

2020-2021

Evaluation Plan for MANDY'S FARM

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Prepared By:

Sonia Bettez PhD
Evaluation Lab Team Lead

Hannah Miller
Evaluation Lab Fellow, MPP Student

Alyssa Franklin
Evaluation Lab Fellow, Sociology PhD Student

NM EVALUATION LAB
University of New Mexico



1. Introduction

Mandy's Farm (MF), founded in 2000, is a nonprofit organization that "assists individuals with developmental disabilities in achieving their goals for living, learning, and working in the community" (Mandy's Farm, n.d.). MF has two farm locations in Albuquerque and supports more than 200 individuals, mostly adults, and their families. MF's contract with the Developmental Disabilities Support Division through the Department of Health allows the organization to provide a variety of services at no cost to participants with a qualifying waiver. Participants with a waiver have access to residential services, day services, an employment program, an agriculture program, and a horseback riding program. In addition, individuals still waiting for state support, attend "VAMOS," an employment readiness program. MF aims to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities by supplementing state Medicaid funding with donations, grants, and volunteer support.

2. Purpose of Evaluation

The evaluation aims to provide a picture of the holistic impact of Mandy's Farm across its array of programming, as well as identify potential survey measures for continued data collection by the organization. The evaluation will provide an analytical link from day-to-day services to the mission. MF recently developed a rubric for the organization (see Appendix A), and they would like to use it for evaluation purposes. The rubric identifies seven areas that impact quality of life for adults with disabilities: Daily Living, Community Access, Economic Opportunity, Friends and Relationships, Safety and Autonomy, Freedom from Discrimination, and Civic Engagement.

For the current evaluation, the MF staff and the UNM evaluation team collectively chose to focus on measuring success over time in three areas: Daily Living, Economic Opportunity, and Friends and Relationships.

For this, the team will:

1. Consolidate 5 individual program logic models created by staff into one to clarify organization-wide activities, resources and short and long-term outcomes. Mandy's Farm staff and the UNM team are working together on the consolidation of the Logic models. For an example of an existing Logic Model, see appendix B.
2. Analyze semiannual assessments conducted by trained staff of 8 participants who have been in the program for at least 5 years. The UNM team will also conduct individual interviews with these 8 individuals.
3. Analyze the usefulness of a survey the VAMOS program uses and teach staff how to report survey findings

3. Literature Review

Mandy's Farm (MF) serves individuals with a wide range of disabilities. Most of their clients have an intellectual disability and many clients have co-occurring disabilities. Intellectual disability (ID), as defined by the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), means having "significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18" (Schllock et al., 2010, p. 5). This definition is based on several assumptions: that limitations are apparent in the context of typical age-appropriate community environments, that valid assessments of disability must consider culture and other personal factors, that individuals with ID have both strengths and limitations, that labeling an individual's limitations should be for the purpose of support or other benefit, and that personalized, continued support will lead to improved functioning (Schllock et al., 2010).

The AAIDD conceptualizes ID both operationally and constitutively (Schllock et al., 2010), to different ends. The operational definition, as quoted above, allows for measurement, while a multidimensional framework constitutes the theoretical basis for the construction of ID. Both definitions center on limitations in functioning based on what is average, and the multidimensional framework emphasizes the role of the environment. This ecological perspective recognizes that a person's limitations depend on the construction of the environment in which that person resides. For example, if stairs are the only access to a building, then persons who use a wheelchair will be limited in their mobility, but if ramps are widely available, then they have greater mobility function. As such, improvement in functioning is dependent on supports. Supports are defined as "resources and strategies that aim to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of a person and that enhance individual functioning" (Schllock et al., 2010, p. 105). Earlier understandings of disability focused on personal deficit rather than the fit between capacities and context.

