

5-1-15

**To: Employment First stakeholders**

**From: Mike Maley, Statewide Employment First Coordinator**

**Re: Employment First: July 1 No New Entry to Sheltered Workshops Policy**

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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This message addresses closing new entries into sheltered workshop settings beginning July 1, 2015. The Office of Developmental Disability Services and the DHS Employment First initiative have put together a F.A.Q. document to answer some of the common questions around this policy change. The F.A.Q. is attached in this email and is also [online](#) on the Employment First website.

While we talk about policies, at the end of the day these policies are really about people. For many months now, we have been reporting on Oregonians who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities getting jobs in the community in our [success stories](#). Some of these people at some point were told that they couldn't work successfully in integrated, community jobs or have lives like anyone else. [Vivian](#) in Hermiston said she was told as a child she would never have her own family, or work in a job of her choice. Today, Vivian is married with children, has her own home, and a job she loves at Desert Lanes Family Fun Center. When given the opportunity and with the right job match and supports, many people with significant disabilities are thriving and living full lives in the community.

We understand that this policy closing entry to sheltered workshops impacts people's lives. We believe that this impact will overall be positive. We are committed to providing employment services that help people explore or pursue jobs in the community, as well as advance in their careers. We are also committed to helping people with disabilities live in their communities, just like anyone else.

Thank you all for your continued involvement, support, and advocacy for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon.

If you have comments or other questions, please email them to [employment.first@state.or.us](mailto:employment.first@state.or.us).

~ Mike