



A Guide to Developing
an Employment-Focused
Family-Governed Group

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An Introduction to this Guide

The purpose of this guidebook is:

- For parents forming a **family-governed** group – a program that meets the needs of their sons and daughters with diversabilities.
- To show how families can share their **CLBC** hours and other resources to support everyone.
- To focus on employment and partnering with **WorkBC**.
- To focus on youth transitioning from high school to the next stage in their lives.

The ideas about sharing found in this guidebook can help others, including people with diversabilities who want to create a user-led group.

The writers of this Guidebook have had:

- 6 years' experience with a family-run group.
- 3 years' experience supporting the participants to prepare and find work.

Definitions in this Guidebook:

- **Family** – This refers to any kind of family. The participant is at the centre of the family.
- **Parents** – Refers to the people wanting to form this program for their sons and daughters. The word 'parent' can also cover grandparents, siblings, Home Share providers and others.

There is a dictionary at the back of this guidebook to make words easier to understand. Also, throughout this guide we talk about a number of documents. In order to assist readers in creating their own family-governed groups, we have included many sample documents on our website at <http://www.inclusionworks.ca/>.

Most of the information in this Guidebook can be used anywhere in BC. It is a good idea to contact your local CLBC office, or service provider agencies, to check that the things we describe can be done in your area.

Executive Summary

Section One – The InclusionWorks! Model

This first section gives a lot of details about creating a family-governed group. You can read it in pieces or read the particular sections when you need to know about them.

Our Philosophy

InclusionWorks! is:

- Creative
- Person-centred
- Run by families (**Family Governance**)

InclusionWorks! provides support for people with diversabilities from ages 19 to 25 – transitioning youth. *InclusionWorks!* uses **Individualized Funding (IF)** hours from CLBC. All the families share what CLBC gives them. *InclusionWorks!* gives greater choice and control to the participants and their families over how decisions are made in about services and supports.

InclusionWorks! started in Victoria, B.C. in 2010. A small number of people leaving high-school, and their families, decided to share their funding. They did this to:

- Have more control and choice in programming.
- Make sure the programming met the needs of the participants.
- Make sure true inclusion happened within their community.
- To prepare the young adult participants to become contributing members of Canadian society.

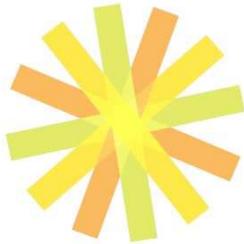


InclusionWorks! groups that have formed:

1. *InclusionWorks! Victoria* – 2010
2. *InclusionWorks! Saanich* – 2012
3. *InclusionWorks! South Island* – 2014.
4. *InclusionWorks! North Shore* – 2015 (B.C. Lower Mainland)

Other groups are being considered in Victoria, Vancouver, and in the Interior and Northern regions of B.C.

Each group provides 35 hours per week of support for 7 to 10 transitioning youth who are **CLBC** clients. The first *InclusionWorks!* groups have been well-supported by their **Host Agency**, Community Living Victoria.



The first group of *InclusionWorks!* families spent a lot of time coming up with their values, **programming principles** and **governance model**. Key Values and Principles were made up by all members of the first group and have changed slightly with each new group.

Values:

- Self-advocates and families are the best people to make choices regarding their futures.
- Self-advocates, with the right opportunities, training and supports, can make meaningful contributions to their communities.
- Canadian society is enriched by community inclusion.
- The **legal ability** of each individual is important and encouraged through supported decision-making.
- Everyone is entitled to have friends.
- All members of society depend on each other.
- We believe in the “dignity of risk”, which means that everyone has a right to take risks in in their lives, and that some of these risks will fail.

Programming Principles:

1. Activities should be in community, challenging, and include life skills and support to work.
2. Activities should be provided based on each person’s interests, strengths and capabilities.
3. Each person will have an individualized schedule.
4. Some activities may be with other participants. This benefits everyone involved. Ideally, activities are done in groups of three or less.
5. Employment, independence, friendships, and life-long learning are the main goals.

6. Activities should be related to learning skills or getting ready for employment. (No watching a video just to kill time.)
7. Participants' physical and mental well-being is important.

InclusionWorks! thinks being inclusive and personalizing each person's schedule is important. *InclusionWorks!* is NOT interested in:

- Being a program that does not interact in the community very much.
- Expecting all participants to participate in all activities together, whether they like them or not.

Employment-First Philosophy

(If employment is important to your group.)

- Employment is an important goal.
- Finding employment is a long-term project.
- Families have to be willing to walk through the many steps to employment and be patient.
- Employment-related activities (i.e. resume writing, **Discovery process**) take priority over other activities.
- If you have a job, you have to go to work instead of participating in a leisure activity with other *InclusionWorks!* young people. (For example: attending a BBQ).

Our Transition Program Philosophy

- *InclusionWorks!* will last five years.
- Participants will spend time doing things their typical peers do:
 - Going to college
 - Engaging in other learning
 - Finding their first jobs
 - Finding apprenticeships
 - Experimenting (safely)
 - Discovering new things about the world and themselves
 - Forming important friendships
- We know that people change and want to do different things with their lives at different times.

This means that *InclusionWorks!* will not be a day program where individuals enter and stay for life.

No Home-Base Philosophy

- It is suggested that *InclusionWorks!* groups have no permanent “home” base.
- This means no place to go and kill time.
- People spend more time out in the community.
- They make use of community facilities. For example: recreation centre programs and spaces, community-based training courses (First Aid, Food Safety), employment agency supports, community centres, libraries.
- They form partnerships with a wide variety of agencies, organizations, businesses and services providers. For example: It might mean forming a partnership with the Education Department at the local University, where free space is available for educational purposes. Participants grow and learn amongst their typical peers.

One *InclusionWorks!* group has, in its last year, rented a small apartment to work on goals related to independent living.

Family-governance means that participants and family members are in control of:

- How service money and other resources are used.
- Deciding the group’s general direction.
- Interviewing and overseeing staff.
- Programming goals.
- All decisions on all matters.

