EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

A Comprehensive Resource Guide

Version 1. March 2025

Employment Resource Guide

Purpose of this Document

The NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities (NYS CDD) and Strong Center for Development Disabilities (SCDD) believes everyone who wants to work should have the opportunity to work!

Everyone's goals and skills shape their journey to employment. Each journey is unique. You should know what resources are available to help you in your path to employment. This guide was designed to support your journey!

Employment 1st

New York State is an Employment 1st state [1]. What does this mean for you? In New York State, "Anyone who is interested in working has the option to work, no matter the complexity or disability." [2]

This means that you are eligible to work. You can get support to work in a job earning minimum wage or higher or to run your own business. You should receive the same benefits and pay as anyone else. You can work alongside people without disabilities. You should have the same opportunities for job growth or advancement as everyone else.

Employment 1st

Employment 1st acknowledges there are many benefits to work, including making money and friends as well as better physical and mental health.

"We all need jobs. Everyone has a purpose in life. Many people with disabilities want to have jobs just like everyone else. Jobs get you out of the house. You meet and communicate with people and make money." [3]

Why Employment First Matters to Self-Advocates?

"…there also needs to be an environment that promotes presuming competence! It also comes down to dignity of risk and having high expectations. Parents, teachers, and providers must have high expectations for us to have real careers, not just a job." - NICOLE LEBLANC [4]

Where Do I Go For Help On My Employment Journey?

Transitioning to work or career advancement involves:

- trying various types of work that you might enjoy;
- thinking about what you want from a career, and considering advancement opportunities.
- learning what supports you need to be successful in work.
- understanding the benefits and incentives to work, and more!

Thankfully, there are multiple resources in New York State that can help you navigate your journey to employment. There are various state agencies and community organizations that offer resources and services to help people gain, keep, and advance in employment. The table below includes some NY State agencies that support employment journey, including types of services, supports they provide, and a link to more information.

STATE AGENCY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

STATE AGENCY	SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)	**ACCES-VR** helps individuals with disabilities gain and maintain employment. Services include career counseling, job training, education, rehabilitation, and career development. **To apply or be referred for ACCES-VR services you must be:** • Legally authorized to work in the United States • At least 14 years old (NEW) • Have a disability that actively participate in the vocational rehabilitation process.
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ACCES-VR: Join "Real Journeys to Employment" video ACCES VR- Information Overview	
Pre-Employment Transition Services (ACCES VR)	**Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre ETS) (Ages 14-22)** • Job Exploration Counseling • Work Based Learning Experiences • Post-secondary Options • Workplace Readiness Training • Instruction in Self-Advocacy
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PRE-ETS ACCES VR Student and Youth Services Pre-ETS Brochure	

STATE AGENCY	SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)	**NYSCB** supports people who are legally blind to develop their strengths, gain employment skills and maximize independence
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NYSCB: New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) | Office of Children and Family Services	
New York State, Department of Labor (NYSDOL)	**NYSDOL** helps all New Yorkers (with and without disabilities) find the right job or career path, learn about employer expectations, and find job or setting opportunities out of local career centers, also called local workforce boards. Examples of services NYSDOL provides: • job search assistance • resume development • career workshops and more
Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) are staff that work out of NYS Career Centers. DRCs can help navigate resources from the career center as well as local employment resources. DRCs can provide benefits advisement to individuals receiving public assistance benefits such as SSI/Medicaid and/or SSD/Medicare. Find Your Local Disability Resource Coordinator DOL Events and Workshops	
Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (Tribal VR)	**TVR** assists American Indians with disabilities in gaining and maintaining competitive employment.
INFORMATION Tribal VR **TVR**	

STATE AGENCY	SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
New York State Education Department (NYSED), Office of Special Education (OSE)	Beginning at 15 in NY, students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) must have appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and transition services. Transition services are a coordinated set of coordinated through your local school district but guided by NYSED OSE: • The Quality Assurance Regional Offices Educational Partnership support and improve students and families, to improve equity and outcomes for all students with disabilities • Parent Training and Information Centers • Resources on Transition from school to post-school for students with disabilities.
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NYSED: Transitions from School to Post-School for Students with Disabilities Quality Assurance Offices answer questions about special education services. Guide to Transition Planning	
Office Of Mental Health (OMH)	Our mission is to promote the mental health of all New Yorkers, with a focus on those who are most vulnerable, those who have serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance. Supported Employment (SE) is an evidence-based (EB), a supported employment model for people with mental health challenges.
OMH Supported Employment Services FIND AN OMH PROGRAM	
New York Commission for Human Rights (NYSHR)	**NYSHR** provides people of all abilities with a single point of access for employment-related services and supports, including job matching, job retention, and training services in the arts sector.
Find a local employment support provider or benefit counselor near you!	

