

**Key Talking Points on Feds' Proposed Revisions to
US DOE FAQ on Disability Employment Rules Defining “Competitive Integrated
Employment” and “Participant Choice.”**

- The proposed guidance is a positive step toward supporting the success of *all* people and *all* abilities.
- Not everyone finds success and meaning in traditional competitive employment settings, where the social and behavioral demands are too great for many people with developmental disabilities.
- Many people prefer and succeed best in work settings that support flexible and shorter hours, frequent breaks, and lower productivity standards.
- Many people require personal support and less pressure to compete with typical workers and at a pace that balances their needs and talents.
- For many people, *receiving* a paycheck is a source of pride and enhances self-esteem, while the *amount* of their pay unimportant.
- A broad definition of “competitive employment” permits many with more significant disabilities to remain employed and to earn a regular pay check.
- Not-for-profit human service agencies like AHRC Nassau have the experience and expertise to develop and create the right jobs to match each person’s interests and unique talents
- Structured vocational programs operated by not-for-profits ensure the inclusion of those who are more disabled, supporting their unique needs to help them succeed.
- Supplemental funding for Vocational Programs that create jobs and provide meaningful employment is far more cost-effective than paying for these same individuals to attend Day Habilitation programs where they are not employed in any capacity.
- Federal and state governments must recognize that employment is not one size fits all. People compete on different levels, and many who succeed in vocational programs simply cannot succeed in so-called “competitive employment” settings.
- As a person closely connected to someone successfully employed in a vocational programs, I urge you to move forward with the revisions to 34 CFR 361 and to support other initiatives that promote choice and employment for people of *all* abilities in our communities.