



Competitive Integrated Employment: Are We There Yet?

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Goals of NCI



Establish a **nationally recognized set of performance and outcome indicators** for aging & disability (including IDD) service systems



Use **valid and reliable** data collection methods & statistical techniques to capture information directly for people who use services



Report individual state results and **national benchmarks** of indicators of system-level performance



NCI-IDD

In-Person Survey (IPS)

Sampling: States design their samples to be representative of their service population

Inclusion criteria: Person receiving at least one service in addition to case management

Consent: Those who are surveyed are informed that their services will not be impacted directly by their responses

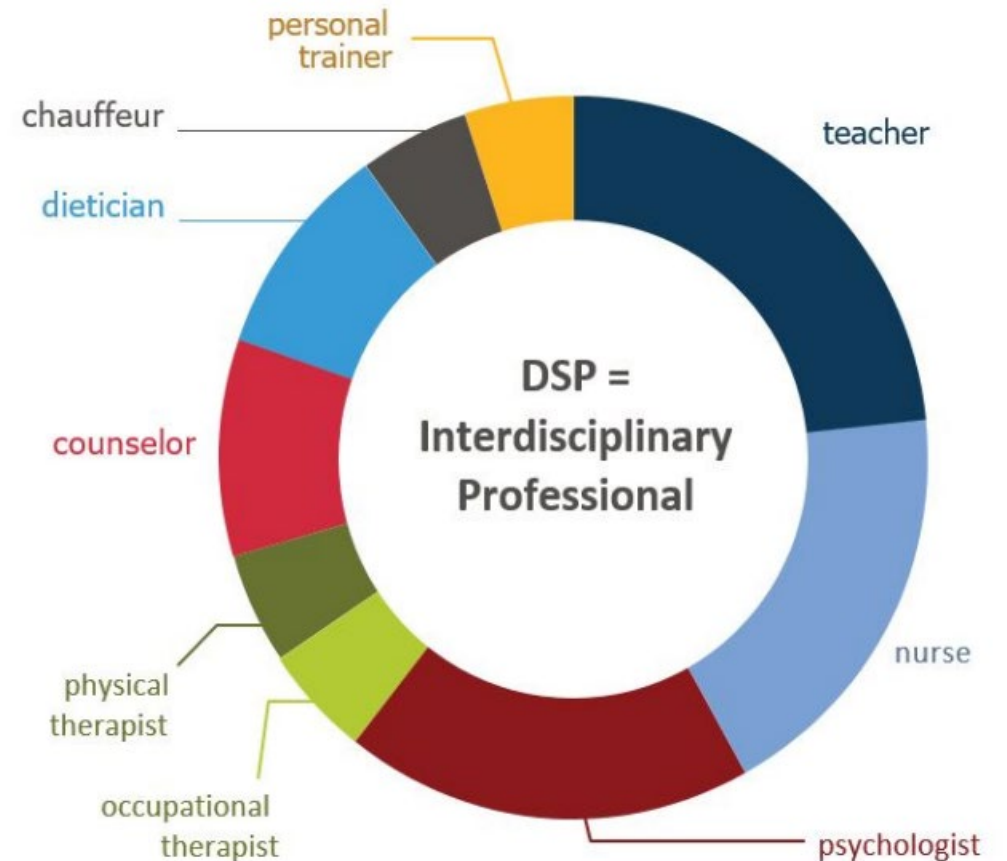
Surveyor training: All surveyors complete standardized training. IPS uses peer-surveyors as well.

Survey features: Flexible administration modes/methods.

Background Information: Gathered from existing sources like case management records, State DD data

The Connection between Workforce Crisis and Employment of People with IDD

- Employment specialists, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, and DSPs typically fill the role of “job coach” for any given individual.
- When we talk about the long-standing difficulty of connecting people with IDD to meaningful jobs, we also need to be thinking about the longstanding workforce shortages