In addition to context, Schalock et al (2010) define other dimensions which interact to determine human functioning in the multidimensional model: intellectual abilities, adaptive behavior, health, participation, and context. Intellectual functioning refers to the capacity to interpret and understand surroundings. Adaptive behavior includes the skills needed to engage in daily life. Health is included to recognize the impact of physical, mental, and social well-being on functioning. Participation refers to an individual's level of involvement in activities, events, and organizations and their social roles and their interactions with others. Context comprises both personal and environmental factors at the immediate, neighborhood and societal levels. A neighborhood-level environmental factor could include positive attitudes toward disability at the workplace, while an example of a personal factor, like gender, is influential but separate from the disability. These dimensions of disability interact with each other and individualized supports to determine human functioning (Schalock et al., 2010).

The focus on providing support is part of the movement toward an inclusive society that facilitates integration (Schllock et al. 2010). At some points in history, people with ID were secluded in institutions (Edgerton 1993). Edgerton (1993) conducted interviews in the 1960's with 48 recently deinstitutionalized ex-patients with mild intellectual disability. They expressed disdain for their time in an institution, and he documented their struggles to rejoin society with very little support.

The study participants wanted to participate fully and normatively in society. Yet, these participants were left to navigate society on their own, and many struggled economically and socially. With little formalized support following official release from the hospital, Edgerton (1993) found that every participant relied, to varying degrees, on beneficiaries for support in tasks of daily living such as handling money in order to successfully “pass” as “normal.” Some participants relied more heavily on beneficiaries while others maintained relative independence, and the level of support needed varied by individual. Supports should be individualized, recognizing that persons with ID have co-occurring strengths and weaknesses that can vary by context (Schllock et al. 2010).

Support should be individualized with the aim to improve well-being. Schllock, Bonham, and Verdugo (2008) developed a Quality of Life (QOL) framework with which to base an individual's supports. In their model, quality of life is measured by level of independence, social participation, and rights. As the field of intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) treatment and care currently stands, QOL frameworks are considered only after models of direct care. Lack of complete integration of QOL's results in a disconnect in championing individuals needs and letting this feedback be the guiding force of IDD care and services. Schllock, Bonham, and Verdugo (2008) find evidence of QOL frameworks not only working but playing an integral role in the future development of both IDD individuals and the organizations that serve these individuals.

Blick et al. (2016) compared several day activities for improvement in well-being measures. They found that participants engaged in community-integrated employment reported increased choice and control when compared to participants engaged primarily with sheltered workshops or adult daycare programs. The authors of that particular study did not find other quality of life measures to be significant. On the other hand, Dutta et al. (2008) found empirical evidence supporting vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and their link to employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Specifically, they found 62 percent of a sample of 5000 individuals were “gainfully employed” after receiving VR services, of which those with sensory/communicative disabilities were the most highly employed at 75 percent while those with physical and mental disabilities were employed at 56 and 55 percent respectively. Delving further into these results, the study found those with mental impairments spent the least amount of time in VR services (often less than 2 years) while those with physical disabilities spent the most time. This diminished time in programs as well as varying degrees of impairment could explain why this group was the most unemployed following VR services.

By comparing efficacy of supports across different demographic groups, Dutta et al. (2008) found further evidence for individualizing support. As the AAIDD notes, personal factors play a role in the level of human functioning in an ecological framework of ID (Schllock et al. 2008). Wehman et al. (2014) also compared economic supports across different demographic groups. Results showed “supported employment” (SE) to increase employment rates across all six demographically defined subgroups of the study, with the effect of supported employment being “especially strong for youth who were Social Security beneficiaries, special education students, and individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism who were also high school graduates” (296).

These findings suggest supported employment as an effective service for building upon the vocational rehabilitation outcomes of young adults and aiding them as they enter the workforce.

Wehman et al.’s (2014) findings support the investment of SE at a national level and support aligning national- and state-level initiatives with “legal mandates aimed at increasing the integration and economic independence of transition-age youth” (306). Additionally, this study recognizes and reaffirms the need for specialist training in order for such investment to be viable in the long term. Finally, the major barrier identified by Wehman et al (2014) centered on the lack of access and or entitlement to services for adults past the age of 21. For supported employment to be truly effective in advancing disabled individuals from Vocational (VR) services, policy must look at redefining cut- off ages that hold little developmental reflection for this population.

