

February 2017



## **DDA Transitioning Youth**

### **Summary:**

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Transitioning Youth Initiative is for young adults with significant developmental disabilities who exit school at the age of 21 years and require post-secondary day and employment services to maintain skills and assist their integration into the work world. In May/June 2017, approximately 800 students with developmental disabilities will exit Maryland schools in need of day/employment supports.

Research shows that seamless transition results in higher rates of post-school employment for young adults with significant support needs, who as a group tend to otherwise achieve very low employment outcomes.<sup>1</sup> It also allows parents to continue working.

### **Background:**

Funding for Transitioning Youth has been a priority of the DD Coalition and the Developmental Disabilities Administration for nearly 30 years. It has proven successful by preventing longer waiting lists for DDA community services.

Transitioning Youth Initiative funding students with significant disabilities do not regress after completing their special education schooling. Prior to 1989, when the program began, these young adults typically stayed at home with nothing to do, losing skills invested through the educational system. Often a parent had to give up employment to stay at home with their young adult. Neither option makes sense at a time when Maryland aims for stronger work incentives and greater employment for persons with disabilities.

Students with disabilities are significantly unemployed and underemployed upon leaving school compared to their peers who do not have disabilities. The U.S. Department of Labor<sup>2</sup> reports these comparisons:

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<sup>1</sup> Certo, H.J., Mautz, D., Pumpian, I., Sax, C., Smalley, K., Wade, H., Noyes, D., Luecking, R., Wechsler, J., & Batterman, N. A Review and discussion of model for seamless transition to adulthood. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*.

**Ages 16 years and over**

**Labor Force Participation**

- People with disabilities: 19.5%
- People without disabilities: 68.2%

**Unemployment Rate**

- People with disabilities: 11.0%
- People without disabilities: 4.9%

**Recommendation:**

Support the Governor's Proposed FY 2018 DDA Budget Transitioning Youth allocation (\$12,950,166) to fully fund Transitioning Youth to provide day/employment services for all students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who will exit school.

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**MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION**

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<sup>2</sup> January 2017 Disability Employment Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