Our Situation

What was learned in the first few years:

- Without an Employment-First philosophy, few participants had paid jobs.
- *InclusionWorks!* decided to provide employment services ourselves by partnering with **WorkBC**.

For *InclusionWorks!*, providing employment services had several benefits:

- It meant families and participants had more choice and control to help each person's employment needs.
- It made sure employment was part of the overall programming and supports.
- It made use of the support workers' knowledge of participants' strengths and interests.
- It used the employment service system that every British Columbian can access.
- We were able to provide more employment resources to support participants.

InclusionWorks! could create a partnership with the local **WorkBC** program because:

- The participants were in a family-governed group.
- We could have a specific *InclusionWorks!* Employment Worker (called an Employment Facilitator) to oversee these services.
- The *InclusionWorks!* groups were using a Host Agency (a **legal entity**) that could support the paperwork and financial tasks connected with the **WorkBC** program.
- The local **WorkBC** office was willing to partner with *InclusionWorks!*.



Without working as a group, an individual with Individualized Funding would interact solely with the local **WorkBC** office and could not be paid to do employment services.

Family Governance

What is Family Governance?

Family governance, is a model of support in which individuals with disabilities, with the support of their families share their resources (knowledge, networks, skills, funding, etc.) to provide support and services to a small group of people with diversabilities. Groups of families have been forming family-governed groups for some time. For example:

- Parent support groups
- Parents from different families get together to buy a house, where their adult children can live independently with shared support
- Parents in different families get together to start a business to create employment opportunities for their sons and daughters.
- **Microboards** are formed by families and can be made up of family members but may also include other members in addition to family members on the board. Sometimes Microboards share resources with others.



Forming a Collective Family-Governed Group

Opportunities

For many transitioning youth and families in B.C., forming a group such as *InclusionWorks!* makes sense. The day programs that have been around for a long time often:

- Mix age groups so that young adults, middle-aged people and seniors are served together
- Are in large group day programs and take group community outings
- Focus on leisure (not employment) and have schedules that stay the same, and
- Have low staffing ratios (this means 1 support worker might support a lot of people making it hard to personalize services and supports).

In most cases, this means that the day program doesn't expect people to get jobs even though most adults have jobs. Most young people with diversabilities were included in regular schools so they want jobs. They also want the choice and control of being free to choose their daily activities and work dreams. There are many benefits to forming a family-governed group, including:

- Participants and their families set the direction of the group.
- By sharing resources they get more and better services.
- A group is better at dealing with paperwork, service providers, and government agencies than a single person is.
- Programming is flexible and can shift quickly to meet individual and group needs and opportunities.
- Participants of similar ages can form friendships.
- Families can hire or contract support workers and job coaches.
- Support staff can be similar in age to participants to model young adult life and access to youth culture (things young adults like).
- Family members provide a network of support to each other.



Challenges

There are some risks to being in a family-governed group. By sharing resources it means that everyone has to feel successful. If one participant and their family is not happy and leaves, pulling out their Individualized Funding, everyone is affected. **Family governance** is not a model of support for those concerned only about themselves or their loved ones. It is a model in which everyone involved must care about the success of the group, as well as the success of each person in the group.

It is important that young people with diversabilities and their families take the lead forming the group, not a service provider or government placing people into groups. To be successful, people must form relationships, explore their values and goals, and understand whether they can work together. They need to do this before they decide to be a family-governed group. If they don't they will not be able to plan and work together, will not have a shared sense of who they are, and will not be able to communicate and solve problems. Even though people with

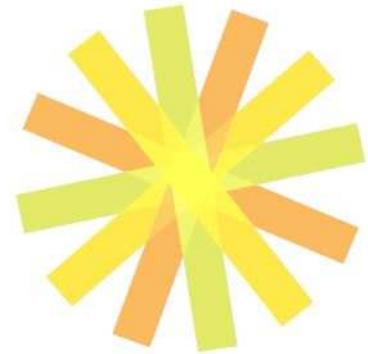
diversabilities need to be the leaders in creating family-governed groups, service agencies and government can help by sharing information about family governance and bringing youth and families together.

Starting a Family-Governed Group

Connecting with Other Families

How do you go about finding others eligible for *CLBC* funding to explore forming a family-governed group? Depending on your community, you may be able to:

- Reach out through support groups, family-focused organizations, transition resource fairs or through social media.
- Get help from your local *CLBC* office. Facilitators may tell other families about your plans or the local *CLBC* manager may help you by distributing a letter.



Finding other families should happen early enough to have lots of time to plan. The first meeting of interested families should take place by late Fall of the last year of high school. It is important to spend time getting to know each other and having a general discussion of hopes and goals. It is also important to discuss **Individualized Funding** and **family governance**, including the benefits and risks.

The next set of family meetings should focus on youths getting to know each other and to come up with shared goals for the next five years. As everyone begins to form relationships with one another, it is important to move to the commitment phase – when people say “I will be in this group.” Once families have committed to the family-governed group the real planning of start-up begins.

Timing for Transitioning Youth

It is also important to plan early because most youth leaving high school will be starting to come up with a **Personal Support Plan** with a *CLBC* Facilitator. In that Plan you should make a request for Individualized Funding and say you want to be part of an *InclusionWorks!* group. Also, name the group’s Host Agency if one has

been chosen. In order to create a family-governed group, everyone will need to make the same agreement with the same Host Agency.

Agreeing on the Family Leads

After a group of families has agreed to be a family-governed group, they need to agree to a Family Lead and a Secondary Lead. This helps the group run well. The **Family Lead** is the volunteer head of the group and the bridge between the Host Agency and other agencies and support people. The **Second Lead** has specific responsibilities (eg. finances or dealing with workers) and is also a support and backup to the Family Lead.