4. Context

New Mexicans with disabilities are especially vulnerable to poverty. According to American Community Survey 2018 data, 34% of New Mexicans with a disability live in poverty (see figure 1). Mandy’s Farm, operating in the most populated region of the state, provides economic opportunity for individuals with disability through a job training programming and by working with community employers toward inclusive hiring practices. In addition, Mandy’s Farm provides meaningful daytime programming, via Medicaid, for individuals with disabilities, allowing their family members to work without worry.

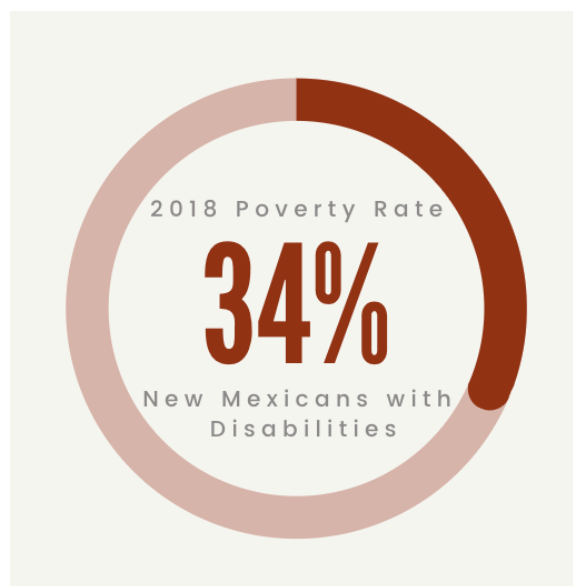


Figure 1. Poverty Rate for New Mexicans with a Disability. Source: *disabilitystatistics.org*, American Community Survey, 2018.

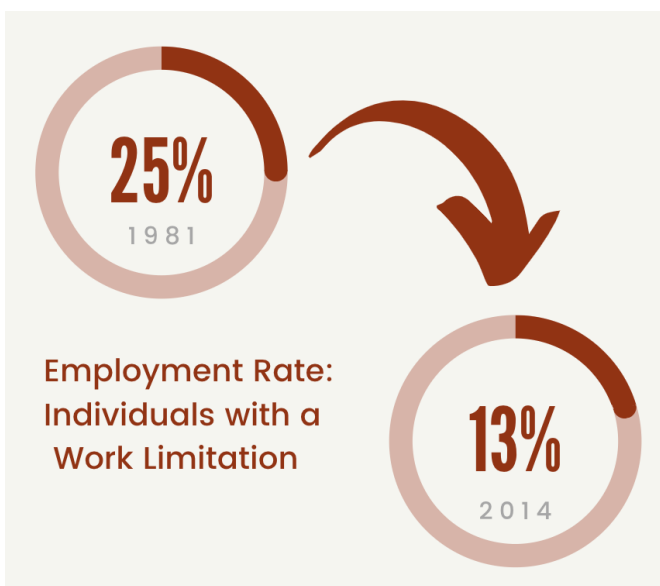


Figure 2. Disability and Employment Rates. Source: *disabilitystatistics.org*, Current Population Survey, 2018.

National Data from the Current Population Survey shows that since 1981, the proportion of individuals with a work limitation who are employed has dropped (see figure 2). In 1981, 25% of individuals with a work limitation were employed, while in 2014, only 13% of these individuals were employed. This data suggests that Mandy’s Farm’s mission to improve economic opportunity for individuals with a disability is needed.