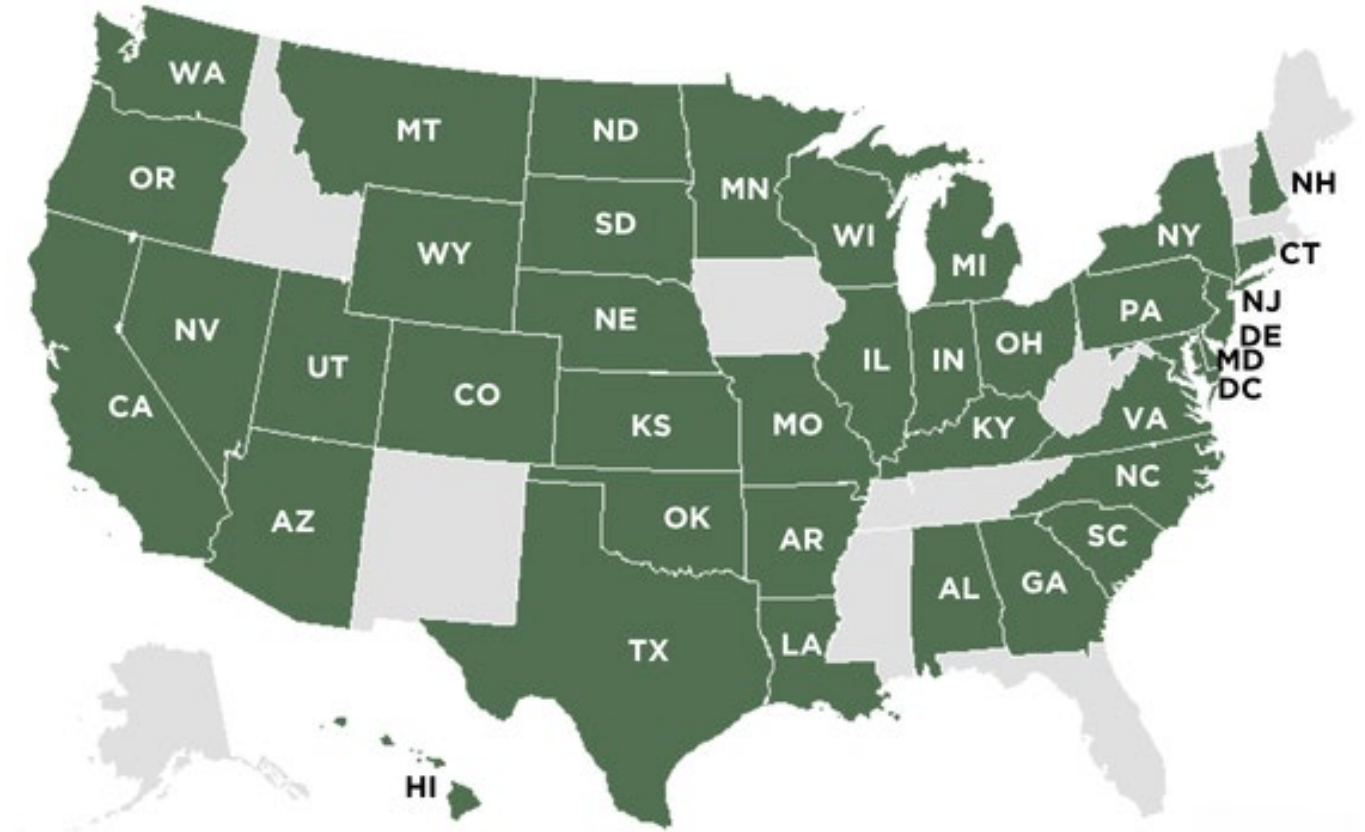


2024-2025 Sample – NCI-IDD IPS

30,888 total respondents

39 states

- **60% male**
- **Average age 40.6**
- **Race/ethnicity**
 - *65% White; 17% Black; 14% Hispanic or Latino*
- **Diagnosis**
 - *82% ID; 30% ASD*



NCI-IDD respondents receive services across many settings, and have various diagnoses