The Family Participation Agreement

Once the families have agreed on their shared values and goals and identified the Family Leads and a common Host Agency, they should sign a **Family Participation Agreement** to write down the things that will help the group run smoothly. The Family Participation Agreement is an important document. It can have a lot of things in it and include:

- Agreement to be part of the group;
- How each family will contribute money;
- What organization will be the Host Agency;
- How long people need to stay part of the group and how to leave the group;
- Permission for Family Leads to sign agreements on behalf of the group;
- What the process will be if there are disagreements.

Host Agency and Contractual Agreements

A **Host Agency** is a *CLBC*-approved organization that works to assist people with diversabilities and their families who have Individualized Funding. The partnership with the Host Agency is important because it helps with starting the group and keeping it going. It is really important that families and the Host Agency have similar values. The Host Agency must be comfortable with families making important decisions and families must be comfortable with the Host Agency's support. A good host agency:

- Shares information and budget information with families;
- Has a good reputation in the community;
- Is willing to take risks and try new things;

- Is interested in seeing *Inclusionworks!* succeed;
- Is open to and trusting of the *InclusionWorks!* families.

There will be four separate types of agreements used to set up a group:

1. The families sign a Family Participation Agreement among themselves.
2. Each family signs an agreement with *CLBC* for Individualized Funding, including naming the same Host Agency.
3. *CLBC* and the Host Agency sign contracts for each participant in the group.
4. The Host Agency and the designated two Family Leads, on behalf of the group sign a Host Agency Agreement.



The Host Agency:

- Helps get good support workers and job coaches;
- Manages money, including paying workers and bills, tracking the group's money, and reporting back to families and *CLBC*;
- Helping the group access resources;
- Helps report things is a critical incident happens;
- Assists the group with staffing issues;
- Assists with on-going problem-solving, advocacy, etc;
- Works through any health and safety related issues;
- Provides **liability insurance** coverage;
- Provides **WorkSafe BC** coverage to support workers;
- Provides support for **Person Centered Planning**.

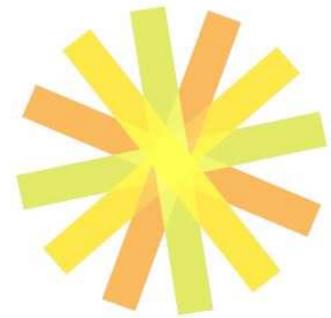
Creating a Budget

In *InclusionWorks!*, people with diversabilities and their families share their knowledge, networks, skills, and funding. Funding includes:

- Individualized Funding from *CLBC*
- Personal or family contributions
- Donations of services or money (including space)
- Grants
- Payments for employment services delivered through the *WorkBC* program.

Budgeting is usually done by parents with this skill, with help from the Host Agency. Depending on the skills of your group, you may use more or less of your Host Agency's support for budgeting.

- Most of *InclusionWorks!* funding is Individualized Funding (IF) through *CLBC*. Individuals have received anywhere from 2-23 hours per week of service funding based on their level of need (Most participants receive 12-17.5 hours per week of service funding).
- In Victoria, families have been able to add educational services from the *South Island Distance Education School (SIDES)*. *SIDES* has education resources for eligible participants up to age 21.
- Added financial support has been received from *WorkBC* for employment services delivered by *InclusionWorks!*. The second part of this Guidebook explains this more.
- Other financial support comes from families themselves. The amount paid is based on how much money the group needs and each family's ability to pay. This needs to be an honest discussion in the group.
- *CLBC* may also fund participants' transportation and activity costs, along with some other things.
- Closing *InclusionWorks!* for several weeks of holiday during the year also saves money. For example, we close three weeks in August and two weeks during December holidays.
- We also take advantage of programs and deals wherever possible. All of our participants have **recreation passes**, **Recreation Integration Victoria Leisure Assistant** passes and **entertainment cards** (allowing support workers free entry to recreation centres and movies), and **IMAX theatre passes**. We watch out for "Groupon" deals and other discounts on activities. These all help reduce our programming costs and increase our activities in inclusive environments.



Tracking Your Budget

When choosing your group's **Host Agency**, it is important to find one that will assist you in keeping track of your funds and will give a monthly statement of your group's finances. These reports are given at each Family Meeting so that everyone knows how much money the group is spending and how much it has left for the year. These reports also help families to decide how they want to use any extra funds they might have. Our groups have used any extra non-government resources on activities such as:

- increased individualization of services,
- special activities,
- training opportunities for workers,
- small outings such as overnight camping trips and conferences.

Organizing Your Group

Relationships and Communication

As with any group, a family-governed group needs clear and open communication built on trust. This includes the participants with diversabilities, family members, support workers, Host Agency staff, and other partners. Trusting relationships begin to be formed even before *InclusionWorks!* starts. This happens through the early meetings among families who are considering whether to be part of a group.

Once a group is formed, meetings among families will likely take place every month or perhaps more often until the group is running well. Then family meetings may be held every two months or less often depending on the group. All of these Family meetings have an agenda (a list of things to be talked about) and any family member or participant can add items to the agenda. Everyone has an opportunity to speak at these meetings. The existing *InclusionWorks!* groups talk through issues until everyone comes to a decision they are happy with. This may take some extra time but becomes quicker over time.



Governance and Volunteering



It is the expectation that all families, including *InclusionWorks!* participants, are represented at family meetings. At these family meetings information is shared and decisions are made. The goal is that *InclusionWorks!* participants with diversabilities take on more and more leadership and decision-making roles in their *InclusionWorks!* group, from making decisions about programming and schedules,

to interviewing and selecting support workers, and participating in family meetings. Participants are encouraged to have a role in governing the group, and are supported as necessary, as their skills grow and they mature.

Part of the initial **Family Participation Agreement** is an understanding that all families will volunteer within the group, based on what they can do and how much time they have. For the Family Leads this means a lot of volunteering, especially in the beginning. For other families, volunteering may be participating on interviewing committees to select new support workers, researching new opportunities, or hosting family meetings at their homes. Whatever a family can do, it is important that everyone contribute.

