



WorkingTogether so all can work

Dear Job Seeker and Family Member,

You are receiving this information because you are an individual with a disability who is working at subminimum wage related to or involved in the life of someone who is. New federal legislation- The Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is adding requirements and mandates the review of individuals who are employed at subminimum wage. The information provided can help you understand the benefits of community-based employment and make an informed choice about the services your loved one receives.

It is important to ensure that individuals with disabilities are aware of the services available to them so they can make a decision that is best for them about the employment options they would like to pursue and the services they would like to access. Individuals with disabilities have the right to choose the setting in which they work and Iowa is committed to providing employment opportunities to anyone who wants to work. If this is relevant to you, your family member or someone you support, please complete the IVRS referral form. If you have any questions or need assistance at any time, please feel contact your case manager or any of the individuals listed below.

- **Page Eastin** 800-652-4298, Iowa Department of Human Rights' Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- **Lee Ann Russo** 515.281.4144, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS)
- **Keri Osterhaus** 515-281-1333, Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB)
- **Tai Tomasi or Emmanuel Smith** 515-287-2502, Disability Rights Iowa (DRI)

Common terms

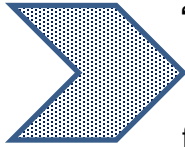
Competitive Integrated Employment: Full or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities. This is considered the optimal outcome under WIOA.

Section 511: A section in WIOA setting limitations on the use of subminimum wage which requires career counseling and other services to be provided to individuals before they can enter or continue to be employed at subminimum wage.

Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP): Agency or organization which provides the direct services to the individual job seeker.

Customized Employment: Addressing Parental Concerns

Virginia Commonwealth University | The Institute for Community Inclusion University of Massachusetts Boston | June 2004



“To Work or Not to Work”... that is a question being asked by many individuals with disabilities and their family members as they begin to think about going to work in their local communities. This fact sheet addresses frequently asked questions by family members and provides answers to dispel the concerns. After reading this, it is hoped that family members will agree that the answer to the question is **“To Work!”**

Q I have been told that my son/daughter is not ready to work in the community.

A Customized employment eliminates the need for a person to “get ready” to work. If your son/ daughter want to go to work, then it is time for him/her to go. A key aspect to customizing employment is finding work that matches your son’s/daughter’s interests and skills. Using this approach, a personal agent or employment specialist works closely with a job seeker to negotiate a specific position that uses the person’s talents to match the needs of a business. The goal is not just to locate any job, but a job specifically negotiated that capitalizes on your son’s/daughter’s interests and abilities.

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Q But, my son/daughter does not have the skills to meet the demands of a real job and needs training.

A Many people with significant disabilities do not transfer skills learned in one setting such as a workshop to another such as a community business. One of the reasons is that it is difficult to simulate the features of a job in a setting that does not have coworkers and the demands of a real workplace. For instance, your son/daughter may be in a training program to learn how to work in an office. The participants in the program take turns completing tasks such as sorting mail, delivering messages, and folding letters and stuffing envelopes. However, typically position descriptions change from business to business. The way that one office prepares and delivers mail can be very different from another. The time spent learning the task in the training program would be better spent in the actual workplace where your son/daughter is employed

Q How would my son/daughter learn the skills in the workplace?

A Key to the negotiation process is the employer’s willingness to support whatever your son/daughter needs to become successful at work. For example, sometimes a job applicant with a disability will need more skills training than the employer is able to provide. In such a case, a trainer sometimes called an employment specialist will go to work with the individual and provide additional on-the-job training. Or perhaps, the person needs to use an assistive technology device to get the job done like using a reaching device to pull items off of a high shelf. Another, job



applicant may need a modification in a company's policy that would allow him/her to work a flexible schedule. Workplace supports vary from individual to individual and are tailored specifically to meet the needs of an individual in a customized job. At the end of the process, when the deal is struck, the result is a custom made job for your son/daughter.

Q I don't know what kind of job my son/daughter would like.

A Personal agents or employment specialists will spend time getting to know your son/daughter as well as your family. For instance, an employment specialist may spend time with him/her in the community doing leisure activities, talking with family members, meeting with friends who know your son/daughter well, and so forth. The time will be spent discovering his/her interests, abilities, and support needs.

Occasionally there still may be uncertainty about what your son/daughter might like to do. If this happens several types of jobs will be identified that appear to match your son/daughter's expressed work interests. Then, he/she can have a brief work experience, perhaps 3 - 4 hours within each job type, to more specifically identify his/her work preferences and support needs. This information will be used to customize a job on your son's/daughter's behalf.

