

# *Findings from the Employment First Waiver Participant Survey*

Noelle K. Kurth & Jean P. Hall  
Employment First Project, Data Collection and Analysis  
University of Kansas Institute on Health and Disability Policy Studies

**Employment First Steering Committee Meeting**  
**April 9, 2025**



**KU** THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**KANSAS**

# Survey Overview & Methods

- Online survey with telephone and proxy options
- Fielded January-March 2025 via email, text and telephone follow-up
- Random sample from KDADS of TBI, PD and ID/D Waiver participants who were not employed as of December 2024 and between ages 18 and 64 (n=150)
  - Proportional, based on geographic location and waiver size
  - Additional samples pulled due to emails and phones not in service and individuals not interested in participating
- 10-15 minutes, \$20
- n = 43 (29% response rate, “cold” no advanced outreach/promotion)
  - Email = 12; Text = 19; Telephone = 12



## Demographics (n=43)

- Waiver Type: 24 PD (56%), 11 IDD (25%), 8 BI (19%)
- Region: 13 KC metro (30%), 11 Wichita metro (26%), 9 Southeast (21%), 7 Northeast (16%), 2 Southwest (4%), 1 Northwest (2%)
- Population Density: 79% Urban/Suburban; 21% Rural/Frontier
- Gender: 53% female; 44% male
- Age: Mean = 46.6 years; Range = 18 years (IDD) to 64 (PD)
- Race/Ethnicity: 58% White, 28% Black, 7% Hispanic, 5% NAAI, 2% Asian
- Education Level = 49% high school/GED diploma; 26% some post-secondary; 12% less than high school; 12% college degree
- Mean Years on Waiver: Mean = 7.0 (PD, 6.6; IDD, 10.9; BI, 2.5)
- Living Situation: 49% live with family, 44% live alone, 7% live with roommates
- Survey completion: 58% self, 42% proxy response
- 3 respondents on IDD waiver reported being employed, one with CIE



# Employment

	Overall % (n=40)	by Wavier %		
		BI (n=8)	IDD (n=8)	PD (n=24)
Wants a paying job	27.5	37.5	25.0	25.0
Does not know if wants a paying job	35.0	50.0	50.0	25.0
Does volunteer/unpaid work	12.5	37.5	25.0	-
Case manager or Care Coordinator has talked to respondent about services/supports available to help find and keep a job	<b>20.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	-	<b>25.0</b>
Had a paying job within the past 2 years	<b>5.0</b>	12.5	12.5	-
Last had a paying job 2-5 years ago	<b>17.5</b>	15.0	12.5	16.7
Last had a paying job more than 5 years ago	<b>57.5</b>	50.0	12.5	75.0
Never had a paying job	<b>17.5</b>	12.5	<b>62.5</b>	4.2
Never applied for or interviewed for a paying job	<b>22.5</b>	12.5	<b>87.5</b>	4.2



## Are any of the following stopping you from having a paying job?

	Overall % (n=40)	by Wavier %		
		BI (n=8)	IDD (n=8)	PD (n=24)
My disability or health prevents me from working	60.5	50.0	50.0	75.0
I would lose my KanCare (Medicaid) if I earned money	<b>18.6</b>	12.5	25.0	20.8
I would lose my Social Security benefits	<b>18.6</b>	12.5	37.5	16.7
My doctor doesn't think I should work	16.3	12.5	-	25.0
I'm afraid of losing benefits (housing, food stamps, etc.)	14.0	25.0	-	16.7
I need more training or education	14.0	-	37.5	12.5
I need more supports so that I could work	11.6	12.5	37.5	4.2
My family doesn't think I should work	11.6	25.0	12.5	8.3
I choose not to work or don't want to work	9.3	12.5	12.5	8.3
I don't have transportation to get to work	9.3	12.5	12.5	8.3
Employers won't hire me	9.3	25.0	12.5	4.2
There are no jobs where I live	7.0	12.5	-	8.3
I'm afraid I would lose my staff that support me	7.0	-	12.5	8.3

Additional response options provided but not endorsed:

- My case manager/Care Coordinator has told me not to work
- I am a caregiver for a family member and can't work
- I've had a bad experience in the community



## Comments about not working

- “There are no jobs here that I can or want to do and I don't know where to go to find one.”
- “I need help with finding a place to work and how-to interview, apply and support at the job.”
- “I need motivation and employers willing to hire the disabled.”
- “I can't work without affordable childcare for my kids.”
- “I'm fully disabled and don't want to lose that.”
- “My health is keeping me from doing things. I've had to have so many surgeries...”



