Employment Resources and Self-Help Guide for Individuals with Disabilities

Authored by FAAST  www.faast.org

Sponsored by the Department of Education/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State of Florida

Original legal review by Mr. Gordon B. Scott, Esq. June 2010

This Resource Guide is not a substitute for legal advice

This Employment Guide originated June 2010 and revised August 2013 with updated hyperlinks and additional information and assistance resources; informative websites; tutorials; frequently asked questions (FAQs); factsheets; guides; and other current relevant resources
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Section I: For Individuals with Disabilities Transitioning From School to Work and Seeking Employment
Going to Work

DEFINING WORK

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines work as:

Activity in which one exerts strength or faculties to do or perform something:

A. Sustained physical or mental effort to overcome obstacles and achieve an objective or result
B. The labor, task, or duty that is one's accustomed means of livelihood
C. A specific task, duty, function, or assignment often being a part or phase of some larger activity

However, the meaning of work is very personal; work can mean different things to different people.

Some individuals view work as a source of:

A. Physical and/or mental exercise
B. Experience
C. Financial stability
D. Success
E. Gainful activity
F. Personal fulfillment

In order to compete, jobseekers of all abilities must educate themselves on the process of pursuing employment as well as the challenges and benefits.

COSTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Where work provides a means of financial stability, unemployment can lead to the inability to meet financial obligations. Failure to pay mortgage payments or to pay rent may lead to homelessness through foreclosure or eviction. The loss of health insurance benefits that comes with unemployment increases susceptibility to malnutrition, illness, mental stress, and loss of self-esteem, leading to depression. The combination of unemployment, lack of financial resources, and social responsibilities can lead unemployed individuals to seek jobs that do not fit their skills or allow them to use their talents. Unemployment can cause underemployment.

What are some disadvantages of unemployment?

Studies have shown that employment rates are also linked to increased crime and suicide in society, and causes less goods and services to be produced. Other disadvantages of unemployment.

In Florida, human resources – people – are essential to fueling the state’s economy. For additional resources on employment statistics, unemployment rates and fastest growing industries in Florida, go to www.floridajobs.org.
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) monthly unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) now includes a subcategory for individuals with disabilities (the first report was released in February for the months of October 2008 through January 2009). The unemployment rate includes individuals who actively sought employment within the last four weeks or who are expecting a recall after a layoff, are not working, and are available to work. Data on the employment status of people with a disability.

The rate does not measure individuals who are discouraged or otherwise not in the labor force, and does include individuals who reside in an institution but who may be actively seeking employment. The number is not seasonally adjusted and therefore should not be compared with seasonally adjusted rates. The typically reported monthly overall unemployment rate is seasonally adjusted. Economic News Release – Employment Situation Summary.

It has been often misstated that the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is around 70%. This is the result of mistakenly subtracting the employment rate for individuals with disabilities, which has been in the range of 30% – 37% for the past several decades, from 100%. The unemployment rate is defined differently than the employment rate and therefore a simple subtraction of the employment rate from 100% is incorrect. The full article from Cornell University which describes in detail why the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities has never been 70%.

A project of Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR), Disability and Employment Institute funded by the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The website provides some of the most up to date and comprehensive statistics on disability and employment, including the employment rate, at both a state and national level. Go to www.disabilitystatistics.org.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s Disability Employment Tabulation contains disability statistics and allows for customized information on disability, employment, and other factors listed at the municipal, state, and national levels, as well as other geographic configurations.

Government and Private Information & Assistance Resources Leading to Employment

GUIDES TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JOB SEARCHES

U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR’S DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES

The use of this information has expanded from job matching applications to various uses for employment counseling, occupational and career guidance, and labor market information services. Click here for the complete Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) revised fourth edition, as supplied electronically by the U.S. Department of Labor.
Welcome to the Nation’s premier source for career information! The profiles featured here cover hundreds of occupations and describe what they do, work environment, how to become one, pay, and more. Each profile also includes Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) employment projections for the 2010–20 decade.

U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JOB SEARCH GUIDE

The U.S. Federal Government has a formal, methodical hiring process which tries to ensure fairness to all. Click Guide to Federal Government Job Search.

HOW TO GET A JOB IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Here's a step-by-step plan to find and apply for federal jobs. Tells how to understand vacancy announcements, develop your resume and other useful tips.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Click here to find out how to apply for government career opportunities with the U.S. Department of Labor.

PUBLICATIONS AND GUIDES FOR JOB SEEKERS

JOB SEEKERS GUIDE

Go to http://jobseekersguide.org/ where you can:

- Manage Your Career
- Assess Yourself
- Explore Careers
- Create a Plan & Set Goals
- Expand Skills
- Find a Job

THE JOB SEEKER’S GUIDE TO ONLINE JOB SEARCHING

Offers helpful information on launching a job search that can be a daunting task for anyone, whether you’re a transitioning veteran job seeker, looking to change careers or a novice. Here is a guide to devising the most effective job search strategy.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO’S JOB SEEKER’S GUIDE

The Job Seeker’s Guide is designed to assist you in your job search. Included in this guide are many helpful tips that can help you throughout your job search.
In this guide, you will learn how to:

- Apply job search strategies
- Write and format a resume
- Conduct yourself during a phone screen
- Excel before, during, and after an interview
- Dress professionally
- Master a behavioral interview
- Answer tricky interview questions

A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR JOB SEEKERS

Click [here](#) to get started building a job search strategy.

FEDERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, provides federal funds to states and protectorates of the United States to ensure that the Federal Government plays a leadership role in promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with significant disabilities, and in assisting States and providers of services in fulfilling the aspirations of such individuals with disabilities for meaningful and gainful employment and independent living. The purpose of Title I Rehabilitation Act funding is to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society, through--

(A) statewide workforce investment systems implemented in accordance with title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 [29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.] that include, as integral components, comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art programs of vocational rehabilitation;

(B) independent living centers and services;

(C) research;

(D) training;

(E) demonstration projects; and

(F) the guarantee of equal opportunity.

THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, AS AMENDED, SECTION 101 (A)(5)

In the event that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for the services, the State plan shall--

(A) show the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;

(B) provide the justification for the order of selection;
(C) include an assurance that, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection, individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services; and

(D) provide that eligible individuals, who do not meet the order of selection criteria, shall have access to services provided through the information and referral system implemented under paragraph (20).

Applying for Vocational Rehabilitation Services

(1) A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if the person has a disability and requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

(2) Determinations by other state or federal agencies regarding whether an individual satisfies one or more factors relating to the determination that an individual has a disability may be used. Individuals determined to have a disability pursuant to Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act shall be considered to have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome.

(3) An individual shall be presumed to benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services under this part unless the division can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome. To demonstrate that an individual cannot benefit from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the individual's disability, the division shall conduct an extended evaluation, not to exceed 18 months. The evaluation must determine the eligibility of the individual and the nature and scope of needed vocational rehabilitation services. The extended evaluation must be reviewed once every 90 days to determine whether the individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

(4) The division shall determine the eligibility of an individual for vocational rehabilitation services within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days after the individual has submitted an application to receive vocational rehabilitation services, unless the division notifies the individual that exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the division prevent the division from completing the determination within the prescribed time and the individual agrees that an extension of time is warranted or that an extended evaluation is required.

(5) As soon as a determination has been made that an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the division must complete an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs and ensure that an individualized written rehabilitation program is prepared.

(a) The individualized written rehabilitation program must be jointly developed, agreed upon, and signed by the vocational rehabilitation counselor or coordinator and the eligible individual or, in an appropriate case, a parent, family member, guardian, advocate, or authorized representative, of such individual.

(b) The division must ensure that each individualized written rehabilitation program is designed to achieve the employment objective of the individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of the individual, and otherwise meets the content requirements for individualized written rehabilitation programs as set out in federal law or regulation.