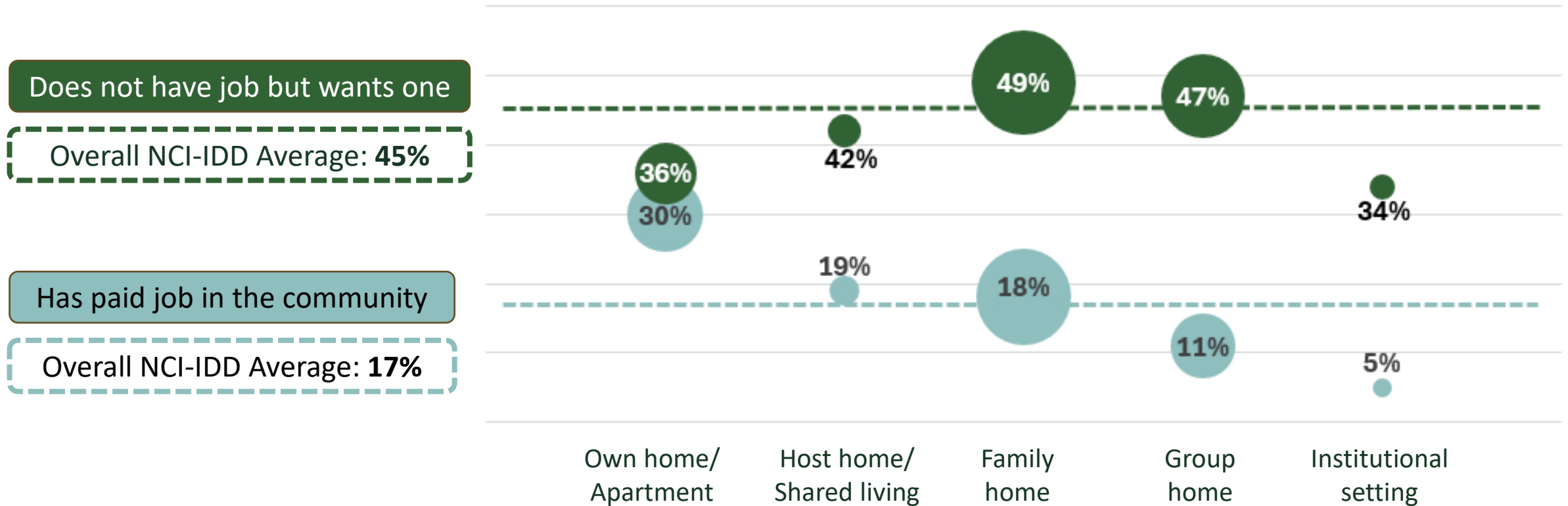
Note: Diagnoses are not mutually exclusive

Residential setting

- 49% Parent/Relatives home
- 29% Group home
- 16% Own home/apartment
- 4% Host home/Shared living
- 3% ICF/IID