STATE AGENCY	SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)	**OPWDD** helps people with developmental disabilities live richer lives. OPWDD provides many services, including employment services. Related to employment, OPWDD uses person-centered planning to help people identify skills and interests and gain work experience. OPWDD also offers: • Paid internships • Supports to travel to get jobs • Provides on-the-job instruction • Builds independence at work • Helps to pursue their career path **OPWDD Transition Tool Kit** provides resources available to students with disabilities getting ready to move from school life to adult life and their families.
About OPWDD Employment Services OPWDD Transition Planning Information OPWDD Transition Tool Kit	
The Front Door **Start here to apply for OPWDD Services**	**OPWDD Care Management**: If you do not have OPWDD services yet but would like to apply for services and support, including employment
OPWDD Front Door About Care Management	
Office for New Americans (ONA)	**ONA** assists all state Agencies in promoting and integrating a variety of services for immigrants and refugees. ONA's mission is to make New York a welcoming and inclusive state.
Link for Information About ONA	

Connect Locally

State agencies typically offer funding to community organizations to help you with your employment journey. They offer employment services like career planning, skill building, finding work and job coaching. In addition to employment services, state agencies can support access to technology, benefits planning, training, and more.

To access services, you need to get connected to the local office for the state agency and local community organizations to help you with your employment goals in your area.

You can find additional information on these resources below

AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY

WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY?	YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY RESOURCE
Do you want to learn how to start your journey? Quick tips on preparing for, finding, and succeeding in employment.	WIN Solutions: "Employment & Volunteering" Quick Guides
Do you want to "Learn About work"? See fun lessons and introductory activities online	Employment First Florida
WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY?	**YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY RESOURCE**
Do you want to get connected to an advocacy agency that can help with employment and independence?	**Contact your local Independent Living Center (ILC)** About NY ILC's Find an ILC Near you
Are you worried that working might impact your benefits? There are many resources in NY that can help you work while maintaining benefits Find your Local Disability Resource Coordinator ACCES VR Benefit Advisement Services Ticket to Work	• Dept. of Labor Disability Resource Coordinators • ACCES VR: Ask for Benefit Advisement Services • Ticket To Work
Do you need advocacy?	**Disability Rights New York** assists people with disabilities, their families, and providers of NY State VR programs including: ACCES-VR, NYSCB and from independent living centers (ILCs). DRNY Client Assistance Program
WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY?	**YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY RESOURCE**
Do you need help trying out and learning assistive technology to help you work?	**Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Program (TRAID)** Regional Centers offer demonstration and loan programs, device loans and hands on training to people with disabilities. Find the nearest regional TRAID Center near you!
Are you looking for an app to help you keep track of your journey?	Assistiveo App for Transition Planning and Resources. (Early intervention to Adulthood)
Do you want to be in a hands-on program in a business environment, learn job skills with the goal of employment?	**Project SEARCH** is a unique, business led, one-year employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Find a Project SEARCH Program Near You **Partnership for Inclusive Internships** identifies internship opportunities within state and local government agencies, and matches qualified candidates with disabilities to those opportunities. **Inclusive Internship Coordinator** Email: Marybeth.Schneider@dhses.ny.gov (518) 457-1130
WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY?	**YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY RESOURCE**
Would you like to work in State or local Government positions? **(SWAIN) Governor's Programs to Hire Individuals and Veterans with Disabilities**	Coordinates efforts to have individuals with disabilities enter state entry level jobs. FAQ: SWAIN
Are you a parent looking for help navigating the transition from school to work?	Transition Checklist for Parents
Are you looking for information to support yourself or someone you care about from school to adulthood?	National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C)
Are you interested in working for yourself?	The Center on Self Employment
Are you interested in starting a small business?	New York Small Business Development Center: Provides consulting, mentoring, and business research at no cost. SCORE can help you start a business by matching with a business mentor
WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY?	**YOUR EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY RESOURCE**
Do you need extra help with mental health recovery and returning to employment?	Learn about **The Alliance for Rights & Recovery**: Employment and Economic Self-Sufficiency Tool Kit
Do you need to build your employment skills?	Volunteer NY Find Volunteer Opportunities near you.
Are you interested in connecting with other self-advocates about employment advocacy?	GAYETI: **The Self Advocacy Association of New York State, Inc.** An advocacy organization founded, and led, by and for people with developmental disabilities. We promote civil rights and opportunities and choices of equal citizenship Hear Our Voices Empowers and educates self-advocates in NYS about relevant topics that impact people with intellectual and or developmental disabilities.

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REFERENCES

[1] NYS Executive Order No.41 Committing New York to Be an Employment First State to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for New Yorkers With Disabilities

[2] Office of Disability Employment Policy - Jobforward Find

[3] Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered and Green Mountain Self Advocates 10.1.23 | YouTube in Life: Why Employment First Matters to Self-Advocates

[4] National Disability Rights Network, Accessed 10/25 Nicole LeBlanc and Eric Buehlmann Disability Employment Policy 101 Guide

[5] Cover photo credit: The University of Kentucky Human Development Institute - HDI Photo Library

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