(c) Each individualized written rehabilitation program shall be reviewed annually, at which time the individual, or the individual's parent, guardian, advocate, or authorized representative, shall be afforded an opportunity to review the program and jointly redevelop and agree to its terms. Each individualized written rehabilitation program shall be revised as needed.
The division must ensure that a determination of ineligibility made with respect to an individual prior to the initiation of an individualized written rehabilitation program, based upon the review, and, to the extent necessary, upon the preliminary assessment, includes specification of the reasons for such a determination; the rights and remedies available to the individual, including, if appropriate, recourse to administrative remedies; and the availability of services provided by the client assistance program to the individual.

If the division provides an eligible person with vocational rehabilitation services in the form of vehicle modifications, the division shall consider all options available, including the purchase of a new, original equipment manufacturer vehicle that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act for transportation vehicles. The division shall make the decision on vocational rehabilitation services based on the best interest of the client and cost-effectiveness.

In the event the division is unable to provide services to all eligible individuals, the division shall establish an order of selection and serve first those persons who have the most severe disabilities.

For information, go to: Florida Statute §413.30(4).

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides services for eligible persons with physical or mental disabilities. These services are designed to assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for employment as well as to keep, maintain, or advance in employment.

**PRESUMPTION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

An individual who has a disability or is blind as determined pursuant to title II or title XVI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq. and 1381 et seq.) shall be--

(i) considered to be an individual with a significant disability under section 7(21)(A); and

(ii) presumed to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services under this title (provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual) unless the designated State unit involved can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that such individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual.


**INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)**

(b) Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment

(1) Options for developing an individualized plan for employment

If an individual is determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services as described in subsection (a), the designated State unit shall complete the assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, as appropriate, and shall provide the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, with information on the individual's options for developing an individualized plan for employment, including--

(A) information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined to be appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the individualized
plan for employment for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of
the individualized plan for employment for the individual;

(B) a description of the full range of components that shall be included in an individualized plan for
employment;

(C) as appropriate--

(i) an explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an
individualized plan for employment;

(ii) additional information the eligible individual requests or the designated State unit determines to be
necessary; and

(iii) information on the availability of assistance in completing designated State agency forms required in
developing an individualized plan for employment; and

(D)(i) a description of the rights and remedies available to such an individual including, if appropriate, recourse
to the processes set forth in subsection (c); and

(ii) a description of the availability of a client assistance program established pursuant to section 112 and
information about how to contact the client assistance program.

For more information, go to: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Section 102 (b)(1) and 29 U.S.C. §722
(b)(1).

**HOW AN IPE IS DEVELOPED**

An Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be developed and implemented in a timely manner
consistent with the needs of the individual.

An IPE, developed by the individual and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Counselor, is a
description of the specific rehabilitation services. IPE must include the total cost of services and the amount of
the financial participation by both the individual and DVR. All services provided must be needed for the
individual to achieve an employment outcome.

An IPE must be designed to achieve the specific employment outcome that is selected by the individual and
consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities,
interests and informed choice; and

The IPE must to the maximum extent appropriate result in employment in an integrated setting.

**OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING AN IPE**

Eligible individuals or the individual's representative must be provided in writing and in an appropriate mode
of communication with information on the individual's options for developing an individualized plan for
employment including:

Information on the availability of assistance, to the extent the individual desires assistance, from a DVR
counselor in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual, and the
availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the IPE. For more information, go to the DVR
Counselor Manual, Chapter 8.
Florida Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (DVR)

In Florida, vocational rehabilitation programs that can assist eligible individuals with disabilities achieve meaningful careers are located within the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE). [www.fldoe.org/](http://www.fldoe.org/)

The general Vocational Rehabilitation agency is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). For more information, go to: [www.rehabworks.org/](http://www.rehabworks.org/) or call toll-free (800) 451-4327 (Voice/TDD).

In order to better understand your rights, responsibilities and the vocational rehabilitation process to receive services you should thoroughly review the DVR Counselor Manual in its entirety (chapters 1–18 including additional operational policies and procedures related documents) found at: [http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml).

To review the DVR office directory and to locate a DVR office in your area, click [here](http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml).

### GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Vocational Rehabilitation is an employment program assisting individuals with disabilities, including Floridians with the most severe disabilities with the opportunity to obtain gainful employment in integrated settings.

Vocational Rehabilitation programs are provided in all 50 states and protectorates of the United States. Individuals with a disability may apply and be assessed for vocational rehabilitation services to help prepare for, gain or retain employment. Found at [29 U.S.C. §722(a)(1)(A)&(B)](http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml).

Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, governs state public vocational rehabilitation programs found at [29 U.S.C. §§ 701-751](http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml) and corresponding federal regulations implementing vocational rehabilitation programs is found at [34 C.F.R. 361](http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml).

Depending on your individual circumstances, individuals with disabilities may qualify for services necessary to become employed. A few examples of services that may be provided include: diagnostics, medical and physical restoration services; educational/postsecondary educational training; vocational training; assistive technology; assistive technology devices and support services; rehabilitation engineering such as home and vehicle modifications; tuition, books, fees and supplies; transportation assistance; durable medical equipment; computer and support equipment; speech, occupational, physical, and mental health therapies; medical treatment and medications; child care services; tools and equipment; help with a small business; and a myriad of other individual services unique to an individual’s vocational rehabilitation circumstances. Eligible individuals with disabilities who receive vocational rehabilitation services have the right to choice, including but not limited to, choice of training, and vendors such as doctors, therapists, and numerous other vendors the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) contracts with.

All individuals with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation services have the right to apply and to be fairly assessed for services within a 60-day timeframe required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and also found in Florida Statute 413 respectively.

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is currently under an order of selection, which is required if the Division is not able to provide services to all eligible individuals. An order of selection means the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation must serve first those persons who have the most severe disabilities.
DVR administrators and staff are dedicated professionals there to help you with a successful employment outcome. They will need and expect your full cooperation and participation in your rehabilitation program to help you achieve a successful employment outcome. DVR has an affirmative responsibility to ensure that they do not duplicate programs and services you may be eligible for through other state or private programs referred to as similar benefits. They also, when it is applicable, require subrogation agreements with any other entity responsible for services related to vocational rehabilitation, such as a subrogation agreement with an insurance company also providing similar benefits including rehabilitation services.

In addition to the various services that DVR provides, the following are a few highlighted programs that are within the General VR Program.

**TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM**

This program is a Social Security Administration (SSA) program. It is designed to give individuals a choice of service providers for rehabilitation, case management development, and job placement services. Employment Networks (EN), under contract with SSA, provide these services. The Program also protects individuals from Continuing Disability Reviews.

For more information, on this program, go to [http://www.rehabworks.org/ticket.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/ticket.shtml).

**SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION SERVICES**

This program involves a number of activities that help students enter training, continue education and/or work after leaving high school. For more info, go to [http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml).

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

These resources are for individuals with the most severe disabilities and need intensive support employment services. For more info, go to [http://www.rehabworks.org/supported.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/supported.shtml).

**DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, LATE-DEAFENED, AND DEAF-BLIND PROGRAM**

This program assists consumers prepare for training and help from VR to obtain employment. For more info, go to [http://www.rehabworks.org/deaf.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/deaf.shtml).

**INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM**

This program provides services through a statewide network of private non-profit, non-residential, locally based and consumer controlled Centers for Independent Living. For more info, go to [http://www.rehabworks.org/indep_living.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/indep_living.shtml).

**WORKERS’ COMPENSATION REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

This program provides appropriate reemployment services designed to assist Florida injured workers return to work and monitors carriers and rehabilitation providers to insure compliance with the rehabilitation and reemployment services requirements in the Florida Workers’ Compensation Law. For more info, go to [http://www.rehabworks.org/brrs.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/brrs.shtml).
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES GRANT

The goal of this grant is to provide school districts and community colleges with funding that gives adults with disabilities and senior citizens the opportunity for enhancement of skills that is consistent with their abilities and needs. For more info, go to http://www.rehabworks.org/adults.shtml.

