



January 30, 2025

To: Sen Gelser-Blouin, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services
From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Community Brokerages
Re: Support for SB 810, placing in statute important values and structures of Oregon's Employment First policy

Chair Gelser-Blouin and members of the committee,

Oregon Community Brokerages is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. Collectively, we provide case management services to nearly 8,000 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people with what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that shape lives.

Everyone can work and advance in competitive community employment in the right job with the right support. We know that our lives are enriched through meaningful work that ties us closer to our communities, providing opportunities for each of us to earn wages and pay taxes. In Oregon, we are an Employment First state: it is the policy of the state that competitive integrated employment is the first and highest priority option for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We support SB 810 and the actions it takes to enshrine Employment First values, practices, and structures into Oregon statute.

Sections 1 and 4-16 update statutory language to modernize and match Employment First standards and respect for people with IDD in the workforce. We welcome this alignment to our shared values.

Section 3 establishes in statute a statewide Employment First Advisory committee to advise ODHS on strategies for increasing opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities to obtain and advance in competitive integrated employment. This section directs the membership of this committee, frequency of meetings, and describes the scope of the work to be overseen. It further compels data collection and reporting by various state departments to support the work of the committee, and directs the committee to monitor services to ensure that we are not funding sheltered or sub-minimum work environments. These are all important structures and functions to ensure

that Oregon continues on its trajectory to increase competitive, integrated employment for people with IDD.

Finally, Section 17 establishes a State as Model Employer program at ODHS, revising and building hiring processes that are fully inclusive of people with IDD. We support Oregon's state departments pioneering and advancing policies and practices that welcome, encourage, and support workers with IDD.

We encourage full support for SB 810. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of SB 810, and the continuing progress toward full employment for people with IDD.