

Getting to Work!

For High School Students

Should I Work if I Can?

YES! Work isn't just about making money. People with disabilities who work are also more likely to have more friends, a more active social life, and feel better about themselves.¹

Working can help you have a better life! So, if you can, and your family/guardians agree, you should Get to Work!



How Can I Get to Work?

Getting to Work with Special Education

If you're getting Special Education services, you'll have an Individualized Education Program or IEP. Your IEP isn't just about school. It should help you to prepare to get the education and services that you need for your future.

Your IEP becomes especially important after you turn 14. That's when your school should be working with you to give your Transition Services. Transition Services are there to help you plan out your future, including helping you come up with preliminary goals for working and getting the support and experiences you need to begin thinking about work.²

So, at your next IEP meeting (you should always go to your IEP meetings!), ask your Team how it can help you figure out what kind of jobs you might want to get, what you'll need to get there, and who could help. Work with your Team to think about whether you want to get job training to learn a specific skill or job, or if you want to go to college and get a degree.

Getting to Work with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation or BVR is the Nevada agency that helps people with disabilities get what they need to work. Its job is to help people get ready to work, find jobs, succeed in their jobs, and advance in their careers.³ BVR can help when you're in High School by giving you Pre-Employment Transition Services or Pre-ETS. If you're 14 or older and either have an IEP or a 504 Plan, you should get the Pre-ETS.

You don't have to apply or ask for the Pre-ETS. Your school and BVR should work together to give you the Pre-ETS you need.⁴ Pre-ETS services include:

- Job Exploration Counseling to help you think of jobs you might want.
- Work based learning experiences and paid or unpaid temporary work experiences based on your interests.
- Post-secondary Education Counseling to help you think about whether you want to go to college or schools that can help you learn job skills.
- Workplace Readiness Training to help you learn how to look for and apply for a job, make a resume and give a good interview.
- Self-Advocacy skills training, including working with other people with disabilities to help you learn how to get what you need and direct your life.⁵

Like we said, BVR can begin working with you after you turn 14. But, if you're 14 and haven't heard from BVR, we recommend you ask your school about Pre-ETS or contact BVR. If you're in Southern Nevada, you can call BVR at (702) 486-5230. If you're in Northern Nevada, you can call BVR at (775) 687-6860.

BVR can also work with you after you finish High School! We have another brochure that talks about ways BVR can help then.



Will I Lose my Benefits if I Work?

Many people with disabilities are afraid to work because they think that earning money will make them to lose the benefits they need – like Social Security (SSI or SSDI), Medicaid or SNAP (Food Stamps).⁶

If you're worried about losing your benefits if you work, we recommend that you talk to BVR. You can also talk to the Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC), who may be able to help.

In Nevada, the CWIC is Julie Taylor, the Nevada Ticket To Work/WIPA Program Coordinator. You can reach her at (719)597-0068 or www.AbilityConnectionsColorado.org. Julie can also tell you about ways you can open and use an ABLE Account so you can earn more money and keep your benefits.⁷

¹Boardman, J. (2003). Work, employment and psychiatric disability. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 9(5), 327-334 (summarizing studies).

² 20 USC 1401(34)

³ 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(2)

⁴ 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(2)

⁵ 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(2)

⁶ Morris, Michael, Christopher Rodriguez, and Peter Blanck. "ABLE accounts: A down payment on freedom." *Inclusion* 4.1 (2016): 21-29.

⁷ Martinis, J. & Harris, J. (2019). ABLE accounts and supported decision-making: Building a pathway to independence, inclusion and a "decent quality of life." National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making. <http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/node/475>