FLORIDA REHABILITATION COUNCIL

This council is committed to increasing employment, enhancing independence, and improving the quality of life for Floridians with disabilities by evaluation, planning and the coordination of services. The Council is appointed by the Government and must be composed of a majority of individuals with disabilities. For more information, go to http://www.rehabworks.org/rehabcouncil.shtml.

THE HISTORY OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

The Smith-Fess Act of 1920 was the beginning of the public rehabilitation program for persons with disabilities. Funds were provided for vocational guidance, training, prosthetics, and placement services. There have been many laws enacted to enhance the life of persons with disabilities. For example, the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 outlined the intent of Congress to ensure consumer choice in career opportunities. For more information, go to history.

DBS - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH VISUAL DISABILITIES AND BLINDNESS

In Florida, within the State Department of Education there is also a Division of Blind Services (DBS). DBS has several programs including a Vocational Rehabilitation Program that is subject to the same terms and conditions as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation listed above. For more information, go to: dbs.myflorida.com/ or call toll-free 1-800-342-1828.

DBS SERVICES

The Florida Division of Blind Services (DBS) within the Florida Department of Education receives federal and state funding to administer programs that serve individuals of all ages. They offer programs and projects and work with partner agencies in the community to provide a broad array of services to individuals with visual disabilities and blindness.

Their mission is “to ensure blind and visually impaired Floridians have the tools, support and opportunity to achieve success.” Their vision statement includes “In partnership with others, create a barrier free environment in the lives of Floridians with visual disabilities.”

Additionally, in cooperation with the Florida Division of Blind Services and the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind this website provides resources.
The DBS **Blind Babies Program** was established by the Florida Legislature in 2000 to help provide community-based early intervention education for children from birth through five years of age who are blind or with visual disabilities, and for their parents, families, and caregivers.

Early intervention services offered through the Blind Babies Program are delivered by community-based provider organizations. The Blind Babies Program promotes early development with a special emphasis on vision skills to minimize developmental delays laying the groundwork for future learning by helping a child progress through developmental stages. The Blind Babies Program works to link children and their families to other available resources as well that may assist in the future.

If you are the parent or caregiver of an infant or young child who is blind or with a severe visual disability, you might find these Florida links helpful:

- [Children’s Medical Services – Early Steps](#)
- [Family Network on Disabilities in Florida](#)
- [Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System](#)
- [Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services](#)

The DBS **Children’s Program** was also established by the Florida Legislature in 2000 and is designed to serve children who are blind from five years of age through transition to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The Children’s Program can work to supplement services already required to be provided by the school system under special education law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)), as well as reasonable accommodations for children not in special education under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as auxiliary aids and services required under the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA).

DBS Children’s Program Specialists serve eligible children so that they may reach educational and independent living goals. The DBS Children’s Program works to help foster a child's learning and ability to function independently. A child's parents, guardian, and family members are an integral part of the program in order to help foster independence. Setting goals to reach successful outcomes help enable students to transition from school to Vocational Rehabilitation or other appropriate community programs.

For more information on children’s rights under these laws and regulations, FAAST, Inc. offers self-help resources guides at [www.faast.org/resources/library](http://www.faast.org/resources/library).

The goal of the DBS **Transition Program** is to assist young people in meeting their future employment goals through transitioning from school to work or from school to a higher educational program. Students must have a visual disability in both eyes and require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for employment.
Transition services are generally provided through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. However, they could also be provided through the Children’s Program. In either case, the student will have a Plan of Services. The types of services to be provided through DBS are normally incorporated into the student's individualized education transition plan as well.

The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. You can review this definition at 29 U.S.C. §705(37).

FAAST, Inc. offers a self-help resource guide to promote effective transition planning.

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### DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Programs and Services

**Vocational Rehabilitation programs and services** are housed within the Florida Department of Education. DBS provides vocational rehabilitation services to assist individuals with blindness and visual disabilities achieve employment outcomes and meaningful careers. Qualified individuals must have a bilateral visual disability which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and needs services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, provides federal funds to states and protectorates of the United States to ensure that the federal government plays a leadership role in promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with significant disabilities, and in assisting states and providers of services in fulfilling the aspirations of such individuals with disabilities for meaningful and gainful employment and independent living.

Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, governs state public vocational rehabilitation programs found at 29 U.S.C. §§ 701-751 and corresponding federal regulations implementing vocational rehabilitation programs is found at 34 C.F.R. 361. The purpose of Title I Rehabilitation Act funding is to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society, through -

(A) statewide workforce investment systems implemented in accordance with title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 [29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.] that include, as integral components, comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art programs of vocational rehabilitation;

(B) independent living centers and services;

(C) research;

(D) training;

(E) demonstration projects; and

(F) the guarantee of equal opportunity.
Individuals with blindness and visual disabilities may apply and be assessed for vocational rehabilitation services to help prepare for, gain or retain employment (29 U.S.C. §722(a)(1)(A)&(B)). A few examples of services that may be provided under an individualized plan for employment (IPE) include, but are not limited to, diagnostics, medical and physical restoration services; educational/postsecondary educational training; vocational training; assistive technology; assistive technology devices and support services; rehabilitation engineering such as home and vehicle modifications; tuition, books, fees and supplies; transportation assistance; durable medical equipment; computer and support equipment; speech, occupational, physical, and mental health therapies; medical treatment and medications; child care services; tools and equipment; help with a small business; and a myriad of other individual services unique to an individuals’ vocational rehabilitation circumstances. Eligible individuals with disabilities who receive vocational rehabilitation services have the right to choice, including, but not limited to, choice of career, training, and vendors, such as doctors, therapists, and numerous other vendors the Florida Division of Blind Services contracts with.

In order to better understand your rights, responsibilities and the vocational rehabilitation process to receive services you may wish to request to review the DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Manual or you may choose to contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP). CAPs are required under Section 112 of the Rehabilitation Act to assist individuals who have issues with Vocational Rehabilitation programs and services. The Florida Client Assistance Program is housed within Disability Rights Florida and can be reached at 1-800-342-0823 or on the web at www.disabilityrightsflorida.org.

**FLORIDA BUREAU OF BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBS)**

The Florida Bureau of Business Enterprise (BBE) Program within DBS administers one of the largest vending and food service programs operated by individuals who are legally blind and blind in the United States. The Florida Bureau of Business Enterprise Program provides job opportunities in the food service sector for eligible legally blind and blind persons under the Randolph-Sheppard Act. Job opportunities include: snack bar, cafeteria, highway vending machines, or non-highway vending.

If you are legally blind and a United States citizen, you might want to consider the Florida Bureau of Business Enterprise Program as your career choice. Read about the Florida BBE Program to see how you can begin an exciting career as a manager of a vending or food services facility.

**THE REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (DBS)**

The DBS Rehabilitation Center is a place where individuals with blindness and visual disabilities can reside temporarily while they receive comprehensive training to help adjust to their disabilities and learn to have more productive, self-sufficient lives. The Rehabilitation Center program incorporates instruction in a variety of independence skills, as well as case management, including home management, cooking, cleaning, personal care, labeling, orientation and mobility, Braille, access computer technology, adaptive equipment and devices, college prep, job readiness, home repairs, adaptation to blindness and many other skills that contribute to independence and the confidence to seek the highest level of employment possible.
THE TECHNOLOGY CENTER FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE MANDERFIELD TECHNICAL TRAINING LABORATORY (DBS)

There is a new Technology Center and this newly constructed facility is located on the grounds of the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Daytona, replacing the Manderfield Technical Training Laboratory, which for many years was the training site for hundreds of individuals with blindness and visual disabilities. The Technology Center offers computer training which focuses on software and hardware that can be useful in the home environment, in preparation for college or for competitive employment. Speech access and screen enlargement training as well as the use of specialized note-takers and other equipment and devices are also available.

