



THE FOCUS

May 2019 Vol. 8 No. 11

Hot Topic

Spotlight on Public Policy

All people deserve to work, be fairly compensated for that work and contribute to their communities. The Oregon legislative session began in January 2019. Legislators have been considering two important wage related issues for people with disabilities and direct support professionals. The first is SB 494; this would require that people with disabilities be paid minimum wage and above. The second is supporting a wage increase for Direct Support Professionals (DSP). We extend gratitude and solidarity to Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (OSAC), providers and advocates who testified and met with legislators to advocate for these issues.

The Oregon DD Coalition has advocacy days at the Oregon State Capitol every three weeks during legislative session. During these advocacy days, the DD Coalition offers training in legislative advocacy and support to prepare to meet with legislators. Oregon APSE will be participating in the DD Coalition Advocacy Day on **June 18**. Please join us by making an appointment with your legislator soon. You can find your legislator on the [Oregon Legislature](#) Homepage. If Please see our tips near the end of this article to get involved.

Oregon APSE 2019 Legislative Priorities

Pay People with Disabilities Minimum Wage and Above (End Subminimum Wage)

Minimum wage exists as the floor for what an hour of an American's time is worth, yet people with disabilities are still sometimes paid less than minimum wage. To fix this, Senator Sara Gelsler, Representative Piluso and Representative Reardon introduced SB 494 to end subminimum wage in Oregon.

Legislators supported this by passing [Continued on page 2](#)

About Oregon APSE

Our mission is to promote equitable, integrated employment of people with disabilities that recognizes their contributions as community members.

We represent the Oregon chapter of the national Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst. **APSE** is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

As of May 2019, we have 136 members!

[Join Oregon APSE](#)

We look forward to joining with like-minded Oregonians!

To become a member, click on the "Join" link or email:



oregonapse@gmail.com

Check out our website

www.oregonapse.org

Hot Topic continued...

SB 494 out of the Senate. The House plans to take a vote to pass it in the next few days. After that, the bill will head to the Governor's desk for her signature. If Governor Brown signs the bill, then it takes effect 91 days after the legislative session ends.

While this bill contains some text that may be confusing to parse and it involves ratios for QRFs (qualified rehabilitation facilities). The unifying message and driving force behind this bill is the motivation to end subminimum wages by 2023. It is supported by Oregon Resource Association (ORA) and OSAC. We hope this bill passes by the June 18 Advocacy Day so you can thank legislators.

Supporting a Living Wage for Direct Support Professionals Oregon APSE believes to have a sustainable support system for people with IDD, we need to provide a living wage to DSPs. These workers work for organizations and support people with IDD to live in their own homes, residential settings (like group homes) and in Supported Living. Higher wages will decrease DSP turnover, ensure people with IDD have support to meet their goals while staying healthy and safe.

Oregon APSE supports a budget that funds a living wage to stabilize the DSP workforce so people with IDD can live and work in their communities. This budget request will cost \$46.1 million dollars and is contained in the Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services budget in HB 5026. You can get more information from the Oregon DD Coalition Fact sheet (<https://orddcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019-GO-Concept-Stablize-System-Sign-v3-2.pdf>)

How can you help advocate for issues that impact people with IDD and their families? Please join us on Advocacy Day on **Tuesday, June 18**; email oregonapse@gmail.com to sign up! Before advocacy day, visit oregonlegislature.gov to get contact information for your State Senator and Representative and schedule visits with them and/or their staff.

On advocacy day, you may choose to wear something yellow to show unity in advocacy. If you are unable to join us in Salem, find out who your local and national delegates are and write them a message. A good start might be: "My name is [your name], and I am a constituent. I'm supporting [bill name] so that all people with disabilities can live and work in their community with the best services and supports." Feel free to add your personal reasons. Please check out our infographic available at oregonapse.org. You can sign up for the DD Coalition's weekly GO! Bulletin for more information [<https://orddcoalition.org/go-project/>] *Written by:* Nicholas Von Pless and Ryley Newport ~

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A Cool Life

~The **Cool Life** column showcases stories that demonstrate individuals with disabilities successfully employed by community businesses. Have a story? Send an email to: oregonapse@gmail.com

Jasmine Chang worked at K-Mart when they announced it was shutting down. After six months of job development and many job interviews that didn't pan out, Jasmine decided to try Project SEARCH. She received job training through the Project SEARCH site at Embassy Hotel and Suites in Tigard, and even before she finished that program, she was selected over many other job candidates for a position at Washington County's Developmental Disabilities Department.