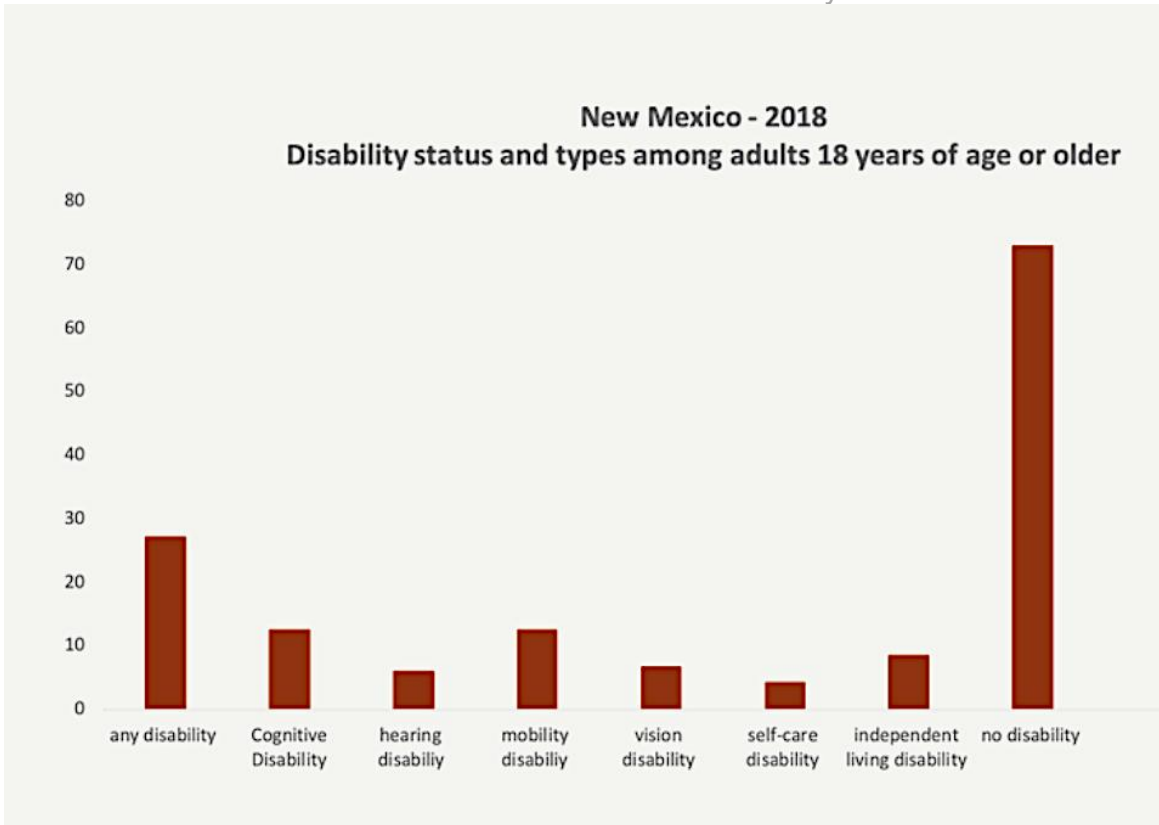


Figure 3. Rates of Several Disabilities in New Mexico. Source: National CDC Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health, 2018.

The 2018 data from the CDC collected by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System surveys shows the proportion of New Mexico adults with various types of disability (see Figure 3). 12.4% have a cognitive disability while 8.4% have a disability that restricts independent living and 4.2% have a self-care disability. These areas highlight the need for Mandy's Farm's service, particularly their residential and day programs that focus on independent living and building relationships. The 12.4% of New Mexicans who suffer a mobility disability also highlight the importance of Mandy's Farm's VAMOS program which helps increase equal employment opportunities in the community.

The US Census collected information through the American Community Survey that provides a 5-Year estimate of the numbers of New Mexicans living with cognitive and independent living disabilities across the state (see figure 4). These numbers demonstrate the importance of Mandy's Farm services in the populated area of Albuquerque as well as their wider outreach programs that influence employment and care protocols across the state.