You may contact the Technology Center at:

401 Platt Street
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Main Number: (386) 254-3856
Toll Free: (800) 522-5078
Fax: (386) 254-3872

DBS INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES THROUGH COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Independent Living Services are provided through a partnership with DBS and currently offer 20 Community Rehabilitation Programs across the state to enable individuals who are blind or have severe visual disabilities to live more independently in their homes and communities with a maximum degree of self-direction. Independent living goal planning can result in successful outcomes to help enable individuals to live more independently in their community and/or to employment.

CONKLIN CENTER

The Conklin Center’s mission is to empower children and adults who are blind and have one or more disabilities in addition to visual disabilities to develop their potential to be able to obtain competitive employment, live independently and fully participate in community life.

Each student has unique abilities and needs, but they all share the same dream - to be productive members of society: to work, to make the decisions that affect their lives, and live with dignity. Officials with the Conklin Center teach the daily living and vocational skills that students need to live on their own and they offer ongoing supported employment/supported living services.

BUREAU OF BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOKS LIBRARY

The Florida Division of Blind Services, in partnership with the Library of Congress and other community partners, provides accessible information and reading materials needed by individuals who are unable to use standard print because of a visual, physical, or reading disability. These free services are provided through the DBS Bureau of Braille and Talking Books Library.
If you live in Florida and have trouble reading print as the result of a visual disability, a reading disability, or difficulty holding a book because of arthritis, a stroke, or an accident, you may apply for Bureau of Braille and Talking Books Library services. Qualified individuals with disabilities, libraries, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, and other Florida programs may also apply for services. Their toll-free number is 1-800-226-6075.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibit employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local governments; and Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the federal government. The EEOC also enforces a number of other non-disability related laws as well as providing oversight and coordination of all federal equal employment opportunity regulations, practices, and policies.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20507
Voice: (202) 663-4900
TTY: (202) 663-4494
Web: www.eeoc.gov

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION RESOURCES

The law requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer. A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

The EEOC provides more information on reasonable accommodations, found at www.eeoc.gov/facts/accommodation.html.

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

UNITED STATES EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC)
The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibit employment discrimination against qualified individuals with
disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local governments. EEOC also enforces sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the federal government.

Federal laws concerning workplace discrimination are enforced by different federal agencies; however, the EEOC is responsible for coordinating the federal government's employment non-discrimination effort. The EEOC is required to review regulations and other EEO policy-related documents before they are issued to ensure consistency in the federal government's effort to combat workplace discrimination. For more information, go to coordination.

Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer. A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment. The EEOC provides more information on reasonable accommodations at http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/accommodation.html.

Every workplace should have emergency evacuation procedures in place. A comprehensive plan should provide for prompt assistance to individuals with disabilities, or those whose medical conditions may necessitate it. Federal disability discrimination laws do not prevent employers from obtaining and using medical information in the event of an evacuation. For more information on these rights and responsibilities, go to http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/evacuation.html.

The EEOC clarifies that discrimination is forbidden in every aspect of employment, including job advertisements, recruitment, application and hiring, job referrals, job assignments and promotions, pay and benefits, employment references, reasonable accommodation and disability, reasonable accommodation and religion, training and apprenticeship programs, harassment, terms and conditions of employment, pre-employment inquiries, dress code, and constructive discharge/forced resignation. For further discussion about each of these specific issues, go to http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm.

Other EEOC publications and information that may be of interest include: Your Employment Rights as an Individual with a Disability and Job Applicants and the ADA.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20507
Voice: (202) 663-4900
TTY: (202) 663-4494
Web: www.eeoc.gov

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**FILING AN EEOC COMPLAINT OR LAWSUIT**

After you have filed the discrimination charge with the EEOC and it has been resolved, you may receive a “Notice-of-Right-to-Sue” at the time your charge is dismissed, usually after completion of an investigation.
This notice gives you permission to file a lawsuit in a court of law. Once you receive the notice, you must file your lawsuit within 90 days. For more information on this process, click filing a lawsuit.

EEOC INFORMATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
Click here for guidance for federal employees about Federal Sector EEO process, Federal equal employment opportunity laws, discriminatory practices, and other legal resources.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Federal, state, and local agencies, programs, projects, and facilities receiving federal funds are subject to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in federally assisted programs and activities (see 29 U.S.C. §974).

Each Federal agency has its own set of section 504 regulations that apply to its own programs. Agencies that provide Federal financial assistance also have section 504 regulations covering entities that receive Federal aid. Requirements common to these regulations include reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities; program accessibility; effective communication with people who have hearing or vision disabilities; and accessible new construction and alterations. Each agency is responsible for enforcing its own regulations.

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
1-800-514-0301 (voice)
1-800-514-0383 (TTY)
Web: www.ada.gov

The U.S. Department of Justice offers technical assistance and guidance on Title I of the ADA for job applicants, employees, and employers including but not limited to: A Guide for People with Disabilities Seeking Employment; ADA: Know Your Rights -- Returning Service Members with Disabilities; ADA Questions and Answers; "Ten Employment Myths"; and more.

THE FLORIDA COURTS
The Florida Courts website offers information to the general public on ADA Title I guidelines. For more information, click here.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY
The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U. S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

Office of Disability Employment Policy
Voice Toll Free: (866)633-7365
TTY Toll Free: (877)889-5627
FAX: (202)693-7888
E-mail: infoODEP@dol.gov
Web: www.dol.gov/odep
JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is one of several services provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). JAN is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities. JAN offers an Accommodation and Compliance Series Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost, High Impact, as well as a series of publications offering accommodations information and ideas, by disability (see http://askjan.org/media/atoz.htm).

Job Accommodation Network
West Virginia University
PO Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Voice Toll Free: (800)526-7234
TTY Toll Free: (877)781-9403
FAX: (304)293-5407
E-mail: jan@jan.wvu.edu
Web: http://askjan.org/

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 rewrote federal statutes governing programs of job training, adult education and literacy and vocational rehabilitation. The goals of the WIA are to improve the quality of the workforce, enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation and to reduce welfare dependency.

In addition to replacing the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), it mandates the use of One-Stop Operating Systems. The Act is designed to streamline services, eliminate duplication of services and empower individuals to obtain the services and the skills they want and need. More flexibility for the Local Workforce Development Boards to operate programs, along with more accountability for their programs, is an essential part of the Act.

States were given the option to implement WIA early or wait until the mandatory date of July 2000. Florida opted to implement early and started on July 1, 1999. Florida Leaders had already addressed many of the same goals outlined in the Workforce Investment Act with the implementation of the Workforce Florida Act.

There are three categories of individuals addressed in Title I of the Workforce Investment Act: Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.

- Adults are any individuals over 18 years of age who may not fit the criteria for other categories.
- Dislocated workers are individuals who become unemployed and are eligible to receive Unemployment Compensation or have established an attachment to the labor market. Also included in the Dislocated Worker category are displaced homemakers. Individuals who are employed but need services to obtain or retain employment, which leads to self-sufficiency, as defined locally, may be eligible for assistance as an Adult or Dislocated Worker.

- Youth services participants are individuals from 14 years to 21 years of age, who are low income and face one or more of the specified barriers. Youth who fall between the ages of 18 and 21 years may receive services as a youth or adult or both at the same time.
GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT (GINA)

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) took effect on November 21, 2009, and prohibits genetic information discrimination in employment.

Under GINA, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of genetic information for employment purposes, or to harass a person because of genetic information. For more information, go to genetic.

CENTER FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

The mission of the Center for Personal Assistance Services is to provide research, training, dissemination and technical assistance on issues of workplace personal assistance services (WPAS) in the United States. The Center’s extensive website lists and describes programs available in each state including WPAS state plans and waiver programs as well as the Department of Aging programs. WPAS include work task-related assistance, such as the use of a reader for business documents not otherwise available electronically, a sign language interpreter for company meetings or trainings, and help lifting or reaching work-related items. WPAS may include personal care-related assistance such as helping an employee to access the restroom, eat or drink at work, or travel for business purposes.