At 37 years old, Jasmine has blossomed into an outgoing and confident person. Missy Bryant, Jasmine's Personal Agent (PA), has known her for 14 years, watching her grow into this person. Missy knew her for years prior to becoming her PA.

Jasmine was asked about her new job and what she did at Washington County. She stated, "At the DHS office where I work, I am a permanent part-time employee at 20 hours a week. I currently am responsible for scanning timesheets for Personal Support Workers, using a program called Laser Fiche. I will soon be learning how to process the Electronic Medical Records of our clients. ... I do clerical work such as filing and computer-related duties."

When asked what she liked best about her job, she said, "At this job, I enjoy

scanning documents and working on the computer. I like the routine and the structure that comes with the job." When asked what she does not like about her job, Jasmine indicated, "the only thing I don't like is going to different buildings for specific training. I find the information difficult to process and keeping up with the discussion is also difficult."

In addition, Jasmine was asked, "You were in Project [Continued on page 10](#)



Jasmine Chang

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Lane v. Brown Semi-Annual Report Debrief

Here are a few observations from the most recent Lane v. Brown Semi-Annual Report of the first half of SFY2019 (2/28/19) compared to SFY 2016 (see [Table 1](#)).

- ⇒ The total number of target population individuals *(a) receiving ODDS Individual Supported Employment Services in competitive, integrated employment (CIE) has gone from 232 to 681 individuals on a selected day in September. Of the two populations, the most dramatic shift is for sheltered workers whose numbers went from 36 to 374.
- ⇒ Correlated with the increase in the Oregon State minimum wage, the average wage has steadily increased from \$9.43 to \$11.63 for transition students and \$9.81 to \$11.55 for sheltered workers.
- ⇒ The average number of hours that people work has increased but is still well below the targeted standard of 20 hours per week. The average hours/week have gone from 12.3 to 13.9 for transition students and from 7.1 to 12.1 for sheltered workers. The number of individuals meeting the 20+ hours/week standard hovers around 20% of the total individuals working in CIE.
[Continued on page 10](#)

Guess... Who is our Mystery Member?

Our Mystery Member has worked in nonprofits in Oregon since 2004, starting in the industry through volunteering at a walk-in center that supported people who experience a mental health disability. His volunteer work became regular work, doing in-home care and job coaching. As the executive director of a large provider organization that is transforming a sheltered workshop, s/he also serves on multiple committees working with employment and transformation as well as taking on the challenge of being in a leadership role that includes being the Co-Chair of a regional Employment First Team.



Can you guess who?

(Go to page 8 to reveal the Mystery Member's identity.)

Check out Oregon APSE's website

www.oregonapse.org



Board Talk



Debra McLean

Debra is a member At Large on the Oregon APSE chapter Board of Directors and works for Wise out of the Portland office. *She is one of the founding Oregon APSE Board members since 2013.*

No Floor, Stay Poor! No More!

In 1938, the US Department of Labor under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established a national minimum wage standard. This meant that, although wages could vary from state to state, they could not go below a nationally established "floor." This was hailed as an important step for American workers. The same law, the Fair Standards and Labor Act, created an exception to this wage standard which focused on workers with disabilities, issuing "subminimum" wage certificates to certain nonprofit organizations, allowing them to pay workers with disabilities less than minimum wage. This created huge sheltered workshop systems. For example, someone with poor dexterity could be deemed a low productivity worker when tasks requires high physical dexterity, and thus paid a low wage overall; yet may be a typical productivity worker on a different task. However, the wages set by such a comparative productivity standard resulted in wages for people with disabilities being paid as little as pennies per hour.

This appalling labor practice continues today. It dooms people to extreme poverty, limits access to minimum wage or better jobs in community settings, and contributes to the flawed perception of people with disabilities as "less than capable workers." It also permits practices which would be [Continued on page 8](#)

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Get Involved!

To volunteer for sponsored training events, Board sub-committees or to be considered for the Board of Directors, contact oregonapse@gmail.com

Please keep your information [up to date.](#)

Newsletter Editors

Tara Asai, Paula Johnson,
Debra McLean, Dan Peccia,
Nicholas Von Pless and CJ
Webb

Upcoming Events

[2019 National APSE conference](#)

St. Louis, Missouri
June 18-20, 2019

**GATEWAY TO
INCLUSIVE
EMPLOYMENT
APSE 2019**

[Community Summit 2019 -- Enriching Lives!](#)

Wenatchee Convention Center,
Wenatchee, WA
June 11-13, 2019

SOLD OUT

Employment First Job Fair at Rockcreek PCC

7705 NW Springville Rd,
Portland
11:00am to 1:30pm
Tuesday, May 28, 2019

For more information,
contact
TSAUCEO@TVWINC.ORG

Around the State

Mid-Columbia Region: Let's take a look

With Xochil Springer, UCP Employment Solutions
Reported by Nicholas Von Pless

The Mid-Columbia Region includes Hood River, Wasco, Gilham, Sherman and Wheeler counties. In speaking with Xochil Springer, an Employment Specialist with United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Employment Solutions, she shared some highlights in the region.