Now prepared, the personal agent or employment specialist will begin to identify potential places of employment in the local business community. You may even be asked if you know employers in your network that would be willing to support a person with a disability in the workplace. The agent will meet with employers to learn more about the business and specific needs of the company. Whenever an employer has some suitable opportunities that match your son/daughter's specific interests and needs, the job negotiation process will begin.

A good customized job individualizes the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. A proposal will be prepared for the employer's consideration that will highlight your son's/daughter's abilities and how he/she can bring value to the business. Once a proposal has been made and both the job applicant and employer agree to the proposal, a work start date will be set.

Q The workshop is a safe place, and I don't think my son/daughter should be alone in a community job. He/she has never been without the support of the agency's staff.

A Looking for a "safe" place to work is also part of the customized employment process. First, "safe" needs to be defined in relationship to your son's/daughter's support needs. For example, a person who has a history of walking out of any door at home or the workshop may have a very different safety concern than the person who just lacks community based experiences. In some instances a workplace that limits access to the outside or machinery may be warranted. Another person may just need to have a little extra support from a coworker.

Your safety concerns will be taken into consideration when negotiating work. It is only natural for you to be concerned about your son's or daughter's welfare. For example, part of the negotiations might include arranging for some additional supervision or creating a job where your son/daughter works alongside a coworker who is aware of the support need. Once again, an agent would work closely with an employer to negotiate a job that minimizes your son's/daughter's disability and provides the workplace supports necessary for him/her to be successful.

Q How will my son /daughter get to work? The community rehabilitation program provides door-to-door transportation service.

A One critical aspect to customizing a job for your son/daughter will be finding work opportunities at locations where transportation will not present a barrier. Every situation is different. For example, some people may travel to work using public transportation, while others, ride with co-workers, take specialized transportation services, or walk.

Part of getting to know your son/daughter will be exploring various transportation options. This information is vital to the strategic plan for customizing employment, since it influences the scheduling requirements and the work location. For instance, your son/daughter may have access to the public bus system, but lack the skills needed to get to the bus stop and ride the bus alone. In this case, a transportation trainer can teach your son/daughter how to get to and from the job on



the bus. Or, another option might be that the place of business is on a friend's route to and from work. This could become part of the employment negotiation process. For example, employment negotiations may center around a specific work schedule that would allow the person to work a schedule that matches the friend's daily commute times.

If you are not comfortable with these options, we can determine if there is a specialized transportation service in the community that can offer door-to-door service. Or, perhaps a college student or senior citizen would like to earn extra money providing transportation. You can be assured that the support needs of your son/daughter will be met so that everyone feels comfortable. He/she will not be left alone until the skills to get to and from work independently have been demonstrated.

Q But, that would cost extra money. I don't imagine that he/she would be making very much anyway.

A Your son/daughter would be making at least minimum wage or more based on what other workers earn who are performing similar job duties. The amount would be negotiated with the employer at the time of hire and again during the course of employment for pay raises. In addition, if your son/daughter is receiving Social Security benefits, he/she may be able to claim an Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE). This is a work incentive designed to assist people with disabilities in paying for expenses that are needed to work. Specialized transportation is one such expense. Basically, a person can deduct the cost of services and items needed to work and reduce the amount of countable income. When Social Security calculates how much a person will receive in the monthly check, an IRWE allows him/her to keep more money than if there were no work expenses. While he/she will not get all of the cost of transportation covered through the work incentive, your son/daughter should have more money available than if not working or working in extended employment options (sheltered workshops).

Q Well, that raises another serious concern! My son/daughter can't lose Social Security benefits and Medicaid. The reality is that he/she needs the benefits and health care coverage.

A Get informed! You should contact your local Social Security Administration Office to locate a Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach Specialist. This person can sit down with you to explain the basics of how work will impact your son's/daughter's monthly benefit check. You also will need more information on work incentives. These incentives were developed to encourage Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries to become self-sufficient. The IRWE is just one of the work incentives that can help your son/daughter. Others include the Earned Income Exclusion, PASS (Plan for Achieving Self Support), and Section 1619 (a) and (b).

