**Key Principles of a National Employment First Strategic Framework**

**1. Disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes the right of individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, to achieve the goals of disability policy—equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living & economic self-sufficiency.**

**2. Self-determination and informed consumer choice are essential elements in all programs and service options related to employment.**

**3. Employment, or work for pay, is a valued activity both for individuals and society. Employment provides both tangible and intangible benefits. Employment helps people achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency. Employment also gives people purpose, dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment and pride.**

**4. All individuals, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, should enjoy every opportunity to be employed in the workforce, pursue careers, advance professionally, and engage actively in the economic marketplace.**

**5. Individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, should be empowered to attain integrated employment with the highest possible wage with benefits, consistent with their interests, strengths, priorities, abilities, and capabilities.**

**6. It is presumed that all individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, can achieve integrated employment with appropriate services and supports.**

**7. Employment-related training services and supports should be provided to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities to become employed with a priority for integrated employment. Other employment activities and training (including prevocational services), while existing, shall be directed toward integrated employment for all individuals with disabilities.**

**8. Based on information from the employment marketplace, services and supports related to the provision of employment and training should target areas of present and future workforce growth. Input from employers and knowledge of the marketplace is critical to effectively direct employment-related training and services.**

**9. Service providers are expected to use best, promising, emerging practices with respect to the provision of employment-related services and supports.**

**10. Technical assistance should be available to service providers for the purpose of expanding and improving their capacity to provide supported employment, customized employment, and other services and supports that will enhance opportunities for integrated employment consistent with best, promising and emerging practices.**

**11. Supports should be provided for as long as needed, with a focus on the use of natural supports.**

**12. The prioritization of integrated employment must reflect an establishment of infrastructure and resource allocations that coordinates multiple systems through an alignment of common objectives, targeted outcomes, performance measures and funding mechanisms while simultaneously ensuring a seamless delivery of supports and services at an individual level.**

**13. Exploitation of workers with disabilities is abhorrent and workers should enjoy meaningful and effective protections against exploitation.**