SHELTERED WORKSHOPS AND EMPLOYMENT: A Family’s Perspective
“People with disabilities have the right to receive services and supports in settings that do not segregate them from the community; it is a matter of civil rights.” — Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
What is happening to Workshops?

- The U.S. Supreme Court’s Olmstead Decision ruled that people with disabilities should work, live and receive services in the most integrated setting possible.

- Governor Cuomo has made compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court’s Olmstead Decision a top priority in New York.

- Sheltered workshops have been around for decades, but won’t be an option much longer. New York is phasing them out to comply with the Olmstead Decision.
Governor Cuomo put together an implementation cabinet to create a plan consistent with New York State’s obligation under the Olmstead Decision.

In April of 2013, Cuomo announced their comprehensive transformation plan for serving people with disabilities in the most integrated setting. The plan included many areas of change:

- Access
- Improved Services
- The closing of the developmental centers
- Assessment
- Quality measurement
- Self direction
- Behavioral supports
- Increased focus for competitive jobs
- The closing of sheltered workshops…
- The Cabinet put together plans to address unwarranted segregated setting which included sheltered workshops

- Steps included the Department of Labor working side by side with OPWDD to design a plan to increase employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, jobs that paid at least minimum wage

- The law required OPWDD put together an integrated employment plan to guide providers. This Plan is call “New York’s Plan to Increase Competitive Employment Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities”
OPWDD’s Integrated Employment Plan

This plan describes specific steps to:

- Increase the number of individuals engaged in competitive employment
- Increase the number of students that transition from high school to competitive employment
- Collaborate with the educational system to ensure that stakeholders are aware of employment services
- Transition workshop participants to competitive employment or other meaningful community activities
The main parts of OPWDD’s workshop transformation are steps for workshop participants to transition to competitive employment, retirement or other community inclusion options.

A multi-year strategy will be used to educate workshop participants about competitive employment options, identify individuals who are interested in competitive employment and begin a person-centered discovery and planning process to identify the supports and services that will assist them in becoming employed.
Family Engagement

- The Integrated employment plan allows for families to be actively involved in the discovery, assessment and planning process for workshop participants who will be transitioning to competitive employment.

- Families will also receive information about the impact of working on benefits, how their loved one will travel to and from work; what other meaningful community activities their loved one will be engaged in when they are not working; how job coaching supports will be provided; what happens if their loved one loses their job; and the type of supports that will be provided to help their loved one get new employment.
A STORY ABOUT THEIR SON

Dennis and Joanne Brawdy
A STORY ABOUT HER BROTHER

Beth Bloomquist
A STORY ABOUT HOW TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Jeff Huffman
QUESTIONS?

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