49% have a guardian

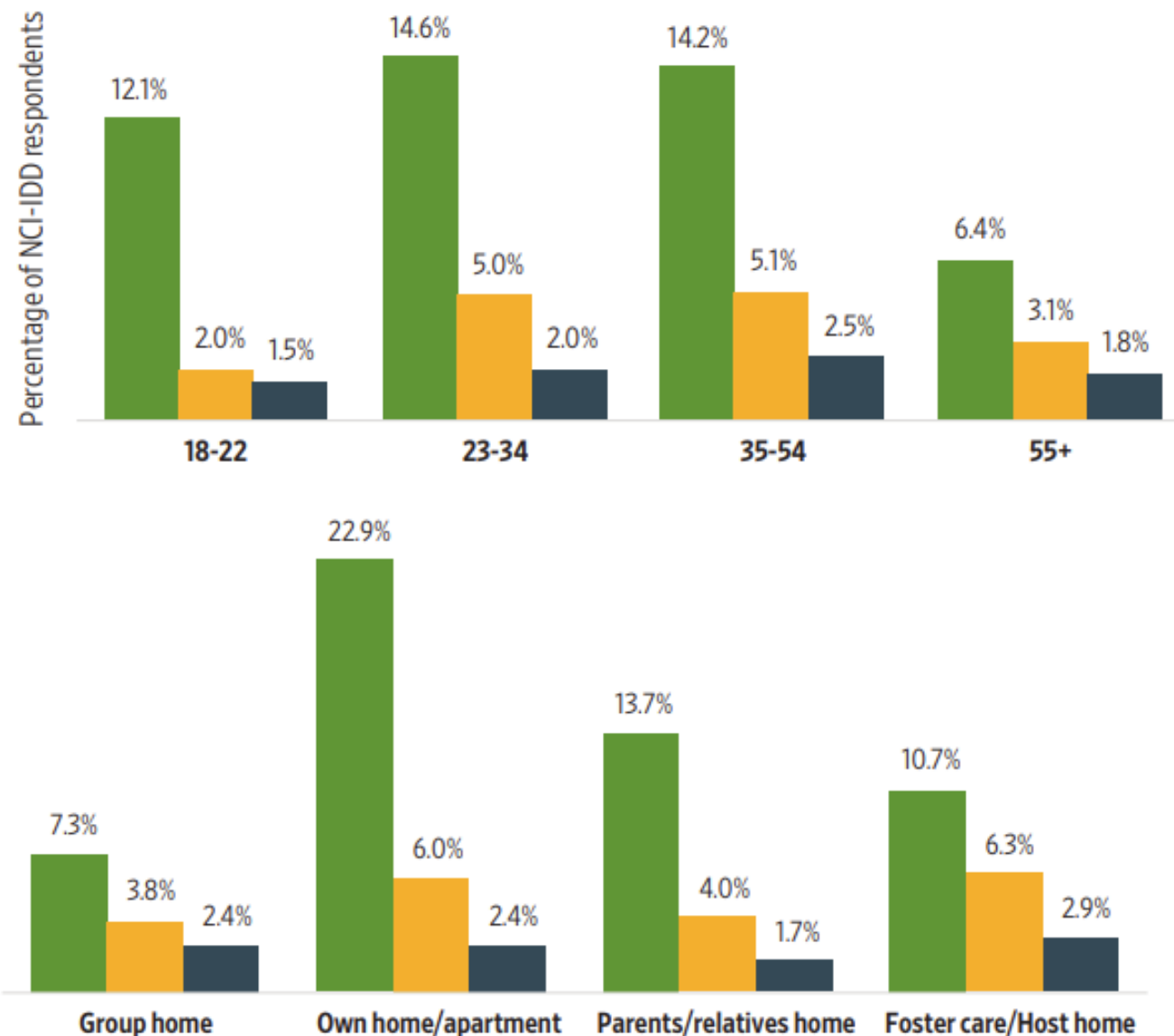
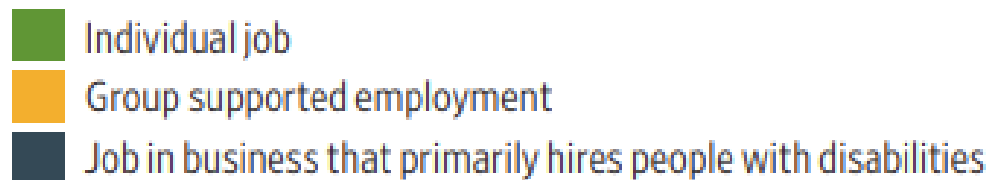
Fewer than 1 in 5 people with IDD have a paid job in the community in 2024-25. Nearly half of those who don't have a job want one.



Having a paid job in the community is significantly associated with certain factors

The highest rates of employment overall are among the 23-54 age groups, and in individual jobs across all age groups.

Looking at residence type and employment shows more stark differences by setting. Those in their own homes/apartments work in individual jobs at more than triple the rates of those in group homes but have similar rates of working in other settings.



Is a paid job the same thing as CIE?

In short, no.