Coordinating the Team

On a day-to-day basis, planning and coordination is done by a **Team Lead**. This is a support worker position with additional duties. The Team Lead is responsible for such things as creating and sharing the weekly schedule to families and partners, talking with community partners, making new ideas happen, being the main contact for families, and attending family meetings.

Staffing and Contracting

Support workers provide direct support in the community, including job coaching. They may also be involved in education and activity planning and making it all happen. In existing *InclusionWorks!* groups, support workers range from casual to full-time hours.

People attracted to the work of *InclusionWorks!* are most likely interested in flexible, creative, and new ways of thinking about support. We ask that they:

- Relate to participants in a caring and positive manner, which respects each participant's personal worth, dignity and rights.
- Train, support and assist individuals in a variety of community, volunteer and work settings.
- Provide employment-related support to participants, including job discovery and job coaching.
- Bring programming and participant-related ideas and concerns forward.
- Create education and training plans to meet the individual's goals.
- Provide opportunities for individuals to learn life skills (i.e. safety, financial management, bus training, nutrition and cooking) in order to increase independence.
- Help participants in developing social skills in the community and with each other.
- Communicate with community partners.
- Work with individual community members, groups, businesses and agencies to make more opportunities for inclusion and independence of individuals with diverse needs.
- Provide the Host Agency with goal updates for participants with input from participants and their families.



The Importance of Community Partnerships

Community partnerships have been really important to *InclusionWorks!*. These partnerships are all different and may come and go as needed. For example some of our partners are: *CLBC*, our Host Agency, our education provider (*SIDES*), and our *WorkBC* employment agency, as well as the local university and college, which have provided both community space and practicum students. We have created partnerships with many organizations and businesses. Whenever possible, participants take part in the same activities and programs as the rest of the population and give back to community.

Programming

During the first six months of the groups' programming, there are often more whole group activities. This allows participants:

- to explore different opportunities and activities and to see what interests them.
- to figure out what types of settings works best for them.
- to discover who get along well together.
- to discover which support workers fit best with which participants or given activities.

Once support workers get to know each participant's interests, programming becomes more individualized, with the majority of activities taking place in small groups of two or three or one-to-one. Our general areas of programming have included:



Paid and Self-Employment – This involves job discovery, preparing to work, direct job skills training, job carving, coaching and maintenance (See Section 2 of this guide for more information on the employment process).

Volunteering – Participants actively volunteer in the community with non-profit organizations in the social, health, animal welfare, arts and environmental areas.

Education and Training – We believe in life-long learning, so participants' education and training is ongoing. For the first two years of *InclusionWorks!*, most participants are registered at *South Island Distance Education School (SIDES)*. *InclusionWorks!* also provides education and training. Educational topics include literacy, money management, transportation skills and others.

Social Skills and Self-Advocacy – Participants have been involved in social skill development using and adapting the *Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS)* course and when out in the community. In our third year, we added self-advocacy and rights training.



Healthy Living and Leisure – Since *InclusionWorks!* began, there has been a focus on health and leisure, including exercise, sports, yoga, nutrition, arts, crafting, and dance. Most of these activities take place in recreation centres, parks, community classes. Sometimes we contract with community providers to provide classes in a smaller, quieter setting.

Relationships – Most of our participants have developed friendships with each other while attending *InclusionWorks!*, and we continue to work on supporting friendships outside *InclusionWorks!*. Relationships have also been built with supportive people in the workplace, volunteer roles, and community activities. For the last several years we have provided education on dating, relationships, and sexuality for some of our participants.

Most of the activities are done through partnerships, which makes our programming more diverse, builds a welcoming community, and promotes inclusion.

Planning – Individual and Group

At various points, we have found it useful to do a group ***PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope)***. A *PATH* is a way of sharing information in order to plan for individuals and groups. In order to ensure our group *PATH* reflects the goals of participants, our support workers conduct shortened *PATHs* with each participant and bring them to the group *PATH* meeting.

This group planning is in addition to the yearly **person-centered planning** with each of the individual participants, which plans their short and long term goals.

We have also found the need to set aside time for planning among our workers and with the **Family Leads**. We usually choose two to three days per year for this planning. Our groups also set one afternoon per month and one hour per week to

meet and plan. This planning time is really important to the success of *InclusionWorks!*.

Policies and Practices

Over time, each of the *InclusionWorks!* groups has had to develop some **policies** – rules to guide what we do. We also follow the policies of our Host Agency. There are some examples of our policies on the *InclusionWorks!* website.

Group Dynamics and Problem-Solving

Most groups go through stages:

- forming (getting together and becoming a group)
- storming (a time when disagreements or problems might happen; people are nervous or unhappy with some things)
- norming (when the group starts to function as it should)
- performing (when the group is working really well and things are going great).



It is important that everyone know that it is normal for groups to go through these stages. Working through problems together strengthens the group. A group will probably go through these stages several times. When you know that this is a normal part of being in a group, it becomes less stressful. Our *InclusionWorks!* groups have made a commitment to problem-solving in our **Family Partnership Agreements**. It is important that everyone is involved and working together to find solutions.

Maintaining Relationships

Relationships among participants, families, support workers, and partners will grow and change over time. Different groups take different approaches. For example: A group may make friendships among participants as a priority hoping these will be lasting. Another group may make employment a priority and hope

relationships develop from employment and inclusion. All of the groups value friendships and employment; they just approach them in different ways.

Teamwork and stability among support workers can vary over time. Because *InclusionWorks!* is focused on supporting transitioning youth, we feel that hiring or contracting young workers is a good thing. The challenges of hiring young adults, often straight out of college or university, can be that they:

- go on to graduate school,
- move on to jobs that further their career goals,
- move away.

To reduce these challenges:

- We ask our workers to commit to at least a year.
- The Team Lead role needs as much continuity as possible, so we often move people from a support worker role to Team Lead when a Team Lead leaves.
- It is vital that the Family Lead and Team Lead work well together.
- The Family Lead needs to be someone who can strike the right balance between supervising the team and giving them freedom to be creative and take on responsibility.
- The *InclusionWorks!* model does not lend itself well to **micro-management**.