Under Special SSI Payments for People Who Work: Section 1619 (a) and 1619 (b), a worker can continue to receive Medicaid. Under Section 1619 (a), your son's/daughter's check could be reduced as low as one cent due to work income, and he/she still receive Medicaid. Eligibility continues as long as your son/daughter meets the basic eligibility requirements and the income and resources tests. Under 1619 (b), Medicaid coverage continues even when earnings become too high to receive a SSI payment, but there are threshold levels in each state. Some states have eligibility rules for Medicaid that differ from SSA's. This is information that you will need to discuss with a Benefits Specialist to find out exactly how work will impact your son's/daughter's benefits. However, he/she can always earn more money working than by just receiving benefits alone. If you still feel unsure after meeting with a representative, talk to other family members who have adult children with disabilities who receive SSI and are working in the community. You can also download a booklet produced by the Social Security Administration, **The Redbook**, which provides more information and sample calculations on how work can impact benefits at <http://www.ssa.gov>.



Q My son/daughter has friends in the extended employment program. Going to work would mean losing those friends.

A If the opportunity to make friends is important to your son/daughter, then this along with other key information would be taken into consideration during negotiations with employers. Every workplace culture is different. For instance, some are friendly and others are not. To understand the workplace culture, the person representing your son/daughter would ask the employer questions and look for signs that the workplace is friendly and supportive. For example, employees who appear to be enjoying their jobs may signal a pleasant place to work.

Developing a good fit between a person and the social characteristics of a workplace is as important as learning how to perform a job. Many people with significant disabilities report making new friends at work and an overall satisfaction with employment. Your son/daughter would have support establishing relationships with coworkers. Social activities that are available to other employees would also be available to him/her. Going to work also does not mean that your son or daughter has to give up friends from the workshop. They can still socialize outside of the workshop setting. Working should expand his/her social opportunities and not limit them.

Summary

Hopefully this fact sheet has provided information on what parents want to know about customized employment. There are other resources available online at the project's website: <http://www.t-tap.org>. Please contact us directly for more information on T-TAP.

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Q What if my son/daughter loses the job? Can he/she go back to the workshop?

A Negotiating a customized employment opportunity for your son/daughter hopefully will prevent this from happening. Rest assured that we would work hard to solve any problems that come up during employment and to address any support needs that could lead to job loss. This includes re-negotiations with the employer, if necessary, to further customize your son's/daughter's job.

If this occurs, staff will work with your son/daughter to find a new job in the community. A new position will be negotiated based on what is learned in the first job about his/her interests, work skills, and support needs. Remember, our program staff is always willing to talk with you whenever you have additional questions!

Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of
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Virginia Commonwealth University

The Office of Disability Employment Policy,
U.S. Department of Labor



Debunking the **BIGGEST** Myths about Disability Benefits and Work

There are several common myths about how working will affect disability benefits and health care coverage. Here are the three most common and why they are wrong:

1 If I try to go to work, I will automatically lose my Medicare or Medicaid.

This is a myth. First, as long as you keep receiving a benefit check of any amount, you will keep your health insurance. If you earn enough that your Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) checks stop, Medicare can continue for up to 93 months. If you currently receive Medicaid, you should be eligible to continue to receive Medicaid even after you stop receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash benefits due to work. To be eligible you need to meet certain requirements, which include earnings below a threshold amount set by your state. Even if your earnings exceed the state threshold, you may still be eligible and should talk to your state Medicaid office. Iowa has a Medicaid program for employed people with disabilities called MEPD.

For more information about **Keeping Your Medical Benefits** after cash benefits stop, visit www.ssa.gov/redbook and www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/1619b.htm.

2 If I use my Ticket to go to work, Social Security will conduct a medical review of my case, and I will lose my benefits.

This is also a myth. Social Security ordinarily reviews your medical condition from time to time to see whether you are still disabled, using a process called the medical Continuing Disability Review, or medical CDR. If you participate in the Ticket program with either an Employment Network or your State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and make “timely progress” following your individual work plan, Social Security will **not** conduct a review of your medical condition. If a medical CDR has already been scheduled for you before you assigned your ticket, Social Security will continue with the medical CDR.

3 If my checks stop because I go to work and then I have to stop working because of my disability, I will have to reapply for benefits all over again. It took me forever to be approved and I cannot afford to wait that long again. As a result, I should not try to work.

Again, it's a myth. You will not need to reapply if your benefits ended within the past five years due to your earnings and you meet a few other requirements, including that you still have the original medical condition or one related to it that prevents you from working. This is a work incentive called Expedited Reinstatement. You may even be able to receive up to six months of temporary cash benefits in addition to Medicare or Medicaid coverage while SSA conducts a medical review to determine if your benefits can be reinstated.

For more information about **Expedited Reinstatement**, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/exr.htm.

