, and needs as stated in his or her ISP and consistent with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in its Home and Community-Based Settings Final Rule (HCBS) that all services for individuals with disabilities must be provided with fully integrated community settings.

While it is recommended that an individual thinking of retirement prepare for it by identifying the goal at least 3 - 6 months before he or she wants to retire and including that goal in his or her person-centered plan, any person can self-identify as retirement-ready at any time and request services in his or her person-centered plan as soon as possible.

Planning for retirement should involve exploration of retirement activities and interests and must support a smooth transition to retirement activities. The individual should have the opportunity to participate in a benefits review to determine what effect retirement may have on eligibility for benefits, including any new benefits for which s/he may qualify.

Services must be individually selected and designed by the individual and identified in the person-centered plan. An array of supported services is available to the individual, including a mix of leisure, meaningful senior-related activities, group and non-group, structured and non-structured, and daily life activities that are comparable to those activities engaged in by retirement-age non-disabled peers, and include paid and natural supports.

Services are to be provided in an environment that promotes independence and in a way that encourages people to engage in their environment and community to the maximum extent possible through support and care provided with dignity and respect. They are designed to actively stimulate, encourage, and enable active participation; to maintain and build on skills and abilities to the maximum extent possible; to introduce new leisure pursuits and establish new relationships; improve or maintain flexibility, mobility, and strength; to develop, maintain, and increase awareness of time, place, weather, persons, and environment in general; and develop and maintain the senses. Services will be reviewed at least annually to assure that they align with the individual's updated goals, interest, and needs.

Any person who decides to retire can later choose to return to work. He or she may do so by asking at any time that his or her person-centered plan be revised consistent with the person's desire to work. The process would include development of employment and related goals and needs.