Center for Personal Assistance Services
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Nursing, University of California
3333 California Street, Suite 455
San Francisco, CA
Voice/TTY Toll Free: (866)PAS-9577
E-mail: WPAS@itsa.ucsf.edu
Web: www.pascenter.org/home/index.php

INDEPENDENT LIVING RESEARCH UTILIZATION PROGRAM

ILRU program is a national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance in independent living. They operate the IL NETWORK with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and organizations and individuals involved in independent living nationwide. A list of CILs can be found at ILRU’s website: http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html.

REGISTRY OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF (RID)

RID is a national membership organization representing the professionals who facilitate communication between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and people who hear.

Possessing RID certification is a highly valued asset for an interpreter. For the betterment of both the profession and service to the consumer, RID has a tri-fold approach to the standards it maintains for membership:

- RID Certification Programs strive to maintain strict adherence to nationally recognized testing industry standards of validity, reliability, equity and legal defensibility.
- **Certified Maintenance Program (CMP)** is an avenue through which the continued skill development of certified interpreters/translitterators is monitored and nourished.

- **Ethical Practices System (EPS) and NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (CPC)** are two vehicles which provide guidance and enforcement to professionalism and conduct. The EPS provides an opportunity for consumers to address concerns or file complaints regarding the quality of interpreter/transliterator services, and the CPC sets the standards to which all individuals holding RID certification are expected to adhere.

In addition to numerous publications about interpreting services, the RID website includes a searchable database that allows one to locate RID members who possess particular credentials or are located in a specific geographical area; go to [https://www.rid.org/acct-app/index.cfm?action=search.members](https://www.rid.org/acct-app/index.cfm?action=search.members).

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
333 Commerce Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 838-0030
(703) 838-0459 TTY
Web: [www.rid.org](http://www.rid.org)

### Information and Assistance Resources for Veterans

**COMPUTER/ELECTRONIC ACCOMMODATIONS PROGRAM (CAP)**

The **Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP)** provides assistive technology and support services to individuals with disabilities and wounded service members. These include those that are blind, vision-impaired, deaf, hearing impaired or with a dexterity, communication, cognitive, or learning disability. CAP increases access to information and works to remove barriers to employment opportunities by eliminating the costs of assistive technology and accommodation solutions.

CAP works closely with federal hiring managers, supervisors and IT professionals involved in the recruitment, placement, promotion and retention of people with disabilities or wounded service members. Any employee with a disability employed by a component of the Department of Defense (DoD) or by any Federal agency can request CAP assistive technology and services.

While CAP’s primary focus is on disabled individuals in DoD and the Federal government, we also provide assistance and guidance to those in the civilian sector, including the aging workforce.
CAP services include:

- Conducting needs assessments to identify appropriate assistive technology
- Purchasing assistive technology and services
- Assisting in technology integration
- Providing training on how to use assistive technology
- Advising agencies about creating accessible electronic environments
- Assisting in accommodating work-related injuries
- Supporting telework participants
- Conducting presentations about CAP services and other accessibility issues

For more information about CAP, go to: [www.cap.mil](http://www.cap.mil).

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR VETERANS**

AbleNet is dedicated to developing **assistive technology products** that can help our active and non-active service men and women move closer and closer to independence.

**Military Home Front**

**Deployments** have changed in recent years. In response to world events including war and terrorism, deployments may be longer, more frequent, resulting in the service member being away from home for extended periods of time. These factors cause service members and families additional stress, and have increased the challenges of deployment readiness, managing separations, and successful reunions.

**Deployment Guide** This guide is intended to help service members and their families prepare for deployment, serve as a resource during the deployment, and help navigate the challenges of a service member’s return and reintegration after the deployment. Information presented in the guide applies to deploying service members of all Service branches and components and their families. The guide is not intended to be printed in its entirety but to be used as an interactive resource.

**DeploymentConnections** is an online handbook for coping with deployment. Our new look is designed to make it easier to find deployment-related information and support services for active duty and Reserve service members and their families during all phases of deployment and mobilization.

**APPLYING FOR VETERANS BENEFITS - VETERANS ON-LINE APPLICATION (VONAPP)**

Welcome to the new and improved **Veterans On-Line Application (VONAPP)** website. Please select one of the following choices to begin using VONAPP.
The VONAPP (Veterans On Line Application) website is an official U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) website that enables service members, veterans and their beneficiaries, and other designated individuals to apply for benefits using the Internet.

U.S. military veterans and some service members within six months of separation or retirement can apply for compensation benefits and/or pension benefits using VA Form 21-526, and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits can be applied for using VA Form 28-1900.

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT - VETSUCCESS PROGRAM**

The [Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR & E) VetSuccess Program](#) is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31. It is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. The VetSuccess program assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VetSuccess offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

**VETERANS BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

The [Veterans Business Directory](#) is a registry and list of Veteran Owned Businesses that provide U.S. Military Veterans with goods and services.

**LONG-TERM CARE**

Those who have severe disabilities may find that it is difficult to take care of their daily needs. If this occurs, the veteran may need to arrange for their long-term care. Long-term care programs may include a nursing home, hospice, and more. There are different requirements that must be met in order to qualify for long-term care benefits. Current income level combined with the degree of disability will determine approval.

[Veterans Benefits and Long Term Care](#):

Medicare discusses paying for long-term care for veterans benefits.

[What is Long Term Care](#):

Health Care.gov looks at long-term care.

[Paying for Long Term Care](#):

National Clearinghouse for Long Term Care looks at ways to pay for LTC.

**HOUSEBOUND PENSION**

A pension consists of a monetary benefit that is paid to veterans that served during wartime, who are disabled, those that have little income, and those who are aged 65-years and over. Those who have extreme or severe disabilities may qualify for what is known as a house bound pension. A house bound pension is money that is paid in addition to the regularly monthly pension. Another benefit often paid to veterans with
disabilities is the Aid and Attendance or A&A pension. It is important to understand that a veteran may not receive both an A&A and house bound pension simultaneously.

**VA Aid, Attendance, and Housebound Allowance**: The U.S. Social Security Department looks at VA House bound pension.

**An Evaluation of the Veterans Administration House bound, Aid, and Attendance Allowance Program**: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services evaluates the V.A. Homebound pension.

**Improved Pension**: A Beginner’s Guide: The American Veterans Institute provided a PDF guide for Veterans seeking aid, including house bound pensions.

### AID AND ATTENDANCE BENEFIT

Aid and Attendance benefits are distributed in addition to a regular monthly pension to those that qualify. Some conditions that render a veteran eligible for Aid and Attendance benefits include when a disability requires a veteran obtain assistance to perform daily living chores, if the veteran is bedridden or requires the services of a convalescence home, if the veteran lives in or is a patient at a nursing home, and if the veteran is blind. Check with your local veteran’s administration office to determine whether you qualify.

**VA Aid and Attendance A & A and Housebound Pension Benefits**:

The U.S. Army discusses benefits for House bound Veterans.

**Disability Pension with Aid and Attendance Checklist**:

Access Kent discusses documents that veterans will need when applying for Aid and Attendance.

### BENEFITS FOR SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS OF VETERANS

Benefits for spouses and dependents of veterans vary and there are multiple benefits available. Those who have lost a spouse may qualify for a death pension, survivor’s and dependents’ educational assistance, medical, home loans, dependency indemnity compensation, bereavement counseling, life insurance, financial counseling, burial flags and burial benefits a spouse should consider upon the death of the veteran. Additionally, there is the TRICARE dental program, the GI Bill, a death gratuity and more. Spouses and dependents will need to fill out the necessary forms in order to determine eligibility.

### FLORIDA VETERANS BENEFITS GUIDE

#### STATE VETERANS HOMES

State Veterans homes are designed to ensure that veterans have a place to live when they can no longer take care of themselves. There are admission requirements that must be met, and the homes are only open to veterans that have been honorably discharged. Additionally, veterans will need to have established residency in the state where the home is locate in order to be eligible.
National Association of State Veterans Homes:

National service with state finder that allows veterans to find homes.