According to Xochil, the Mid-Columbia Employment First (EF) team has grown steadily, with increasing diversity in stakeholders who regularly attend. According to one source, "pretty much everyone is there." This includes representatives from the brokerage and comprehensive services, educational leaders, Vocational Rehabilitation staff, and employment providers.

Xochil also reports a major milestone is the annual celebration event. They celebrate both the employers and their proud employees. Anonymously, it was reported that Laura Noppenberger (Executive Director of Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage [EOSSB]) applied for an Innovation Grant to receive financial support to launch this celebration initiative. As the EF team looks forward to hosting the 3rd annual event; Xochil said, "our community looks forward to it, and it is really neat to see what kind of jobs people are holding."

The Best Western generously donates the space, and the mood is electrified throughout the evening. "They have value in the community and it's unique for the employers to see how proud the employees are," beams Xochil. Students and representatives from local school districts are also invited, and "a lot of students

Around the State continued...

want to access [employment services] and it's cool for them to see what a successful job looks like," said a bystander. What is best is that all the awards highlight customized employment positions.

Xochil Springer's "forever goal" is that she wants people to come learn more about the communities in which her dedicated cohort works. For instance Xochil commented, "a lot of people don't realize there's only one brokerage for the entire eastern half of the state (EOSSB). There are some barriers in place, but on the flip side [we know] how deep and rich the communities are, and how residents want the best for each member of the community." In addition, it was reported that Drew Parker (CESP*, Gorge Jobs) has recently developed a great job for a person at a grocery store (Rosauers in Hood River) for 32 hours, and "the employer readily helped that person to balance work with other responsibilities." According to someone on the EF team, "we're all working hard to promote choice and employment for everyone."

Parker also spoke of the success, saying, "It was important to [the job seeker] that we find employment that balanced his... responsibilities and [other] commitments...we targeted this [Rosauers] due to their location, levels of business, and great reputation for treating employees and customers with respect and kindness. [After four months], our persistence paid off." If you find yourself in the Gorge, consider supporting community partners who have hired proud employees and value a diverse workforce. In Hood River, check out Pietro's Pizza, Pfriem Brewing, and Doug's Sports along with Rosauers. In The Dalles, stop by Lilo's BBQ, Safeway, and Oregon Veterans Home. We know there are more but these are a good start.

*Certified Employment Support Professional

~

Upcoming Events

Pacific Northwest Employment Forum

**Bremerton, Washington
September 23-25, 2019**

[Registration will open soon](#)

New website coming!

APSE CESP™ Exam

[Find out about the exam
process for certification](#)

Don't forget about re-
certification and those
requirements.

[Recertification requirements](#)

Northwest Conference by ORA

October 8-10, 2019

**Riverhouse on the Deschutes
Bend, OR**



Ideas for FOCUS articles

Please send them to:
oregonapse@gmail.com
with the Subject: FOCUS

Board Talk continued

completely unacceptable to workers **without** disabilities. The limitation to income based on the “productivity and available tasks” in sheltered settings is compounded by lack of choice and opportunity. People with disabilities and their families are often uninformed about how supported employment could work on their behalf, providing regular wages in regular business settings with strategic supports and training. Currently, it is legal to give people with disabilities choices of tasks which do not fit their genuine abilities and then pay them according to productivity.

This law is being challenged in the Oregon legislature by [SB494](#) , introduced by Senator Gelser and Representative Piluso. If passed, this bill will require employers who pay subminimum wages to gradually increase wages until state minimum wage is reached no later than July 2023, commencing in July 2020. This bill is being discussed now but not yet been voted on by the legislature.

There is a national movement to raise the national minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15.00 per hour over the next six years. The “Raise the Wage Act” (H.R.582) for all American workers is being introduced into the US Congress and includes a clause that would phase out subminimum wage for people with disabilities by 2025. Additional legislation “Transform to Competitive Employment Act”(S.260) calls for an end to the issue of new subminimum [Continued on page 10](#)

[Follow the discussion on the Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)

Meet Mystery APSE Member



Josh Bearman

Executive Director
TVW Inc.