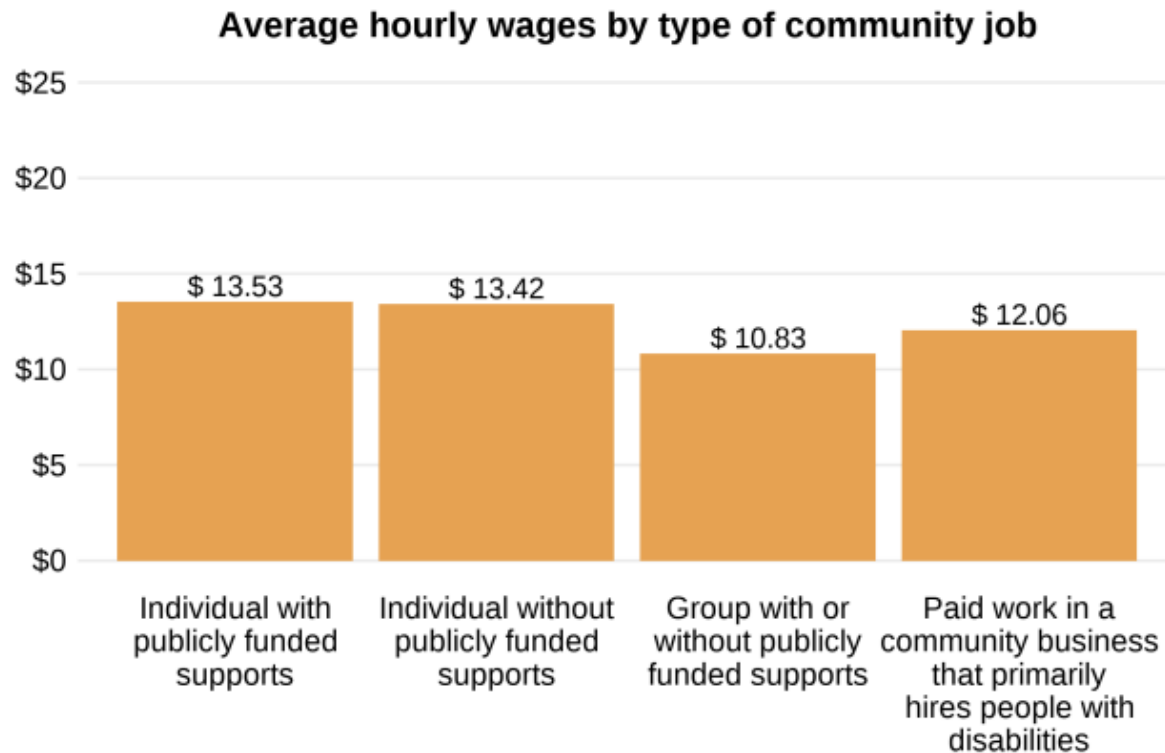
Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)
is defined as:

Work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is:

- 1) Compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid to employees without disabilities
- 2) Receiving the same level of benefits and opportunities for advancement as employees without disabilities
- 3) At a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities



NCI tracks employment across different settings, including wages and hours



2024-25 NCI-IDD data

Group employment (often called enclave or work crews) does not meet criteria for CIE.

There is still debate about whether the business that primarily hire people with disabilities (ex: Bitty and Beau's) represent CIE.

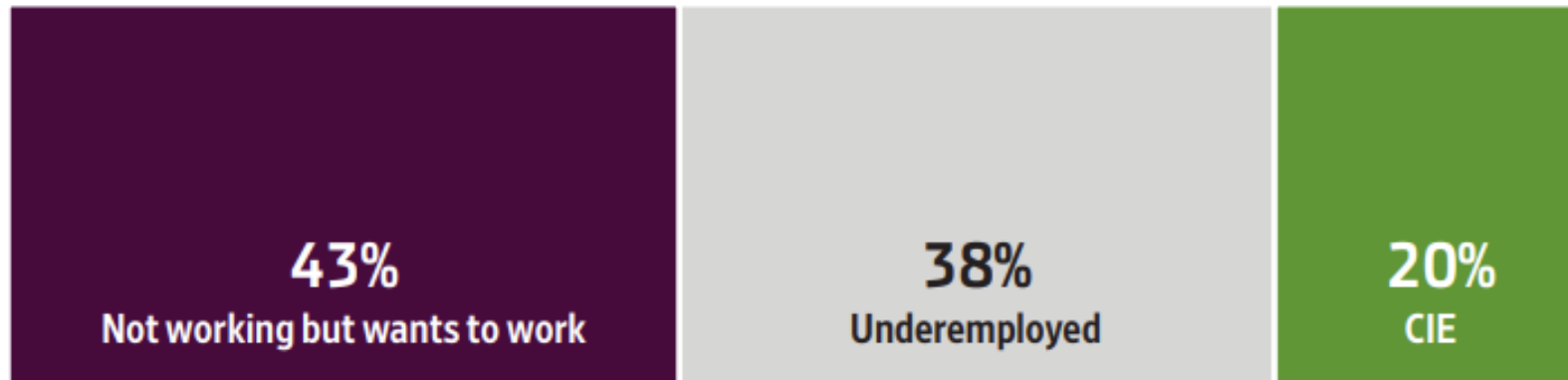
Unemployment, underemployment and CIE

NCI data can be used to classify individuals in the following groups:

1. **Unemployed:** people who do not have a paid job and want one
2. **Underemployed:** people who have a paid job **AND** the job either:
 - a. Is in a sheltered/segregated setting
OR
 - b. Pays below minimum wage
3. **CIE:** people who have a paid job in the community that is integrated **AND** pays at or above minimum wage



2023-24 NCI-IDD data showed there are 4 times more people with IDD who are unemployed and underemployed than there are people in CIE



Source: [DuBois, Windsor, Hiersteiner, Shepard \(2026\). The Status and Outcomes of People with IDD in Integrated Employment](#)

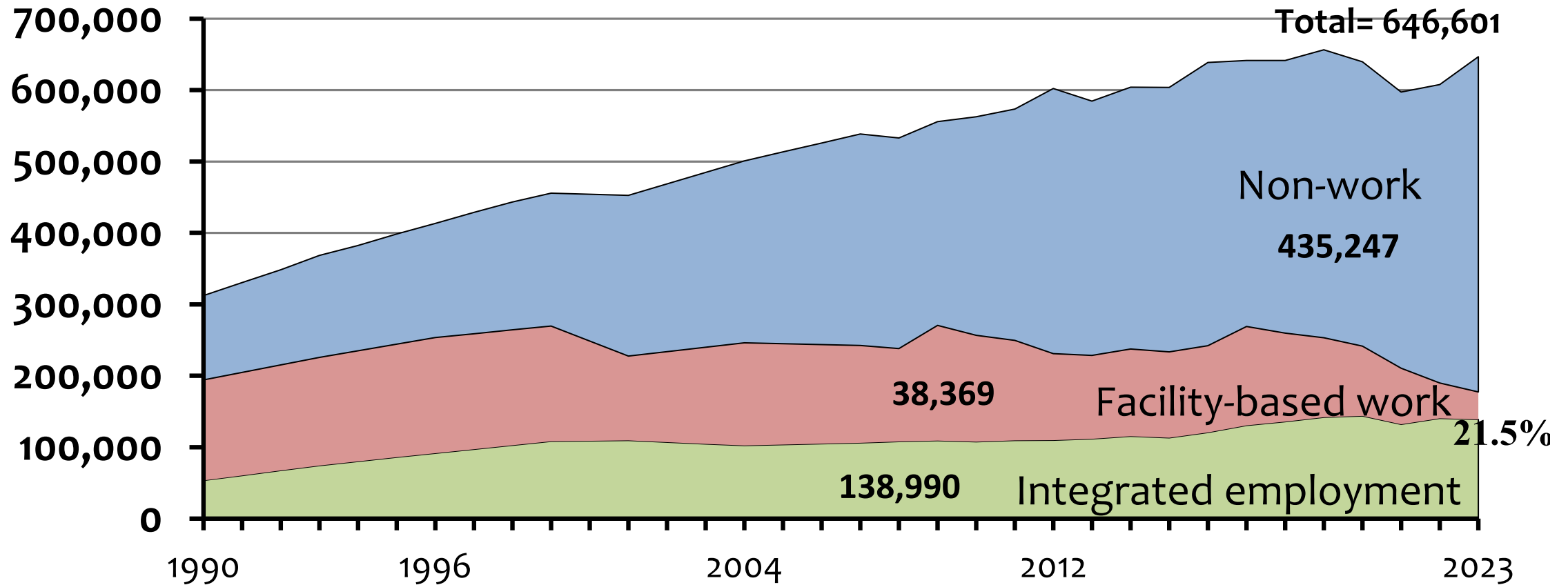
The role of service plans in employment outcomes

Employment category	Has goal for employment in service plan
Overall	26%
Not working but wants to work	35%
Underemployed	55%
CIE	73%