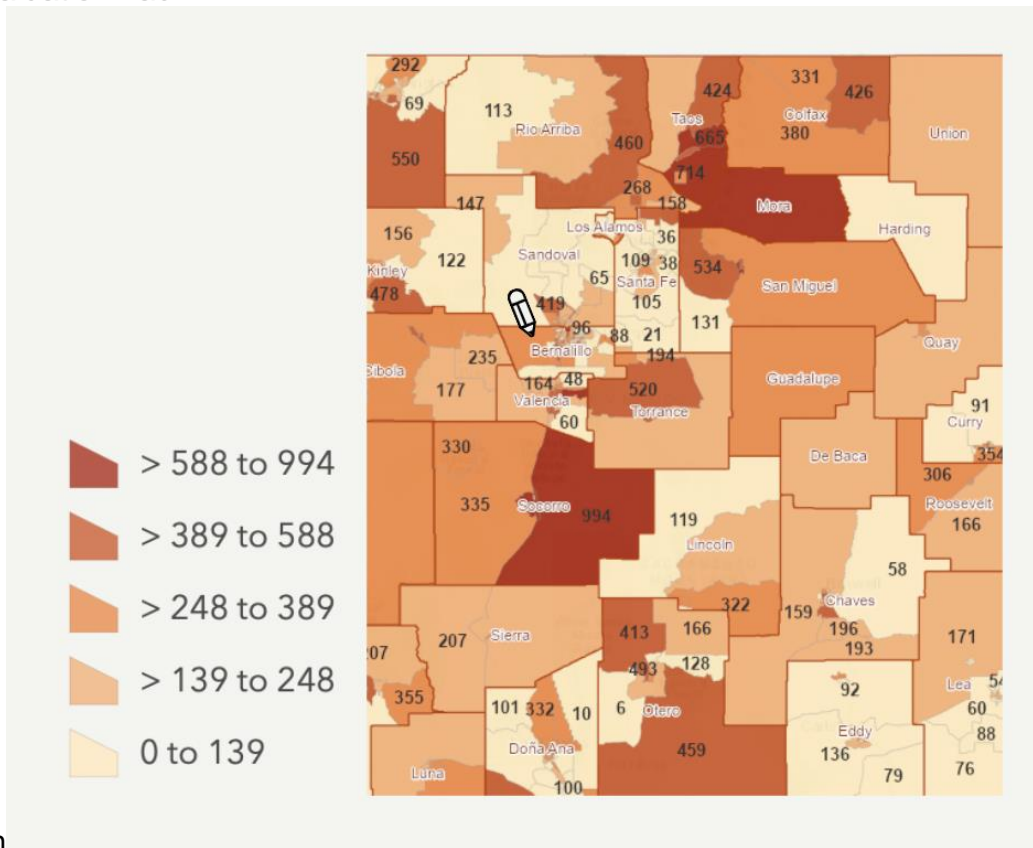


Figure 4. Number of individuals with Cognitive and Independent Living Disabilities Across New Mexico Counties. Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2015.

5. Evaluation Team and Other Stakeholders

Evaluation Team:

Sonia Bettez: PhD, Team Lead

Hannah Mille: MPP Student, Evaluation Lab Fellow

Alyssa Franklin: Sociology PhD Student, Evaluation Lab Fellow

Melissa McCue: Executive Director, Mandy’s Farm

Alex Luce: Associate Director, Mandy’s Farm

Jessie Calero: Development Director, Mandy’s Farm

Bernadette Garcia: Program Director, Mandy’s Farm

6. Evaluation Activities and Timeline

Planned the evaluation goals collectively: Throughout the semester, the UNM team and MF team met bimonthly to develop evaluation goals and to solidify evaluation plans. In September, the MF team provided a tour of one of their sites to provide the UNM team with an understanding of the day-to-day work that they do. Following, the UNM and MF teams spent several bimonthly meetings discussing what success looks like for Mandy's Farm as an organization and for clients, as well as how to measure it. We decided to focus the evaluation around three particular rubric items.

