

§ 525.4

(g) *Employ* is defined in FLSA as *to suffer or permit to work*. An employment relationship arises whenever an individual, including an individual with a disability, is suffered or permitted to work. The determination of an employment relationship does not depend upon the level of performance or whether the work is of some therapeutic benefit. However, an individual does not become an employee if engaged in such activities as making craft products where the individual voluntarily participates in such activities and the products become the property of the individual making them, or all of the funds resulting from the sale of the products are divided among the participants in the activity or are used in purchasing additional materials to make craft products.

(h) *Special minimum wage* is a wage authorized under a certificate issued to an employer under this part that is less than the statutory minimum wage.

(i) *Commensurate wage* is a special minimum wage paid to a worker with a disability which is based on the worker's individual productivity in proportion to the wage and productivity of experienced nondisabled workers performing essentially the same type, quality, and quantity of work in the vicinity in which the individual under certificate is employed. For example, the commensurate wage of a worker with a disability who is 75% as productive as the average experienced nondisabled worker, taking into consideration the type, quality, and quantity of work of the disabled worker, would be set at 75% of the wage paid to the nondisabled worker. For purposes of these regulations, a commensurate wage is always a special minimum wage, *i.e.*, a wage below the statutory minimum.

(j) *Vicinity* or *locality* means the geographic area from which the labor force of the community is drawn.

(k) *Experienced worker* means a worker who has learned the basic elements or requirements of the work to be performed, ordinarily by completion of a probationary or training period. Typically, such a worker will have received at least one pay raise after successful completion of the probationary or training period.

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§ 525.4 Patient workers.

With respect to patient workers, as defined in § 525.3(e), a major factor in determining if an employment relationship exists is whether the work performed is of any consequential economic benefit to the institution. Generally, work shall be considered to be of consequential economic benefit if it is of the type that workers without disabilities normally perform, in whole or in part in the institution or elsewhere. However, a patient does not become an employee if he or she merely performs personal housekeeping chores, such as maintaining his or her own quarters, or receives a token remuneration in connection with such services. It may also be possible for patients in family-like settings such as group homes to rotate or share household tasks or chores without becoming employees.

§ 525.5 Wage payments.

(a) An individual whose earning or productive capacity is not impaired for the work being performed cannot be employed under a certificate issued pursuant to this part and must be paid at least the applicable minimum wage. An individual whose earning or productive capacity is impaired to the extent that the individual is unable to earn at least the applicable minimum wage may be paid a commensurate wage, but only after the employer has obtained a certificate authorizing payment of special minimum wages from the appropriate office of the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor.

(b) With respect to patient workers employed in institutions, no deductions can be made from such individuals' commensurate wages to cover the cost of room, board, or other services provided by the facility. Such an individual must receive his or her wages free and clear, except for amounts deducted for taxes assessed against the employee and any voluntary wage assignments directed by the employee. (See part 531 of this title.) However, it is not the intention of these regulations to preclude the institution thereafter from assessing or collecting charges for room, board, and other services actually provided to an individual to the extent permitted by applicable Federal or State law and on