Finally, the relationship with your Host Agency will change over time too. Hopefully trust and communication will grow and the Host Agency will support your group to build its ability to reach its goals.

Section Two – Meeting Your Employment Goals

This next section provides a lot of detail about how to give employment services to people in a family-governed group. You can read it in pieces or read the particular sections when you need to know about them.

Focus on Employment First in a Family-Governed Group

The first *InclusionWorks!* groups made employment a priority as they believed that employment is an important part of citizenship and inclusion. The goal of having a job for a young person with a diversability is the same expectation that society holds for all young adults.



We learned that we needed to have values and goals about employment. We decided that our work needed to result in:

- Real jobs (see definition below) where people have the opportunity to earn equal wages and other benefits
- New skills
- Social and economic inclusion
- Promotion of self-determination, choice and **interdependence**
- Self-esteem
- Increased quality of life where people are treated fairly and with respect.

Real jobs means that:

- Wages are paid at the going rate for the job, with the same terms and conditions as all other employees.
- The job helps the person meet their life goals and aspirations.
- Managers and other workers value the employee's role.
- It can be self-employment or having shares in a business.
- It does not include volunteering, work experiences, sheltered workshops, or work crews (except co-ops).

For our groups, this meant increasing our knowledge and skills to be able to deliver employment services to our participants.

Best Practices in Supported Employment

Increasing our ability to do employment services meant having guidelines to direct how we would go about it. Our expert consultant helped us choose the following principles:

1. Choice and Control: Employment support is guided by the job seeker to achieve his or her career goals and dreams.
2. Paid Employment: The job seeker receives the same rate of pay and benefits as other employees doing the same job.
3. Partnership: We need to be individualized in providing support for the long-term satisfaction of the job seeker and the employer.
4. Full inclusion: Employment must be inclusive.
5. Job Search: People need good support that is done quickly to meet their needs and achieve successful employment.
6. Individualized: Supports need to be offered one person at a time.
7. Natural Supports: Employment supports are as invisible as possible and (may) fade over time by building on community support.
8. Long-term support: Is available to all to ensure participants maintain employment.
9. Continuous quality improvement: to always be evaluating and improving.



Adapted from the Canadian Association for Supported Employment, 2016

Types of Employment

There are two general types of employment that *InclusionWorks!* participants have – paid employment and self-employment. Which one of these is right for the individual is decided with them through the **Discovery process**. In some cases, participants have pursued one type of employment, but then decide on a change.

- “Paid Employment” is when a participant is paid an hourly wage by their employer.
- We consider our participants “self-employed” when they have their own **micro-enterprise**, a very small business created based on a community need or the passion of the individual.

We also speak of “supported employment” and “customized employment.” Perhaps the best descriptions of these two employment models come from the *Family Support Institute’s* booklet, *Employment Options for Individuals and Families in BC*, which we have adapted below:

Supported Employment is when a service provider [or in this case, a family-governed group] works with an individual to help them obtain a job that already exists. The service provider works with the employer to modify the job so the individual will be successful in the job. A job coach works alongside the individual as long as needed and can gradually fade their involvement as the new employee becomes more independent and confident in their job. Over time co-workers or supervisors may act as employment support for the person.

Customized Employment is when a service provider [or family-governed group] begins by first getting to know and understand the individual through a process known as Discovery. Discovery uses a person-centered approach to create a profile of the person by getting to know them and their skills and abilities rather than focusing on what jobs are available in the job market. Discovery takes place in a variety of locations so that we get to really know the person looking for a job. The individual’s family and network often help and the focus is on what a person can do, not on what they can’t do. Customized Employment seeks to get an individual in a job that is carved out specifically for them, based on their preferences and strengths and also based on the needs of an employer.

Adapted from *Family Support Institute*, 2015

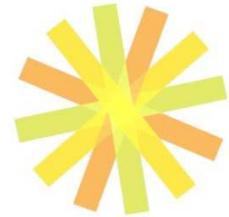
This is just one set of definitions and might be a little different than the definitions used by the *WorkBC* program. If your family-governed group wants to give employment services under the *WorkBC* program, you will have to use their definitions.

Partnering with the *Employment Program of BC (WorkBC)*

WorkBC is the provincial government's access point to the world of work in British Columbia. It was created with one key goal – to help all British Columbians to successfully find work. WorkBC helps people find jobs, explore career options and improve their skills. WorkBC also helps employers fill jobs, find the right talent and grow their businesses.

Adapted from *WorkBC* website, 2016

- The *Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI)* established *WorkBC* in 2012.
- *WorkBC* has offices around the province. Some are non-profit organizations, others are for-profit businesses.
- All *WorkBC* offices have a variety of partnerships in the community.



Some *WorkBC* offices, instead of or as well as providing employment services directly to people with diversabilities, work with organizations with special expertise. This increases *WorkBC*'s ability to serve more people and better help people with different needs.

InclusionWorks! has been a **fee-for-service** provider for *WorkBC*, providing each participant a range of employment services. *WorkBC* pays *InclusionWorks!* to complete the stages of preparing a participant to find work. Several community living organizations have entered into fee-for-service relationships with our local *WorkBC* office. This is true in other communities throughout B.C. In creating your own relationship with your local *WorkBC* office, we recommend:

Discussing the Idea with your Host Agency

Your relationship with your Host Agency is important if you want to deliver employment services under the *WorkBC* program. Because your group will be

providing fee-for-service employment services, you do not receive payment until the service has been delivered. Will your Host Agency allow you to use your existing funds to support such efforts, knowing that payment for the services will eventually come from the *WorkBC* program? Because you are not a legal entity, billing for services must come through your Host Agency. Are they willing to invoice and track funds to be added to your family-governed group's funding?