Organization-wide Logic Model: Using program-specific logic models, we worked toward designing an organization-wide logic model that aligns with the organization's vision and rubric. We compiled all information from the program-specific logic models into one excel document. We eliminated items that repeat across the program LMs and recommended organizing outcomes into short-term and long-term categories. Over several editing rounds, the MF team increasingly consolidated the LM items based on their importance to the organization vision, and the UNM team provided feedback. In a December bimonthly meeting, we finalized a version that is consolidated enough fit into the same two-page format as the existing program LMs. This December, the UNM team will create a revamped version of the existing LM format and input the newly developed organization-wide LM items.

Quantitative analysis of existing MF data: MF collects survey data from participants of the VAMOS program and would like to learn how the measurement could be adjusted to illuminate their progress toward the organization mission. In October, the MF team sent the UNM team survey responses from several participants. After reviewing these, we decided to analyze a sample of 20 survey responses from Summer 2019 of the VAMOS program. The MF team sent 20 redacted surveys to the UNM team. This December, the UNM team will create an excel document to organize the survey data in preparation of analysis.

Qualitative interviews: We will interview clients to understand how individual progress can indicate program success. During bimonthly meetings, we decided to interview 8 long-term clients. We had ongoing discussions about what interviewing the MF service recipient population entails in a remote format, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. The MF team selected 8 potential interview participants and sent out confidentiality forms to them and their families. This December, we are continuing to develop the interview protocol, to be finalized in a bimonthly meeting. The MF team is compiling a document of recommendations for interviewing each client, individualized to particular communication styles.

Next semester: We will collect and analyze data, and we will report the findings.

- January: We will input the responses from the scanned paper surveys into the developed excel document. We will conduct the interviews and transcribe them.
- February: We will conduct an analysis of the quantitative surveys. We will code the transcriptions and conduct a qualitative analysis.
- March: We will present the findings and prepare an Evaluation Report. Based on the results, we will discuss how to improve existing organization measurements and how to develop new ones that capture progress in alignment with the rubric.

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Appendix A: Mandy's Farm Rubric

