



RUTGERS HEALTH

The Boggs Center
on Disability and Human Development

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Work Without Limits: Building an Inclusive Workforce

Jasmin Trenfield, MSW, Rutgers School of Social Work, NJLEND Social Work Fellow
Caroline Coffield, PhD.; Bethany Chasee, DSW, LSW, CESP; Patricia A. Findley, DrPH, MSW, LCSW

Introduction

On December 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor published a notice proposing to phase out the section 14(c) certificates. Expressing that subminimum wages are no longer necessary for providing job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The decision to phase out subminimum wages reflects a growing recognition of the value that workers with disabilities bring to competitive jobs.¹

Background

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 established important labor standards, including the federal minimum wage. However, it also introduced Section 14(c), which allows employers to pay workers with disabilities subminimum wage based on how their disabilities affect job performance. While this provision was initially presented as a means to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, it has hindered the full integration of workers with disabilities into the workforce.² Over the years, disability rights advocates have challenged this system and called for change. One promising approach to promoting inclusive job opportunities for individuals with disabilities is competitive integrated employment.³



Use the QR code to access the complete zine.

Objective

The purpose of the zine is to provide information about the origins of Section 14(c) and the allowance of subminimum wages, detailing the research on the negative impacts associated with Section 14(c) work and the movement toward competitive integrated employment (CIE). The zine explains CIE, the benefits it offers for individuals with disabilities, as well as resources available to assist in transitioning to CIE. Additionally, the zine includes the voices of individuals with lived experiences regarding CIE. The zine aims to empower readers with knowledge, foster a greater understanding of employment rights and opportunities, and ultimately promote a more inclusive workforce that values the contributions of all individuals.

Reference

1. U.S. Department of Labor. (2023). Annual report to authorizing and appropriations committees on the U.S. department of labor's wage and hour division section 14(c) program. [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/14c/WHD_FY24_Annual_14\(c\)_Report_to_Congress.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/14c/WHD_FY24_Annual_14(c)_Report_to_Congress.pdf)
2. New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. (2014). Notice to Entities Holding a Certificate under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. https://nj.gov/labor/forms_pdfs/dvrs/letterto14_c_entities.pdf
3. Avellone, L. (2024). The time is now: Increasing competitive integrated employment opportunities for all americans with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 60(3), 273–279. <https://doi.org/10.3233/jvr-240012>