Outside of work, Josh enjoys spending time with family and going fishing.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Some basic information about Pre-Employment Transition Services in Oregon

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are foundational supportive services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation, upon request, to transition-age students across Oregon. Pre-ETS focus on five main service areas: self-advocacy, work readiness, work-based learning, job exploration counseling and counseling on post-secondary opportunities. These services are available for individual students, classrooms or to use as support when growing established programs. Pre-ETS are not intended to supplant services already established in schools; the purpose of these services is to support the growth of services in place or provide supplemental services that enhance the individual's experience.

Pre-ETS are an opportunity for students to start having insight and conversations about what life after school will look like, through structured activities. Activities included in Pre-ETS are: work skill and personality assessments, job shadows, informational interviews, interest inventories, touring of local post-secondary options, soft-skill lessons, disability disclosure workshops, self-advocacy lessons, one-on-one job exploration counseling, work readiness classes and much more.

[Follow the discussion on the Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)

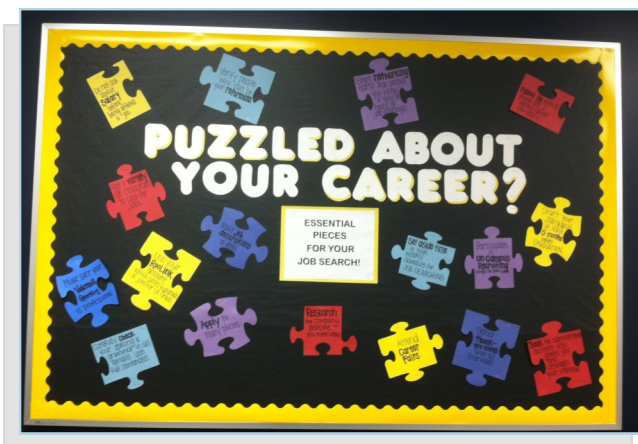
Employment Specialist Corner

Pre-ETS can support connecting students to services they can access on their road to competitive, integrated employment. These services can look very different dependent on the student's or classrooms needs. Pre-ETS are person-centered. The process begins by sitting down for a consult with the participant requesting services and discussing what they would like to gain from these services.

If you would like to know more about Pre-ETS or would like to request Pre-ETS in your area, please connect with Pre-ETS Coordinators at Pre.ETS@dhsosha.state.or.us.

Article written by Nicole Perdue and CJ Webb, and approved by DHS for Vocational Rehabilitation.

~



Board Talk wrap-up

wage certificates as well as phasing out existing certificates by 2025. Both proposed legislations promote supported employment, recognize the successful employment of people with disabilities making competitive wages and are in keeping with the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, prohibiting discrimination in the workplace.

OR APSE is urging all its members to contact their representatives and urge them to support a phase out of the Subminimum wage certificate!

~

Lane v. Brown continued...

⇒ VR Data available since SFY2017 (no data for SFY2016) suggests that many more transition students are receiving VR services than sheltered workers. While the number of transition students receiving an IPE has increased from 312 to 326, the number of sheltered workers has decreased from 210 to 178. VR closures for transition age students increased from 139 to 182, while sheltered workers have remained relatively steady from 86 to 90. The weighted number of individuals obtaining an IPE vs. closures has improved and this number is consistently higher for transition age (.56) vs. sheltered workers (.51).

*(a) Transition age (14-24 yrs.) and sheltered workers as of 3/2012.

Cool Life continued...

SEARCH; how did that experience help you get ready for your job at Washington County?" Jasmine remarked, "Project SEARCH prepared me by teaching me employability skills such as learning to get along with people, interviewing skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, [and more]. Putting me in the Sales Office for the first rotation really helped. That was where I learned how to file paperwork and work on several computer programs."

Lastly, Jasmine was asked about what she would say to someone who is thinking about getting a job but is unsure if work is right for them. She expressed, "I would encourage anybody to work. It gives me a sense of purpose when I'm working, or volunteering. In fact, volunteering gives you experience which would help you find a job. It would give you a chance to see if you like working."

Written by Dan Peccia, Oregon APSE Board Member-At-Large

~

Lane v. Brown wrap-up

Two questions for reflection:

- 1) What has been the benefit of the 20 hours /week standard even though only 20% of the population is obtaining it?
- 2) Is there an explanation of why VR data suggests favoring the transition age population over the sheltered worker?

~