For more information about these or other Social Security Work Incentives, contact the Ticket to Work Help Line at **1-866-968-7842** or **1-866-833-2967** (TTY).

For more information about the Ticket to Work program or to access the service provider directory, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/work.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Referral for Services

Please complete all sections. If you would like assistance with this form, do not hesitate to ask. If you need more space, please use an additional piece of paper.

A. Personal Information:

First Name: _____ Middle/Maiden Name: _____
Last Name: _____ Preferred Name: _____
Home Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
County: _____ Home Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____
Primary E-Mail: _____ Secondary E-Mail: _____
Gender Identity: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Do not wish to disclose

Do you have a specific low vision impairment or are you considered legally blind? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Do you require an interpreter? ☐ No ☐ Yes Language: _____

Preferred Method of Communication: ☐ E-mail ☐ Phone ☐ Video Relay

Permission to Send Text Messages: ☐ No ☐ Yes

Do you have a legal guardian? ☐ No ☐ Yes Name: _____ Phone: _____

B. Referral Source:

Who referred you to IVRS? _____ Phone Number: (____) _____

What is the reason they suggested you apply for services? _____

IVRS USE ONLY:

Referral Notes:

Date Stamp Received:

IVRS USE ONLY

If low vision question is checked “yes” send referral to IDB and notify the individual. If the individual does not want to be referred to IDB, notify him/her that IVRS does not serve this population.

Source of Referral at Application

- ☐ 14(c) Certificate Holders *
- ☐ Adult Education and Literacy Programs *
- ☐ American Indian VR Services Program
- ☐ Centers for Independent Living
- ☐ Child Protective Services
- ☐ Community Rehabilitation Programs
- ☐ Consumer Organizations or Advocacy Groups
- ☐ One-stop Employment/Training Centers (Department of Labor Employment and Training Service Programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth)
- ☐ Educational Institutions (Elementary/Secondary)
- ☐ Educational Institutions (Postsecondary)
- ☐ Employers
- ☐ Extended Employment Providers *
- ☐ Faith Based Organizations
- ☐ Family/Friends
- ☐ Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Providers
- ☐ Medical Health Provider (Public or Private)
- ☐ Mental Health Provider (Public or Private)
- ☐ Public Housing Authority
- ☐ Self-referral
- ☐ Social Security Administration (Disability Determination Service or District office)
- ☐ State Department of Correction/Juvenile Justice
- ☐ State Employment Service Agency **
- ☐ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) *
- ☐ Veteran's Benefits Administration (which includes VA Vocational Rehabilitation)
- ☐ Veteran's Health Administration (the VA hospital system, as well as the VA transitional living, transitional employment, and compensated work therapy programs)
- ☐ Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program *
- ☐ Welfare Agency (State or local government)
- ☐ Worker's Compensation
- ☐ Other One-stop Partner *
- ☐ Other Sources
- ☐ Other State Agencies
- ☐ Other VR State Agencies
- ☐ Other WIOA-funded Programs including Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native Americans, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs *

*Do not use until 7/1/17

**Do not use after 6/30/17

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Application

Personal Information:

Application Date: _____

First Name: _____ Middle/Maiden Name: _____

Last Name: _____ Preferred Name: _____

Home Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

County: _____ Home Phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Sex: Male Female Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Are you a veteran? Yes No

Do you require an interpreter? Yes No Language: _____

Preferred Method of Communication: Email Phone Video Relay

Permission to Send Text Messages: No Yes

Do you have a legal guardian? No Yes Name: _____ Phone: _____

Race: Please check all that apply

White Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Black or African American

Asian American Indian or Alaska Native

Ethnicity: Please check one.

Hispanic or Latino No Yes

Referral Source:

Who referred you for services? _____ Phone Number: _____

Vision Impairment:

Do you have a significant vision impairment? No Yes (If no, skip to next section)

Cause: _____ Onset Date: _____

Acuity: _____ Date of Last Eye Exam: _____

Media Choice: Braille Electronic Large Print

Contact Information:

Is there someone who would usually be able to help us contact you?

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Employment:

Do you have the documents necessary to comply with Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, which all employers must file for new employees? No Yes

Are you currently employed? No Yes

Employer: _____ Job Title: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Wage: _____ per _____ (hour, week, biweekly, monthly, year)

Hours Per Week: _____ Date Began: _____

Specific Duties: _____

Transportation:

Do you have reliable transportation to get you to and from appointments and work? No Yes

What type of transportation do you use? (Check all that apply)

Private Vehicle Bus Taxi Family/Friends Other: Please explain _____