

Employment Options Before/After Graduation for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (Fact Sheet #1)

Planning for your future is important. Work is an important part of being an adult. Some young people can find jobs by looking in the paper or contacting local businesses. Some young people need help to find and hold a job. This information sheet describes the employment options available to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Consider these options as you plan for work. Students can access intellectual disabilities funding for work during non-school hours (afterschool, weekends, holidays, summer employment). Natural supports and other funding sources should be considered prior to intellectual disability funding.



Take Charge of Your Life

CHOOSE WORK

What are my Employment Options?

- ⇒ **Community Employment** - *full or part time work with competitive wages (minimum wage or above) and responsibilities.* These jobs are most often found by contacting community employers, checking want ads, internet searches and utilizing your community connections.
- ⇒ **Community Supported Employment** - *full or part time work at a job in your community.* This is a regular job at a local business, using the support of a job coach. The job coach can assist you in finding a job, developing the skills needed to do the job, and ongoing support while on the job.
- ⇒ **Community Customized Employment** - *full or part time work at a job in your community.* This is work, at minimum wage or above, that is developed through job carving, job development, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives. Job responsibilities are customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of the individual. Ongoing support is provided, as needed by the individual.

Next Steps?

- Contact community businesses to apply for available positions.
- Use the connections that you have in the community to identify places of employment.
- Contact your local Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for assistance.
- Contact your teacher for other employment options, including school work experiences.
- Contact your Intellectual Disabilities Supports Coordinator for other employment options.
- Contact a local Employment Network. Check out WorksForMe-PA.org or call the Works for Me Hotline at 1-877-268-9894. Ask about Ticket to Work!

- Disability Scoop - <http://www.disabilityscoop.com> -

Governors Promote Employment For People With Disabilities

By Melissa Maynard, Stateline | March 11, 2013

Julie Williard, 25, is one of the top performers in her division filling orders from local stores at the Walgreens distribution center in Windsor, Connecticut. She is also deaf.

Williard says she was more accustomed to being bullied than encouraged before she started at the center, her first full-time job. "It just brought the happiness into my life," she says. "Right now I have tons of friends."

What makes this job different is that the facility, which opened in 2009, was built with the needs of people with a range of disabilities in mind. The workplace removes obstacles to success, by offering touchscreens, adjustable work stations and images and symbols to illustrate functions. About half the workers at the center have a disability, and they are expected to compete with all of their colleagues. Making the accommodations cost Walgreens an average of \$50 per worker.

The nation's governors have turned their attention to helping more people like Williard find jobs and building partnerships with companies like Walgreens that are willing to help accommodate people once considered unemployable. The National Governors Association (NGA) is targeting the issue this year and will make recommendations in an August report. The aim is to come up with plans that provide workers with disabilities not only a paycheck, but also a deeper sense of purpose and belonging.

Delaware Governor Jack Markell, NGA chair, says he chose this issue after meeting a Bank of America employee with a disability who made T-shirts and other promotional materials. Markell says he was moved by the pride the employee took in his work and asked what he had been doing before he got the job. "He sat at home for six years watching TV with his parents," Markell told Stateline.

According to the NGA, the U.S. spends about \$300 billion annually to support unemployed workers with disabilities, while 67 percent of working-age people with disabilities would rather have a job than be unemployed and unproductive.

Nationally, more than 30 percent of the adult population receiving income-based government assistance through programs such as Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families has a disability, according to a recent report from the Census Bureau. One in three adults with disabilities, ages 18 to 64, were employed in 2011, compared with three out of four adults without a disability.

State governments have taken a variety of steps to help these workers find jobs. Connecticut's state vocational rehabilitation agency, for example, works closely with Walgreens to identify people with disabilities who might be a good fit for the program and provides ongoing support for employees who are struggling to adapt.

"(Walgreens) didn't ask for much," Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy told fellow governors in February at the NGA's winter meeting in Washington, D.C. "The one change that we had to make in Connecticut is we put a bus stop at their front door." The state also provides funding for the training program through a nonprofit partner, Community Enterprises.

Delaware's Markell signed "Employment First" legislation in July requiring state agencies that provide services to people with disabilities to push jobs that are in an integrated setting as the first choice. A work group is also focusing on state hiring practices with the goal of advancing recruitment, retention and career advancement opportunities for people with disabilities. "States can be model employers themselves," he says.

Utah has put in place an alternative application process for state workers called "ASAP" that lets qualified people with disabilities bypass the regular competitive hiring process. Instead, they get the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to do the job in a trial work period.

A state program also helps workers with disabilities understand whether any of their benefits, such as Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare and housing support, would be affected if they were to get a job, and informs them of available work incentives and safety nets.

"If you cannot convince the individual that it is in their best interest to try working at a level that will get them off of benefits, increase their disposable income and improve their quality of life, nothing else you do for them in the (vocational rehabilitation) program is going to make that big of a difference," Don Uchida, executive director of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, said in testimony last month before the U.S. Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Companies like Walgreens that have made strides in hiring and training people with disabilities say it has helped their bottom line. "This was not charity; this was business," Walgreens president and CEO Greg Wasson said at the NGA meeting.

Wasson credited the program in Connecticut and other distribution centers with lowering absenteeism, increasing retention and reducing the number of accidents and associated workers' compensation costs. The company has since launched a similar program for its retail outlets that partners with state agencies and community organizations to train and place people with disabilities as service clerks.

Stephen Wooderson, chief executive officer of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and former director of Iowa's program, says he appreciates all of the attention the NGA initiative has brought to the issue and the change it is already beginning to generate. The NGA's focus on working with businesses to meet their needs is furthering an effort that has been gradually taking hold in the vocational rehabilitation community. "Quite honestly for many years, we have been training individuals without a clear understanding of what the marketplace was going to be when they completed their training," he says.

South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard brought home the point at the NGA meeting with an emotional story about growing up on a farm in South Dakota with two deaf parents. After his father was laid off from a job making cabinets, Daugaard remembers his parents arguing in sign language over whether they should accept unemployment benefits. His father then got a job as a janitor at night while working on the farm during the day.

"I thank all the employers here who open their minds and job sites to workers with disabilities because by helping them you are helping yourselves, but your efforts also unlock doors," he said. "They give workers like my parents a chance to live their lives with dignity and provide for their little boys back at home."

Daugaard told Stateline he believes workers with disabilities have a lot to offer employers. "Many folks with disabilities have an increased level of determination because they've had to overcome adversity in the form of their disability," he says. "They can in many ways become a superior employee to those without disabilities."

Stateline is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Center on the States that provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy.

2 Comments To "Governors Promote Employment For People With Disabilities"

#1 Comment By [Ravi kumar](#) On March 11, 2013 @ 10:54 am

It would be commendable steps, if Government takes in August Report.