## What would you need to be ready to work at a paying job?

	Overall % (n=40)	by Wavier %		
		BI (n=8)	IDD (n=8)	PD (n=24)
None. I don't need anything to be ready to work	27.5	12.5	25.0	12.5
I don't know what I need	22.5	25.0	25.0	20.8
Help looking for jobs	22.5	25.0	25.0	20.8
On-the-job training	20.0	-	50.0	16.7
Writing or building a resume	17.5	12.5	25.0	16.7
More education	17.5	12.5	25.0	25.0
Learning more about what type of job/career I want	15.0	-	37.5	37.5
Help or practice doing job interviews	15.0	-	50.0	12.5
Understanding and knowing how to get the supports available to get a job	15.0	12.5	37.5	8.3
Independent Living Skills Training	7.5	-	25.0	4.2
Services for teens/young adults on how to go from school to work	5.0	-	25.0	-



## What supports or services would you need (do you use) at a paying job?

	Overall % (n=43)	by Wavier %		
		BI (n=8)	IDD (n=11)	PD (n=24)
Transportation to get to and from work	<b>48.8</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>
Flexible hours and/or part-time only	<b>46.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Accommodations on the job	39.5	37.5	54.5	33.3
Job Coaching	37.2	37.5	90.9	12.5
DME to allow you to work	20.9	-	27.3	25.0
Supports keep a job (on time, talking to boss, etc.)	20.9	12.5	54.5	12.5
None. I would not/do not need supports at a job	18.6	12.5	-	29.2
Computer training	16.3	-	9.0	25.0
PAS at home to be able to work work	14.0	-	27.3	12.5
Assistive Technology	11.6	-	18.2	12.5
I don't know what supports I need	9.3	12.5	-	12.5
Interpreters	2.3	-	9.0	-



## Comments about supports needed to work

- “I need a laptop so I can take online classes so that I can get a good job.”
- “I don’t think anyone would ever hire me.”
- “I have difficulty transitioning between tasks and staying on track and bosses don’t like that.”
- “I don’t have the skills to work because of my disability. I need a new brain.”



# Knowledge about Programs, by Waiver

Do you...	Overall % (n=43)	Wavier %		
		BI (n=8)	IDD (n=11)	PD (n=24)
Know who to ask about getting the supports and services you need to work?	65.1	50.0	36.4	83.3
About the Working Healthy/WORK program in Kansas?	<b>20.9</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>20.8</b>
About the STEPS program in Kansas?	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9.1</b>	-
About ABLÉ savings accounts?	<b>9.3</b>	-	<b>27.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Need Work Incentives Counseling?	18.6	37.5	9.1	16.7
Need Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services?	14.0	37.5	9.1	8.3



# Knowledge about Programs, by Region

Do you...	Overall % (43)	Region %				
		KC metro (n=13)	Wichita metro (n=11)	SE (n=9)	NE (n=7)	West (n=3)
Know who to ask about getting the supports and services you need to work?	65.1	30.8	36.4	44.4	42.9	100.0
About the Working Healthy/WORK program in Kansas?	20.9	<b>7.7</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
About the STEPS program in Kansas?	2.3	7.7	-	-	-	-
About ABLE savings accounts?	9.3	15.4	-	11.1	-	33.3
Need Work Incentive Counseling?	18.6	15.4	9.1	22.2	28.6	33.3
Need Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services?	14.0	15.4	9.1	22.2	-	33.3



## Comparisons to Kansas NCI Data

National Core Indicators <https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org>

- NCI IDD
  - 33 states
  - Kansas 2023 IDD n = 393 (4.8% response rate)
- NCI AD (Aging and Disabilities)
  - 18 states
  - FE, PD and BI waiver participants
  - Kansas 2023 AD n = 1,208 (9.0% response rate)
- Administered face-to-face
- EF Waiver Participant Survey included selected items from NCI employment and support domains for comparison



## Comparisons to Kansas NCI Data

Item	2023 NCI (n=1,601)	EF Survey (n=43)
Lives independently	60.9%	51.2%
Does not have CIE, but wants CIE	20.5%	27.5%
Informed of employment options & supports	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>
Has transportation to participate in community activities as much as one would like	79.0%	75.0%
Receives paid ADL/IADL support	77.2%	65.1%
Self-directs	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>62.8%</b>
Any overnight hospital stays in past 12 months	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>



# Next Steps for Data Collection & Analysis

## SURVEY

- Analyses by length of time on waiver?
- Analyses by time since last paid job?
- Analyses by age group?
- Analyses by other demographics?

## NCI

- Break out NCI analyses by IDD and AD?
- Analyses of NCI employment and supports data over time?  
(e.g., 2018 compared to 2023)
- Analyses of pilot site data



## Questions

Noelle K. Kurth

KU-IHDPS

[pixie@ku.edu](mailto:pixie@ku.edu)

(785) 864-7085

**OPEN NOW!**

2025 National Survey on Health & Disability (NSHD)

[kuhealthsurvey.org](https://kuhealthsurvey.org)

