



*DJ Joe started his own DJ company and is self-employed with support through DDS' Innovative Employment Outcomes Pilot.*

### **Employment First**

Employment First is a national movement to make competitive employment the preferred outcome for supported individuals. CT DDS has been an employment first agency since 2011.

### **Why is employment important?**

Employment provides opportunities for people to be part of their local community. At DDS, we know that every individual has the ability to achieve their goals and find employment that is right for them.

### **How does working benefit me?**

- I am able to connect with and work in my community
- Working helps create friendships and natural supports
- Having a job is good for my social health and self esteem
- Working is a fun way to try new things and learn about others

### **About Us**

Employment and Day Services is a division of DDS working to increase employment for individuals in CT with intellectual disability. Our division works with providers, community partners, and CT businesses to prepare individuals for comparative employment and match them with their dream job.

### **We're Here to Support You**

DDS is here to support individuals and their families every step of the way. We understand that the jump to employment brings much change in an individual's daily life. DDS staff is here to support families and individuals through the process to ensure the best outcome for everyone in our support community. We know changes to income may bring questions about benefit eligibility. DDS can also assist with connecting families to benefits counselors and other resources.

### **Employment Resources**

[www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/employment-first](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/employment-first)

[www.portal.ct.gov/DDS/EmploymentDayServices/Employment-First](http://www.portal.ct.gov/DDS/EmploymentDayServices/Employment-First)

<https://portal.ct.gov/AgingandDisability>

<https://apse.org/chapter/connecticut/>

### **Contact DDS Employment & Day Services**

460 Capital Avenue Hartford, CT 06106  
[portal.ct.gov/DDS/EmploymentDayServices](http://portal.ct.gov/DDS/EmploymentDayServices)  
(860) 418-6091  
[dds.employment-dayservices@ct.gov](mailto:dds.employment-dayservices@ct.gov)

# DDS

## Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS)



## Employment & Day Services

An Employment  
First Agency

## DDS Role in Employment First

- Case management
- Employment training
- Job placement
- Individualized and group Employment supports

## Follow the Road of DDS Services!

DDS works with a network of providers to connect with community partners like American Job Centers to help achieve employment goals.



Individuals may receive Employment Transition Services to learn about work skills, job development and self-advocacy. DDS leads by example, employing Self Advocate Coordinators to connect individual advocates across the state.



Once individuals have identified a field of interest, individuals may benefit from group or individual supported employment. Individuals in these models learn skills according to their focus and work toward independence, competitive employment.



Individuals can enroll in the Small Business Enterprise that allows individuals to identify different career paths and provides an interpersonal analysis of supports needed to be competitively employed.



Advocates participating in a wheelchair race fundraising event.

Sometimes the road to employment is not a standard path. Project Search is a business-led program in which interns learn relevant marketable skills for 9 months. This on-site training follows a rotation so individuals may gain multiple skills within the business site. Partnerships include Mohegan Sun, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and a host of other businesses across CT.



## Self-Advocacy

DDS employs 10 Self-Advocate Coordinators who teach other individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) how to advocate for themselves. Since 2004, the self-advocacy program has created meaningful work for individuals and empowered thousands of CT residents. Self-Advocates support existing self-advocacy groups and help start new groups by providing self-advocacy and self-determination training to consumers, staff and families; and by creating self-advocacy materials that are written for and by people with cognitive disabilities. Visit our website to learn how you can become an advocate!



Self-Advocate Coordinators lead advocacy activities across their region which include encouraging employment!