Home Loans for Veterans through HUD

FOR MORE ASSISTANCE

Those in need of further assistance will find that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is a great place to begin looking for help. You may look up each Veterans Affairs office by state or territory in the links below. Those with questions regarding VA Benefits may contact their local office or call the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at 1-800-827-1000. Beneficiaries in receipt of Pension Benefits with questions may call 1-800-294-6380 for assistance.

State/Territory Veterans Affairs Offices:

United States Department of Veterans Affairs lists Veterans Affairs offices by state.

Veterans:

White House looks at issues that affect veterans.

Disability:

Resources for those living with a disability.

VA’S COMMITMENT TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

Through the Homeless Veterans Initiative, VA committed $800 million in FY 2011 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. For more information, go to VA Homeless Veterans.

Florida State University announces initiative to create most veteran-friendly campus in the nation

FSU in collaboration with the Collegiate Veterans Association (CVA) is work to establish a Florida State Veterans Center, which will reach veterans of all generations. The center will serve as the focal point for all campus veteran resources, academic advising, orientation and transition programming, personal and rehabilitative support services, and assistance with VA educational benefits and certification.

Local Resources

ONE STOP CENTERS

Each local area is to establish a one-stop delivery system through which core employment-related services are provided and access is provided to other employment and training services. The access to services must be
provided through at least one physical one-stop center in each local area, which may be supplemented by networks of affiliated sites. The programs providing services through the one-stop system are referred to as one-stop partners. For more information, go to: http://www.floridajobs.org/onestop/onestopdir/.

The local board, with the agreement of the local elected official, develops and enters into a memorandum of understanding with one-stop partners. The board also designates one-stop service center operators and conducts oversight of the partners and centers.

"Designated" one-stop partners are programs that must provide core services through the one-stop, and include programs authorized under:

- Title I of the Workforce Investment Act; The Wagner-Peyser Act
- The Adult Education and Literacy title of this Act
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Act
- The Welfare-to-Work grants
- Title V of the Older Americans Act
- Postsecondary vocational education under the Perkins Act
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Veterans employment services under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.
- Unemployment compensation laws
- Community Service Block Grants
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Additional programs also may be partners in the one-stop center with the approval of the local board and local elected official. The partners and local boards, subject to the approval of the chief elected official, enter into a written memorandum of understanding describing the services to be provided, how the costs of the services and operating costs of the system will be funded, methods for referral of individuals between the one-stop operators and partners for appropriate services and activities, and other matters deemed appropriate.

The local board, with the agreement of the chief elected official, selects the operator of a one-stop center through a competitive process. The board may also designate a consortium of not less than three one-stop partners to operate a center. The operators may be a public or private entity, or a consortium of such entities, which may include post-secondary educational institutions; the Employment Service authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, private for-profit or non-profit entities, government agencies, one-stop partners, or other organizations. In addition, the bill contains a grandfathering provision that allows the Governor, local elected
official, and local board to continue to designate any one-stop operator that was designated as an operator under a one-stop system established prior to the enactment of this title.

**CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CILS)**

One of the purposes of CILs is to promote a philosophy of independent living, including consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy, in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

Under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the federal government provides financial assistance to States for providing, expanding, and improving the provision of independent living services; providing financial assistance to develop and support statewide networks of centers for independent living; and providing financial assistance to States for improving working relationships among State independent living rehabilitation service programs, centers for independent living, and Statewide Independent Living Councils.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) provide four core services to individuals with disabilities: Advocacy; Peer Support and Mentoring; Independent Living Skills Training; and Information, Referral and Assistance; as well as other services.

To locate one of the 15 CILs or their satellite programs in Florida, go to: [http://www.floridacils.org/LocateYourLocalCIL.html](http://www.floridacils.org/LocateYourLocalCIL.html).

The Florida Division of Blind Services also has CILs known as Community Rehabilitation Programs. Click [here](http://www.floridacils.org/LocateYourLocalCIL.html) to find one of the 20 Community Rehabilitation Programs in Florida for individuals with visual disabilities and blindness.

**DISABILITY BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS (DBTACS)**

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has established ten regional centers to provide information, training, and technical assistance to employers, people with disabilities, and other entities with responsibilities under the ADA. The centers act as a "one-stop" central, comprehensive resource on ADA issues in employment, public services, public accommodations, and communications. Each center works closely with local business, disability, governmental, rehabilitation, and other professional networks to provide ADA information and assistance.

Programs vary in each region, but all centers provide the following:

1. Technical Assistance
2. Education and Training
3. Materials Dissemination
4. Information and Referral
5. Public Awareness
6. Local Capacity Building
In addition to ADA services the centers assist individuals and entities in better understanding related disability legislation which may impact their rights or responsibilities. Information on the Rehabilitation Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, Workforce Investment Act and others can typically be provided by a Center.

Of special interest to those with involvement in education settings will be materials and technical assistance developed to assist in efforts to make educational experiences accessible to all participants. This includes assuring accessibility not only to the physical site of the entity, but also of the programs and technology used in the experience. This includes building accessible web pages, assuring that distance learning programs are accessible and assuring that technology purchases are those which are best able to work with assistive devices used by people with disabilities. For more information, call (800) 949-4232 (V/TTY).

Call the toll-free number above for information, materials, technical assistance, or training on the ADA. This number will automatically route your call to the Center in your region.

SOUTHEAST ADA CENTER

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the ADA National Network consists of 10 regional centers that provide local assistance to ensure that the ADA is implemented wherever possible. They are not an enforcement or regulatory agency, but a helpful resource supporting the ADA's mission to "make it possible for everyone with a disability to live a life of freedom and equality."

The Southeast ADA Center (formerly known as Southeast DBTAC) is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, and serves eight states, including Florida. It provides information, training, and guidance on the ADA and disability access tailored to the needs of business, government, and individuals at local, state, and regional levels.

Core services provided by the Southeast ADA Center include:

- Technical Assistance. Highly trained and qualified specialists are available to answer questions about the ADA, including advice and information on what is required, who is covered, and how to work through ADA-related questions. Call the regional hotline at 1-800-949-4232 or see the website at http://www.adasoutheast.org/. All requests for information via phone or submitted online are confidential.

- Education and Training. The Center provides customized training and distance education opportunities about the ADA and disability-related laws to disability organizations, state and local government agencies, and private businesses. Posted on their website are ready-to-use, educational web courses, toolkits, and national training resources. Find webinars, audio conferences, and webcasts in the Events Calendar and search the website: ADA Training Resources. To arrange training, check out their Training Team and Staff Directory, or contact the ADA Center at 1-800-949-4232.

- Materials Dissemination. The ADA Center distributes and provides publications with accurate, up-to-date information about the ADA via websites, social media, email, discussion lists, newsletters, and printed materials. Explore their Publications, Legal Updates and Case Law, Promising Directions, and national ADA websites: ADA Training Resources and ADA Document Portal.
- Information and Referral. The ADA Center provides referrals to local organizations for advocacy assistance or issues outside of our work scope via our State Resource Network and through partnerships with nationally-recognized experts and organizations.

- Public Awareness. Promote the ADA in a positive manner in training and media outlets — check out the Events Calendar, or contact your ADA Center at 1-800-949-4232 [voice/tty].

**ADDITIONAL CONTACTS**

**Job Accommodation Network**  
West Virginia University  
PO Box 6080  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080  
Voice Toll Free: (800)526-7234  
TTY Toll Free: (877)781-9403  
FAX: (304)293-5407  
E-mail: jan@jan.wvu.edu  
Web: [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

**Center for Personal Assistance Services**  
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
School of Nursing, University of California  
3333 California Street, Suite 455  
San Francisco, CA  
Voice/TTY Toll Free: (866)PAS-9577  
E-mail: WPAS@itsa.ucsf.edu  
Web: [www.pascenter.org/home/index.php](http://www.pascenter.org/home/index.php)

The mission of the Center for Personal Assistance Services is to provide research, training, dissemination and technical assistance on issues of personal assistance services (WPAS) in the United States. The Center’s extensive website lists and describes programs available in each state including WPAS state plans and waiver programs as well as the Department of Aging programs.

