

## Develop Buy-In Plan – Elevator Speech

### Sample Elevator Speech (to be modified/shortened/personalized)



Closing a sheltered workshop is a process by which an agency transforms their current day and work services/programs into integrated, community-based services by providing people with options based on their individual preferences and abilities.

*(This paragraph is optional) Like all Americans, those with disabilities want to have the opportunity to participate in activities that create a full and satisfying life: having a meaningful job that leads to a career, engaging in leisure activities, joining clubs and other organizations, attending cultural events, doing volunteer work, taking courses and seeking out people with similar interests. Yet, these opportunities are scarce because of enduring prejudices, inaccessibility and inadequate transportation. Pervasive misconceptions and negative stereotypes about people with disabilities remains one of the biggest obstacles to their full participation in American society. Many huge barriers still exist that force Americans with disabilities to remain segregated from the mainstream of society. Unemployment rates for working-age adults with disabilities continue to hover at around 70% for a variety of reasons, including the lack of employment opportunities, insufficient vocational and educational training, some high cost of assistive technologies, prejudices based on historical and erroneous stereotypes and inadequate transportation options. If people with disabilities are to be truly integrated into the community, they must have the opportunity to work, to recreate and to volunteer in their communities. Public education and outreach as well as familiarity bred by exposure to people with disabilities in the workplace and elsewhere, are key to facilitating meaningful inclusion in community life.*

In accordance with legislation (Olmstead Decision, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)) it is imperative that individuals with disabilities are offered full access to employment that matches their skills and interests, and full community participation as they choose- outside of a sheltered workshop.

The overall goal of closing a sheltered workshop is for individuals with disabilities to become fully integrated into the communities where they live and work. As an agency you should engage the people you serve, and their families in the process and philosophy of full inclusion. You should develop a caring, increasingly competent, well-trained and dedicated work force to serve people with disabilities in community settings. You should shift your agency's resources to a "program without walls." The transition will require changes in your agency's use of its physical premises, increased staffing and staff

Training and the incorporation of new technology. You should secure job opportunities in community settings, internship and volunteer opportunities, for each person you serve who has the desire and the potential to work. A wide array of recreational, cultural, educational and community service choice opportunities should be created so persons with disabilities will not be segregated into limited “disability clusters.” Programs that raise public awareness about the abilities of persons with disabilities should be developed. All of this will help defeat negative stereotypes in order to promote familiarity and acceptance that will result in more employment and community inclusion.

As the individuals you serve begin to participate in this process, each person’s Interdisciplinary Team should meet and information should be made available to the guardians and families of those individuals involved. Guardian and family input is vital and valued to help realize individual consumer program goals and promote successful community integration for all people served

All stakeholders must be involved in the planning and implementing process. No one can stand outside the process. As a Board member, staff, family member, consumer, or member of the community, their ideas, leadership and commitment are vital to achieving the goal of closing a sheltered workshop.