Developing an Understanding of *WorkBC*

Every local *WorkBC* office is slightly different in how it delivers employment services. Some questions to think about are:

1. Does the local *WorkBC* office have partnerships with fee-for-service providers and will they work with a family-governed group?
2. Do they have policies, and procedures they will share with your group?
3. What does your local *WorkBC* office provide that can help your group understand the program?
4. Does the local *WorkBC* office help case manage the individual and the employment services you will be providing (coordinate, support, track, review)?
5. Does the local *WorkBC* office have a user-friendly system to document employment service activities? Documenting activities is essential.

Your group's Capacity and Training Needs

The *WorkBC* program requires that those who are doing employment services have the expertise to do the work. Do your group's current staff or contractors have the skills to deliver employment services? Typically support workers receive little training around employment and in some cases, see themselves as caregivers as opposed to supporters. If your support workers do not have the training to provide employment services, what training is available?

Determining Roles Within your Group

You need to decide on your worker roles if you want to do employment services. We decided to train all of our support workers in employment and assign each support worker responsibility for employment services for a specific individual(s).

This does not mean others are not involved. As we have moved on from our **Vancouver Foundation** grant which had funded our Employment Facilitator position, each of the *InclusionWorks!* groups either assigned an existing support worker the responsibility for job development, or contracted a new part-time job developer. Job development is a skill that demands developing relationships with potential employers and promoting both your *InclusionWorks!* group and its participants.

Working with the *WorkBC* System

On-Boarding

Before beginning to do employment services through the *WorkBC* program, all staff and contractors who will be working with participants need to be “on-boarded.” This requires all workers to provide a criminal background check done through the local police department or RCMP office, submit their personal information (name, address, etc.), and provide an e-mail address to the *WorkBC* program. This information is reviewed and must be approved before support workers can provide employment services.

Intake

To start the process with *WorkBC*, all of our *InclusionWorks!* participants had an initial meeting with their designated **Disability Employment Services Advisor** at our local *WorkBC* office. At this meeting, participants submitted various forms including a **Disability Related Employment Needs Assessment (DRENA)**.

WorkBC Services

Under *WorkBC* supported employment, there are two forms of services offered. *WorkBC* clients may access one or the other of these services, but not both.

Job Development (JD) services are provided to individuals who are “work-ready”. They have the ability to do a job with a typical job description, a job that already exists in the community. The individual might need help to prepare to get a job, but they are ready to work and with support, can apply for jobs that already exist. They may also need assistance when they start the job and some adaptations might be required. Looking for a job, writing a resume, applying for a job, getting ready for an interview, negotiating a new job and providing early support are

services that can be provided to people who are employment-ready who need job development services.

Customized Employment Development (CED) services are more intensive than Job Development services. They are for individuals who need more support. It also involves adapting or creating a new job (job carving) or a self-employment opportunity for an individual. The job is customized to fit the individual's skills, talents, abilities and passions in a setting that works for the individual. At the same time, the job fills the needs of an employer. The job is not applied for, it is changed or created for the employee to meet their needs and the employer's needs.

The Customized Employment Development Process

So far all *InclusionWorks!* participants have used **Customized Employment Development (CED)** services. It provides a personalized approach, bringing together a combination of tasks that meet the needs of an employer while making the most of the skills, strengths and abilities of the worker. Below is more detail about each stage of Customized Employment Development process.

Stage One: Discovery Process

The Discovery process helps uncover an individual's strengths, skills, abilities, and unique qualities as well as considers the settings or environments that the individual works best in. The Discovery process focuses on the positive qualities of an individual, what they're capable of, and how they can contribute. It is a time to discover an individual's diverse abilities, strengths, passions and motivation. For *InclusionWorks!*, the Discovery process is lead and completed by the *InclusionWorks!* support workers. Working closely with participants, support workers get to know each person well and can provide great insight into the participant. This is really important to creating a job that is a good match for the



person and the employer. The Discovery process involves meeting with others in the person's life who can give new information about the participant.

The completed Discovery profile is given to the *WorkBC* office. After that, the individual (and their support worker) and the Case Manager review the Discovery document and create an employment plan. Together they talk about what employment services and supports are needed to help them in finding employment or becoming self-employed. In addition to the employment services delivered by *InclusionWorks!*, other services and supports may also include access to a bus pass, training courses, assistance purchasing work clothes and helpful technology, adaptations to work settings, etc.

Stage Two: Customized Employment Development

Paid Employment

Once the Discovery process is done, information from the discovery profile combined with conversations with the participant, support workers and parents, is used to look for employment that is a good fit for the person.

The employment facilitator uses the Discovery document and many job ideas as a starting point to look for job leads. Using the networks of the employment facilitator, individual and parents, and others is important. The employment facilitator may create a profile of the participant. It outlines the person's strengths and experience related to the job and can include a photo. Listening to the potential employer, the employment facilitator looks for tasks that are not currently being done or that are not being done well. With this information the employment facilitator can carve a new position that meets the employer's needs and the job-seeker's strengths. Some employers who have had no experience working with people with disabilities can have a harder time figuring out what a person could contribute to their businesses. The employment facilitator works with them to help them start to see and understand the strengths a person has and how they could contribute to the workplace.



Self-Employment

For some *InclusionWorks!* participants, developing their own businesses and being self-employed is the best option. If self-employment is the better choice for the participant, a lot of additional support is needed. It is very important to make sure this support is available. *InclusionWorks!* was able to partner with a local program, **EntreActive**, which works with people with disabilities to start their own businesses. It is our understanding that organizations like *EntreActive* exist in other parts of the province (e.g. **Community Futures**). In our case, *EntreActive* adapted their business development course for *InclusionWorks!* participants. For several participants, additional funding from *Inclusion BC's Ready, Willing and Able* project allowed a business facilitator to be hired to focus on the participant's business. In each case of self-employment, individuals needed a great amount of support from their families. The family needs to be invested in the business – feel the passion that their son or daughter feels for the business idea.