**Office of Disability Employment Policy**  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S-1303  
Washington, DC 20210  
Voice Toll Free: (866)633-7365  
TTY Toll Free: (877)889-5627  
FAX: (202)693-7888  
E-mail: infoODEP@dol.gov  
Web: [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)
The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U. S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

**State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies**
Every state has VR services available to people with disabilities. The mission of these services is to ensure gainful employment for people with disabilities. In addition to job placement, services may include but are not limited to counseling, vocational evaluation, assessment, and on-the-job training. VR can be a resource for trying to locate WPAS services such as interpreters and readers. Contact information can be found in local telephone directories under state government, or go to: [Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies](#).

### OTHER RESOURCES

**American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) Center for Workers with Disabilities**
810 First Street, NE
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
Voice: (202)682-0100
FAX: (202)289-6555
E-mail: mnewsom@aphsa.org
Web: [www.nasmd.org/disabilities](http://www.nasmd.org/disabilities)

American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) Center for Workers with Disabilities is a technical assistance center for states enhancing or developing employment supports programs for working persons with disabilities; most of the thirty plus states support by the Center are supporting employment supports development with Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funds established under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-170).

**Association for Persons in Supported Employment**
1627 Monument Avenue
Suite 301
Richmond, VA 23220
Voice: (804)278-9187
FAX: (804)278-9377
E-mail: tamara@apse.org
Web: [www.apse.org](http://www.apse.org)

APSE was created to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities and services for persons with severe disabilities, including mental disabilities.
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
A Federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore MD 21244-1850
Voice Toll Free: (877)267-2323
TTY Toll-Free: (866)226-1819
Web: www.cms.hhs.gov

On July 1, 2001, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) became the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Medicare and Medicaid, enacted in 1965, originally provided health care coverage to Americans over the age of 65. In 1972, Medicare was expanded to Americans living with disabilities. The joint federal-state Medicaid program provides health care coverage to low-income families with children under 21. These programs were created in the Social Security Act and were administered by the Social Security Administration until 1977. That year, Medicare and Medicaid were transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services and to the Health Care Financing Administration. In 1997, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was included in the Balanced Budget Act.

Independent Living Research Utilization Program
2323 S Shepherd, Suite 1000
Houston, TX 77019
Voice: (713)520-0232
TTY: (713)520-5136
FAX: (713)520-5785
Web: http://www.ilru.org/

ILRU program is a national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance in independent living. They operate the IL NETWORK with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and organizations and individuals involved in independent living nationwide. A list of CILs can be found at ILRU’s website: www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html.

Kelly Services Corporate Headquarters
999 West Big Beaver Road
Troy, Michigan (USA) 48084-4782
Voice: (248)362-4444
Web: www.kellyservices.com

Kelly Services, Inc. is a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Troy, Mich., offering staffing solutions that include temporary staffing services, staff leasing, outsourcing, vendor on-site and full-time placement.
Manpower
Headquarters
5301 N. Ironwood Rd.
Milwaukee, WI 53217 USA
Voice: (414)961.1000
FAX: (414)961.7985
Web: http://www.manpower.com/

Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN) is a world leader in the employment services industry, offering customers a continuum of services to meet their needs throughout the employment and business cycle. The company specializes in permanent, temporary and contract recruitment; employee assessment; training; career transition and organizational consulting services.

The Nationwide Sign Language Interpreter Referrals
Web: www.rid.org or go to: Disability Resource Center
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, SW
M-13, Room 2110
Washington, DC 20590
Voice: (202) 493-0625
TTY: (202) 366-5273
FAX: (202) 366-3571
Headquarters Interpreting Service Voice: (202) 366-9433, TTY: (202) 366-6242
Email: drc@ost.dot.gov
Web: www.drc.dot.gov

The Department of Transportation’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) is a comprehensive Department-wide program for DOT employees, supervisors, and job applicants. The Center opened in 1999 to ensure that employees with disabilities can participate fully in all aspects of the Department’s work, programs, and services.

For a copy of the DOT’s Personal Assistive Services as an Accommodation for Government Travel document, please go to: http://www.dot.gov/drc/personal-assistance-as-reasonable-accommodation.

Effective Transition Planning for Employment

FAAST, Inc., through support from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, has completed research and development of a comprehensive 14-page general self-help resource guide. This guide helps to promote effective transition planning with students with disabilities under IDEIA of 2004 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

This resource guide is created to provide resource information to help foster cooperation among public school officials, parents, family members, caregivers, guardians, advocates or representatives, and other agencies or
transition partners as they work together to accomplish effective transition planning for students with disabilities.

As there are many national and state resources designed to promote effective transition planning to receive necessary and required transition services this self-help resource guide provides comprehensive national and state resources that are user-friendly and hyperlinked for convenient reference. This guide provides hyperlinks to federal and state laws, regulations, and rules regarding transition planning requirements as well as an array of informative websites, frequently asked questions (FAQs), factsheets, and many other relevant and helpful effective transition planning resources.

TRANSITION PLANNING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Project 10 (Transition Education Network) offers a planning guide for the successful transition of a student with disabilities from school to adult life and is written for families of Florida’s students with disabilities. However, other people involved in transition planning, such as students and teachers, may also find this guide helpful.

FYI TRANSITION

The University of South Florida, in collaboration with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, developed a website to provide information to students with disabilities and their families related to employment and transition. FYI Transition provides information and web-based learning on transition planning, career and post-secondary education planning, job development and support, career exploration, funding, work incentives, and more.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Students with disabilities in post-secondary education are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA Amendments Act.

As students with disabilities prepare to continue their education in post-secondary schools, such as universities, state colleges, and vocational and career schools, you should know that students with disabilities have rights and responsibilities. There is excellent guidance as well as information and assistance provided by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U. S. Department of Education that detail your rights and responsibilities to reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, as well as auxiliary aids and services under the ADA Amendments Act regarding post-secondary educational institutions.

In addition, OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the ADAAA, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Most school districts and post-secondary schools in the United States are subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements. Click here to review OCR’s Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities frequently asked questions document.
To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in post-secondary education institutions, you may contact OCR at:

Customer Service Team  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100  
Phone: 1-800-421-3481  
TDD: 1-877-521-2172  
Email: ocr@ed.gov  
Web site: www.ed.gov/ocr

To order hard copies of the publication Students With Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities:

Write to: ED Pubs Education Publications Center, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304.
Or fax your order to: 703-605-6794;
Or e-mail your request to: edpubs@inet.ed.gov;
Or call in your request toll-free: 1-877-433-7827 (1-877-4-ED-PUBS). Those who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a teletypewriter (TTY), should call 1-877-576-7734. If 877 service is not yet available in your area, you may call 1-800-872-5327 (1-800-USA-LEARN).
Or order online at http://edpubs.gov.

This publication is also available on the Department’s Web site at http://www.ed.gov/ocr/transition.html. Any updates to this publication will be available on this website.

On request, this publication can be made available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print or computer diskette. For more information, you may contact the Department’s Alternate Format Center at 202-260-0852 or 202-260-0818. If you use TDD, call 1-800-877-8339.

ADA/504/DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES COORDINATORS

Public schools covered under Section 504 and the ADA are required to designate 504 and ADA coordinators including post-secondary institutions such as universities, state colleges and vocational schools.

College students with disabilities are eligible to receive support services and reasonable accommodations. Just a few examples of standard accommodations may include extended time on exams, texts and tests in alternative formats, note-takers, sign language interpreters and more.

To locate a disabled student services coordinator at a state college, university, or vocational school in your area, go to: local student disability services office. For more information on Disability Support Services, go to: http://www.fldoe.org/cc/educators/Disability/dss.asp.

PARCC RELEASES ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES AND ACCOMMODATIONS MANUAL

On July 25, 2013 the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) released the first edition of the accessibility features and accommodations manual for the assessments currently being developed. The manual includes proposed participation and accommodations policies for students with
disabilities and English learners in addition to information on tools that will be provided through PARC’s computer-based assessment delivery system for all students. For more information, visit: [http://www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org).