2023-24 NCI-IDD data

In a [2021-2022 paper](#), we showed that even after adjusting for the factors that contribute to better employment outcomes, **having an employment goal in one's service plan was associated with 4.5 times higher odds of CIE relative to unemployment.**

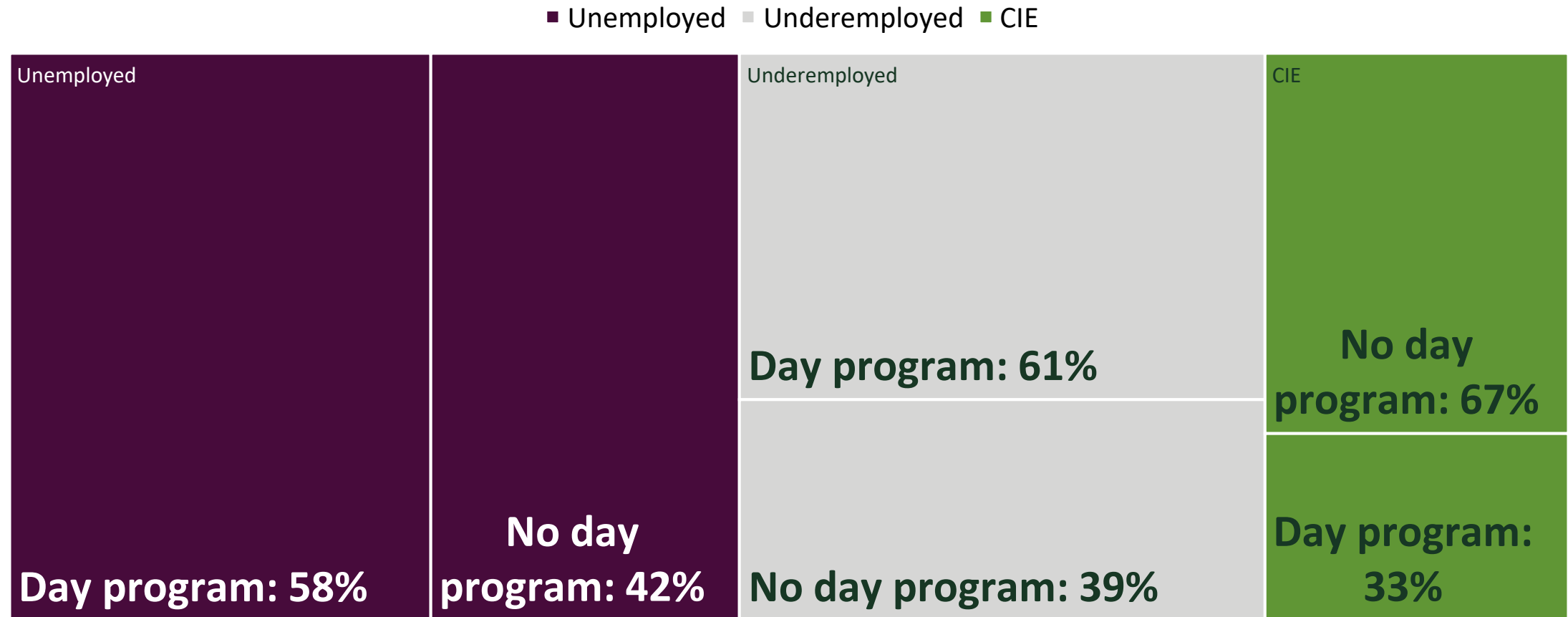
State IDD Agencies Struggle to invest in integrated employment services



Source: [ICI National Survey of State IDD Agencies](#), 2023



Those with CIE in 2023-24 are significantly less likely to attend a day program



Conclusions and Implications

Are We There Yet? No, we have a lot of work to do

- At the individual level, few people with IDD have CIE. In fact, just 5% of ALL NCI respondents have competitive integrated employment
- At the state level, many states are trying to improve employment outcomes through various efforts:
 - Employment 1st
 - SELN
 - ThinkCollege programs
- At a federal level, there is interest in expanding access to subminimum wage employment ([H.R. 8736](#))

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