As with paid employment, individuals supported to do self-employment can access job development funding. For the *InclusionWorks!* participants who developed their own businesses and received small business development training through *EntreActive*, the process was sufficiently documented. The next stage is developing a business plan. The business plan must include the name of the business, estimated weekly hours the person is working on their business, expected weekly income, the person's position title, who is supporting them with the work, how needed expenses are covered, and the (estimated) launch date of the business.



Stage Three: Job Coaching

To date, all *InclusionWorks!* participants have required job coaching. Job coaches is important in helping the participant (new employee) understand and adapt to their new job. The job coach also helps the employer and co-workers get comfortable with the participant and see them for their strengths. The job coach acts as a bridge, providing on-site training in job skills and work-related behaviour for employees with diversabilities. As the employee gains skills and confidence,

and natural supports are developed, the job coach gradually spends less time at the work site, but remains available for retraining, assisting with challenges, and providing orientation and training for co-workers. Although the employment facilitator may not be regularly on the job site, she checks in frequently with the employees and job coaches to find out how things are going and if they (or the employer) need support with any aspect of the job. She also maintains communication with the employer and is available to assist the employer with any issue that may arise.

Stage Four: Job Maintenance

Once a person becomes independent in their job and no longer requires job coaching, the next stage is to provide job maintenance support. Job maintenance support provides the participant and the employer with the support needed to ensure that the job placement continues to go well for both parties. We have found that issues can arise after the job coach fades out, from either the participant's perspective or the employer's. Usually the employment facilitator provides support to both the employer and the participant to get things back on track. At times, this may mean adding job coaching supports for a period of time. Job Maintenance support involves the employment facilitator checking in periodically with both the participant and the employer to assess the job placement.



Relationships with Employers

InclusionWorks! has had a lot of success in finding employment for our participants. When we look at where our participants are working and who is employing them, it becomes apparent that most of our jobs have started with personal contacts of either the employment facilitators or families. We have

found that finding employers starts with using our personal and professional networks. We start with thinking about all that has been discovered about the participant through the Discovery process. We brainstorm ideas about employment that would be a good fit. We think about who we might know who can provide us with an in to those potential places. Then, we start the conversation with them. The family governance model has the added advantage of being able to access a number of family networks.



A Final Note on Employment

Delivering employment services might feel a bit scary – after all you are a group of families, not a group of employment specialists. But the important thing is, like every other support a family-governed group might provide, individuals with diversabilities and family members know themselves best. It is the years knowing

someone and the recognition and deep appreciation of an individual's gifts which lead to employment that lasts. For parents, your relationship with your son or daughter contributes to all of the services and supports you design – and that includes employment. As you consider offering employment services through your family-governed group – either directly as *InclusionWorks!* has done or in partnerships with an employment service provider, remember that you and your son or daughter are in fact the experts.

Section Three – Lessons Learned

Although *InclusionWorks!* is still pretty new, we have learned some important lessons:

- The group must be based on values of inclusive community.
- It is very important to have a shared understanding of values and principles among the youth with diversabilities and their families.
- A Family Lead and Second is needed to help the group run well.

- A strong Host Agency is important. The Host Agency should have similar values to the group and embrace self-advocate and family leadership.
- As a group, you can access more community resources than you can as an individual.
- Keep your *InclusionWorks!* group to five years. It is important that *InclusionWorks!* groups don't become traditional Day Programs that continue beyond the transition period.
- You will benefit from not having a permanent physical space, particularly at the beginning of your group. Use community spaces wherever possible. University and college-based spaces might be hard to find but are great for transitioning youth.
- You need to grow partnerships in the community. Communities will be open and welcoming of partnerships when you approach them in a positive way, focusing on the benefits for both of you.
- Groups must have choice in partners.
- In order to operate an *InclusionWorks!* group, families need to be creative and organized and work to solve problems quickly.
- Every family needs to volunteer.
- Collaboration and planning time are important among families and workers.
- Behaviour is communication and sometimes you will need help finding out what a person is saying.
- Employment is not only a goal. It is pathway to friendships, greater independence, pride and self-esteem, and the increased choices that come with money in your pocket.
- Resources from *WorkBC* are time-limited. This needs to be thought through when individualizing programming and supports.

- Risk-taking is safer when you are supporting each other as a group. The group can determine its own comfort level with risk, always balancing safety with dignity of risk.
- There is no cookie cutter *InclusionWorks!* group. Each group will develop its own ways of doing things.

We wish you the best on your family-governed journey!

Sample Documents

See Sample Documents on the InclusionWorks! website at <http://www.inclusionworks.ca/>.

Dictionary

Accreditation – CARF accreditation makes sure that a service provider is committed to continually improving services, encouraging feedback, and serving the community.

CLBC (Community Living British Columbia) – a branch of the government called a Crown Agency which pays for services for some adults with diversabilities. For example: community-based community inclusion services, employment services, respite care, Home Share, independent living supports, etc.

Community Futures – operate 268 non-profit offices across Canada that provide small business services to people living in rural communities.

Contractors – at present the original *InclusionWorks!* support workers are contractors. This means that they set their own hours within the guidelines of their contract and have flexibility in how they do the work. They also invoice the Host Agency for the hours they work, no deductions are taken from their cheques, and they do not get paid when they don't work.

Customized Employment Development – the process of finding a job that fits the individual, rather than seeing if the individual can fit into an existing job description. This process includes carving out a position within a job that already exists where the individual would just do a certain part of the job, not

all of it, with the employer's agreement. It can also be creating a brand new job from several tasks that need done.

Disability Employment Services Advisor – an employee of a WorkBC program who will help people with disabilities find and settle into regular work.

Disability Related Employment Needs Assessment (DRENA) – one of the initial documents used by WorkBC to help a client find work. It outlines what the person's disability is, how it affects their ability to work, and what they might need to help them work.

Discovery process – a process that helps define a person's skills, strengths and interests. It is used to help the person get ready for employment and understand what kind of jobs might be a good match for them.