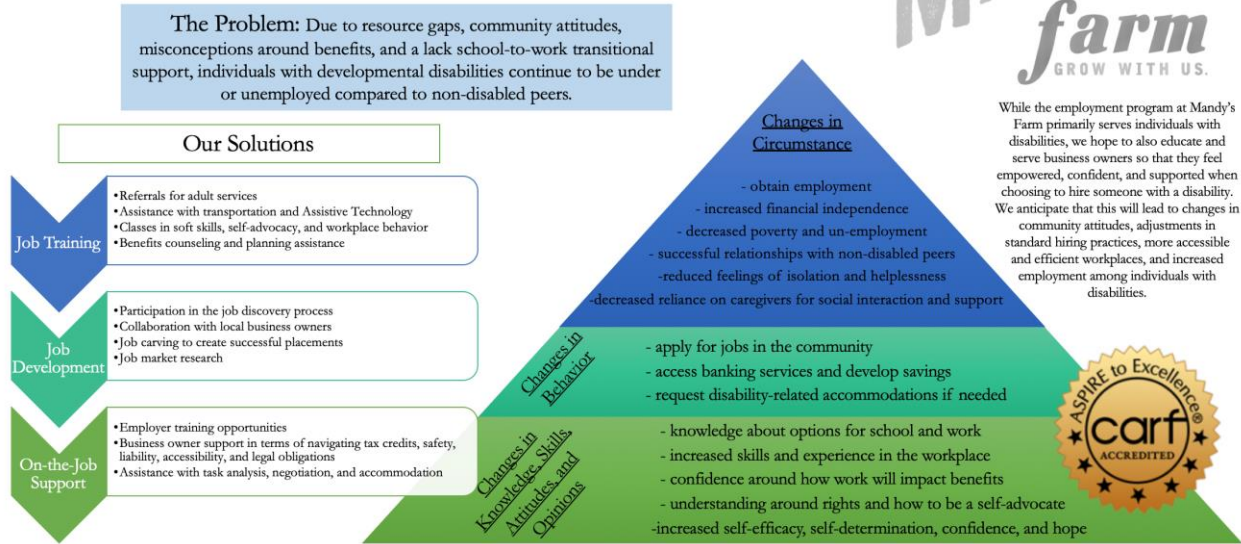

Increased Quality of Life Among Adults with Disabilities

	Failing	Developing	Achieving	Thriving
*Daily Living	Adults with disabilities are told what to do in all areas of their lives	Adults with disabilities are offered limited options for daily activities, with whom they spend their time, and where they live	Adults with disabilities learn choice-making skills regarding relationships, daily activities, and housing.	Adults with disabilities exert full control over where they live, where they work, and who they spend time with.
Community Access	Adults with disabilities are limited to segregated spaces	Adults with disabilities access select areas of the community	Adults with disabilities can access all areas of the community	Diverse needs are welcomed, and centered, within community spaces through universal design
*Economic Opportunity	Adults with disabilities are unable to access employment and financial tools. Adults with disabilities are unable to make any financial decisions.	Adults with disabilities are provided with segregated, enclave, or disability-focused employment opportunities and have limited access to their disposable income.	Adults with disabilities are educated about, and able to make decisions regarding, their place of employment, access to equitable wages, and their benefits.	Adults with disabilities exert full control over financial decisions and have access to employment at minimum wage or higher alongside non-disabled colleagues.
*Friends & Relationships	Adults with disabilities rely on paid caregivers and/or immediate family for socialization	Adults with disabilities develop friendships with disabled peers	Adults with disabilities develop relationships with non-disabled community members	Adults with disabilities live with, work alongside, and have long-term relationships with community members with and without disabilities
Safety & Autonomy	Adults with disabilities experience abuse, neglect, and exploitation	Adults with disabilities are provided with reporting mechanisms to address abuse,	Adults with disabilities are educated regarding their rights, safety, choice-making,	Adults with disabilities live free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation through community

		neglect, and exploitation	consent, and personal safety	safeguards and individualized resources
Freedom from Discrimination	Adults with disabilities, including those who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color) and/or LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer) experience discrimination compared to their white, cisgender, heterosexual, non-disabled counterparts, preventing equitable access to community spaces, healthcare, early intervention, and community-based support.	Adults with disabilities, including those who identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ, are given limited access to community spaces, healthcare, early intervention, and community-based support.	Adults with disabilities, including those who identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ are provided with education regarding their rights, safety in the community related to police violence, freedom of expression, sexuality, consent, and personal safety.	Adults with disabilities, including those who identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ are able to freely exercise the same rights as their white, cisgender, heterosexual, non-disabled counterparts.
Civic Engagement	Adults with disabilities are excluded from voting, political engagement, and community organizing.	Adults with disabilities face significant barriers in terms of accessibility when engaging in politics, voting, and community organizing.	Adults with disabilities are provided with education regarding their rights, voter registration, political issues, and opportunities for community organizing and peaceful protest.	Adults with disabilities successfully access the vote (registration, physical locations, and ballot design), as well as meaningful opportunities to engage in political activities, peaceful protest, and community organizing.

Appendix B: Example of Mandy's Farm's Logic Model

Our Logic Model: Employment

Our Logic Model: Employment

Program Inputs

- ❖ Staff salaries, fringe benefits, administrative support, and office space
- ❖ Collaborative relationships with community members who lead training workshops, provide opportunities for internships, fund program activities, or provide classroom/ meeting space
- ❖ \$ for event and training fees
- ❖ \$ for certifications, conferences, and professional development opportunities
- ❖ Social capital for job development
- ❖ Training and staff hours related to job discovery, vocational assessments, job development, and on-the-job support
- ❖ Online and printed marketing materials geared towards community businesses or potential service recipients
- ❖ Consultation and support from family members, therapists, case managers, and natural supports

Program Outputs

- # of informational interviews completed
- # of business assessments completed
- # of DVR referrals
- # of SunVan or community bus passes obtained
- # of networking events attended
- # of job fairs attended
- # of job applications completed
- # of job interviews attended
- # of job placements achieved
- # of job placements maintained
- # of career advancements achieved