Investment in cross-disability, cross-system efforts that promote community-based, competitive, integrated, and self-directed employment opportunities are needed for Alaskans with disabilities across the lifespan.

Alaska is an Employment First State

- When Alaskans with disabilities are employed, they contribute positively to their communities, pay taxes, and experience meaningful engagement that reduces isolation and promotes health and wellbeing.

- Supports for Alaskans with disabilities include resource coordinators at job centers, public school transition services, vocational rehabilitation, and more.

- Following a national movement, Alaska promotes employment in the general workforce as the preferred option for people experiencing disabilities receiving assistance from publicly funded systems.

Working Side-by-Side

Supported employment services help Alaskans with disabilities — including people with intellectual and/or developmental and behavioral health disorders, dementia, and traumatic brain injury — find and keep employment in typical work settings, earning competitive wages and benefits, side-by-side with people who do not experience disabilities. Alaskans with disabilities may benefit from a range of employment supports; some may only need help finding a job, whereas others may need on-site coaching or mentors as they learn and/or maintain their job duties.
Positive Outcomes Through Employment

Employment is an essential part of recovery for many individuals with behavioral health disorders, offering positive impacts on life satisfaction, self-esteem, independence, and symptom reduction. Additionally, employment is a path to self-sustainability and can prevent people from becoming homeless or entering institutional or criminal justice systems.

Key Points

• When Alaskans with disabilities are employed, they have the opportunity to contribute positively in their communities, pay taxes, and experience meaningful engagement that reduces isolation and promotes health and wellbeing.

• It is important that employment services are flexible to meet the needs of individuals.

• Employment is a pathway to independence and financial security for many Alaskans.

Some services and programs that support employment for Alaskans with behavioral health disorders and disabilities include:

• Vocational Rehabilitation
• Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation
• Medicaid Waiver supported employment services
• The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model

For more information, visit:
www.alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/jointadvocacy