Employee -- an employee is someone who must work certain hours for their job and is paid a wage with government deductions taken from it. They get paid holidays and usually some sick time. Some employees are part of a union. Unions help people advocate for better wages and benefits, but also might insist that long-time employees have seniority (meaning they get the first choice for new jobs); this may or may not affect family-governed groups' ability to hire people of their choice.

Entertainment cards – the Access 2 Entertainment program provides a card that offers more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in recreational activities with an attendant, without added financial burden (The support person can get in to movies and other events free). For more information go to: <http://www.access2card.ca/>

EntreActive – an entrepreneurial training program in Victoria for persons with self-identified disabilities.

Family – in this Guidebook, it refers to any kind of family. The participant is at the centre of the family.

Family Governance or family-governed – run by families. Families make the decisions about what will happen in the group.

Family Governance Model – a new way to set up supports for people with diversabilities. The families make the decisions, and govern what and how things are done. There are several family governance models. In *InclusionWorks!* CLBC gives the funding, a Host Agency provides support to manage the group, and the families govern.

Family Leads – two family members who the *InclusionWorks!* group has decided on who will speak on behalf of everyone when talking to CLBC, the Host Agency, or other partners in the community.

Family Participation Agreement – a document created by a group of families that covers some of the important administration and activities of the group and give the Family Leads the authority to speak to CLBC and others on behalf of the group's members and the group as a whole. A sample is on the *InclusionWorks!* website at www.inclusionworks.ca/.

Fee-for-service – a way of paying for services. WorkBC pays for each service provided to participants after the service has been completed. For example: Discovery process, job development, job coaching.

Global Funding – funding from CLBC given to an agency to provide services to people, when space is available. Global funding funds a program or service, not individuals.

Host Agency – A non-government agency which supports people with diversabilities. You can direct Individualized Funding through a Host Agency. In this way, you do not have to calculate the amount of staff paycheques or do any of the monthly paperwork required by CLBC.

IMAX theatre passes – In Victoria, an IMAX pass can be purchased for \$52 a year. You can attend as many shows as you like for a year.

Individualized Funding or IF – funding from CLBC that is attached to a person not a program through a service provider. You can spend it on support workers and other things to help you do what you want in your life.

Interdependence – we all depend on each other at different times for different reasons.

Job Development – the process of finding suitable work for a person with diversabilities.

Legal Ability –the participant is able to make legal decisions about his or her life, usually with support.

Legal Entity – a legally formed group of people. For example: a non-profit agency, a business, a charity.

Liability Insurance – insurance that protects people if they are sued for things they do, or don't do, while being a part of or working with *InclusionWorks!* For example: a worker is in a car accident while working and is sued by another

driver or damage is done to a facility while *InclusionWorks!* is using it and they are expected to pay for it.

Microboards – groups that operate as small non-profit societies offering customized supports and services to the one person they support. There are hundreds of microboards operating in BC. A great resource on microboards is Vela Canada. Their website is: <http://www.velacanada.org/>.

Micro-enterprise – a business operating on a very small scale, especially with one owner and fewer than five employees.

Micro-management – controlling every detail of an organization or activity instead of allowing people to manage some of their own work.

Parents – in this guidebook, this refers to the people wanting to form this program for their sons and daughters. The word ‘parent’ in this guidebook can also cover grandparents, siblings, Home Share providers and others who are the main supporter for a person with diversabilities.

PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) – A creative, visual way of planning for the future.

PEERS® (Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills) – a social skills training program for youth with social challenges. For more information: <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers>

Personal Support Plan – a plan made with a CLBC Facilitator that covers what an individual wants to do with his or her life, and how CLBC and others will support the individual to do that.

Person-Centered Planning – a planning process focused on the person that helps them set goals. There are different ways to do person-centered planning, but most importantly the focus-person is there and controls the direction of their own plan.

Policies – a set of rules or guidelines describing how the group will do things.

Preliminary Release Form – a form signed by all families who want to form an *InclusionWorks!* group. It gives one or more families in the group permission to discuss options for the whole group with a Host Agency and CLBC. This form is used in the planning stages. It will be replaced by the Family Participation Agreement once all members have committed to being part of the group and have chosen a Host Agency.

Programming Principles – the ideas that are important to the *InclusionWorks!* group. These ideas are important when making decisions and deciding on

goals as well as when you are creating programming. You want all you do to match with your principles.

Ready, Willing and Able – a national initiative active in 20 communities across Canada, with a branch in all 13 provinces and territories. One of the primary goals of Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is to increase the employment rate of people with intellectual disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by engaging employers and helping them understand the value of hiring people with disabilities. See: <http://readywillingable.ca/>

Recreation Integration Victoria Leisure Assistant Pass – having a Leisure Assistant Pass means that a support person can get into a Recreation Centre or another venue in Victoria for free. Call Recreation Integration Victoria (250-477-6314) and tell the receptionist that you would like a Leisure Assistant Pass.

Recreation Passes (LIFE passes) – in Victoria, these are available from the Recreation Centre where the participant lives. The pass can be used to swim or use the gym at any Recreation Centre. The pass gives 52 free Recreation Centre visits per year or you can choose to pay 50% of an annual pass. To apply, take your last Income Tax Assessment to your local Recreation Centre.

Vancouver Foundation – a foundation that gives grants to organizations and individuals who desire to make a difference in their communities. The Vancouver Foundation gave a grant to *InclusionWorks!* and Community Living Victoria to work with WorkBC and create this guidebook.

WorkBC – a Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation program designed to help all people in BC find employment.

WorkSafeBC – the government agency which sets standards to keep workers safe at work. WorkSafeBC also may give payment to a worker who has been hurt at work.

Yearly Person-Centred Planning – a planning document used each year to define the goals and dreams of each participant. In *InclusionWorks!* it is usually written up by the Host Agency coordinator, and includes input from the participant, family members, the Team Lead, the employment facilitator, and others the person wants involved.