**KHAN ACADEMY – FREE ONLINE COURSE INSTRUCTION**

**Khan Academy** is an organization on a mission, a not-for-profit with the goal of changing education for the better by providing a free world-class education for anyone anywhere. All of the site's resources are available to anyone. It doesn't matter if you are a student, teacher, home-schooler, principal, or an adult returning to the classroom after 20 years. Khan Academy's materials and resources are available to you completely free of charge. With a library of over 4,300 videos covering everything from arithmetic to physics, finance, and history and hundreds of practice exercises, Khan Academy is on a mission to help you learn what you want, when you want, at your own pace.

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY Follows the Student**

To this end, FAAST in partnership with the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), state councils, and advocacy organizations, worked with the Legislature where AT follows the student became a reality under §1003.575, Florida Statutes.

Accessibility, utilization, and coordination of appropriate assistive technology devices and services are essential as a young person with disabilities moves from early intervention to preschool, from preschool to school, from one school to another, and from school to employment or independent living. To ensure that an assistive technology device issued to a young person as part of his or her individualized family support plan, individual support plan, or an individual education plan remains with the individual through such transitions, the following agencies shall enter into interagency agreements, as appropriate, to ensure the transaction of assistive technology devices: (1) The Florida Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program in the Division of Children's Medical Services of the Department of Health. (2) The Division of Blind Services, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Department of Education. (3) The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program administered by the Department of Education and the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

Interagency agreements entered into pursuant to this section shall provide a framework for ensuring that young persons with disabilities and their families, educators, and employers are informed about the utilization and coordination of assistive technology devices and services that may assist in meeting transition needs, and shall establish a mechanism by which a young person or his or her parent may request that an assistive technology device remain with the young person as he or she moves through the continuum from home to school to post-school.

**SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION**

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation’s [School to Work Transition Program](http://www.fldoe.gov) involves a number of activities that help students with disabilities prepare and plan for employment success after high school.
REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. You can review this definition at 29 U.S.C. §705(37).

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2004

The term “transition services” means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that--

A. is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

B. is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and

C. includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

You can review this definition at 20 U.S.C. §1401(34).

Effective transition services play a critical role in allowing students with disabilities to achieve their post-school goals for employment, continued education and community living. It is essential that students receive assistive technology assessments to determine what assistive technology resources would best enable the student to achieve their goals as independently as possible.

The individualized education plan (IEP) should clearly state all interagency responsibilities for the provision of transition services. This compels the Florida Department of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs to directly focus on interagency cooperation to help ensure the coordination of transition services.

PARTNERS IN TRANSITION

Partners in Transition (PIT) includes officials with FLDOE working at state and local levels to implement strategies that result in improved transition outcomes for students with disabilities across the domains of employment, postsecondary education, and community and independent living. For more information, go to http://partnersintransition.fmhi.usf.edu/.
PIT strategic planning in partnership with students with disabilities, their families/support system and officials with FLDOE can work to address key elements such as:

- School-based preparatory experiences like good academic and vocational programs;
- Career preparation and work-based learning experiences, such as career assessments, exposure to life-long learning opportunities, and paid and unpaid internships;
- Connecting activities, like transportation, physical and mental health, benefits planning and economic futures planning;
- Family involvement, such as access to training and information about transition options and evidence-based transition practices; and
- Youth development and leadership opportunities, like exposure to mentors, role models and the Youth Leadership Forum.

In order to help ensure equal access to a free and appropriate public education and to improve transition plans FLDOE can purchase and provide instructional materials for all students with disabilities in accessible formats. Improvements to universal access can be made by adhering to standards under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as implemented by Chapter 282, Florida Statutes, including but not limited to a need for school systems to equip themselves with universal access computer stations and other universal, assistive and information technologies to fairly accommodate students with disabilities.

PASS: A SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROVISION TO HELP INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RETURN TO WORK

A Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) allows a person with a disability to set aside otherwise countable income and/or resources for a specific period of time in order to achieve a work goal. Any person who receives SSI benefits, or who might qualify for SSI, or any person receives SSDI (or a similar benefit) and could qualify for SSI, may be able to have a PASS. There is no limit to the number of successful PASS plans a person may use in a lifetime.

A qualifying PASS must:

1. Be designed specifically for the person
2. Be in writing, either on a PASS form or, if not, covering all the same information
3. Have a specific work goal that the person is capable of performing (unless there is evidence to the contrary, SSA PASS Specialists should presume an occupational goal to be feasible, and a PASS to be viable)
4. Have a specific time frame for reaching the goal
5. Show what money and any other contributions will be used to reach the work goal
6. Show how the money and resources will be saved/spent
7. Show how any money set aside in savings will be kept separate from other funds
8. Be approved by the Social Security Administration PASS Cadre
9. Be reviewed periodically to assure compliance
10. Decrease reliance on the Social Security system by reducing the amount of benefits received by the end of the PASS (see exception below for Supported Employment)
11. Also include a Business Plan if the PASS is for self-employment

For the official SSI PASS form, visit: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ssa-545.pdf.
WORK INCENTIVES

Congress intended the employment support provisions to provide you with the assistance you need to move from benefit dependency to independence. Employment supports help you to enter, re-enter, or stay in the workforce by protecting your eligibility for cash payments and/or health care until you achieve this goal.

Area Work Incentives Coordinator

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Organizations (WIPA)

Work Incentives Seminar (WISE) Events

State Vocational Rehabilitation Providers

Protection and Advocacy (P & A)

Disability Program Navigators

EARN Job Seeker Network and Individual Development Accounts

You can find information about SSA employment support provisions at any SSA field office. You may also call the SSA toll free at 1-800-772-1213, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

AREA WORK INCENTIVES COORDINATOR (AWIC)

AWICs are experienced employment-support experts who:

- Coordinate and/or conduct public outreach on work incentives in their local areas;
- Provide and/or coordinate and oversee training on SSA’s employment support programs for all personnel at local Social Security offices;
- Handle sensitive or high profile disability work-issue cases, if necessary; and
- Monitor the disability work-issue workloads in their respective area

Information on how to contact your local AWIC is available at: http://www.ssa.gov/atlanta/southeast/awic/index.htm.

WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS (WIPA)

WIPA projects are community-based organizations that receive grants from SSA to provide all Social Security and SSI disability beneficiaries (including transition-to-work aged youth) with free access to work incentives planning and assistance. Each WIPA project has counselors called Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWIC) who:

- Provide work incentives planning and assistance to our beneficiaries with disabilities;
- Conduct outreach efforts to those beneficiaries (and their families) who are potentially eligible to participate in Federal or state employment support programs; and
- Work in cooperation with Federal, state, private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve beneficiaries with disabilities.

If you are one of the many SSDI or SSI disability beneficiaries who want to work, a WIPA project can help you understand the employment supports that are available to you and enable you to make informed choices about work.
WIPA services are available in every state, the District of Columbia, and the US Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. If you want to locate the WIPA organization nearest you, please call 1-866-968-7842 or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY/TDD) for the hearing impaired. You can also find contact information in our service provider directory at: http://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html.

**WORK INCENTIVES SEMINAR (WISE) EVENTS**

During the year, SSA-sponsored WISE events will take place throughout the country to provide you with the knowledge necessary to either assign your Ticket to Work or pursue other work incentives. These seminars will give you the opportunity to meet representatives of organizations who can assist you by providing free information and assistance to help you go to work for the first time, return to work or reach other employment goals. Click here to learn more about WISE events.

**STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROVIDERS**

State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies furnish a wide variety of services to help people with disabilities return to work. These services are designed to provide you with the training or other services that are needed to return to work, to enter a new line of work or to enter the workforce for the first time. You can also find a list of State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies in our service provider directory at: https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate.

**PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY (P&A)**

In every state and U.S. Territory, there is an agency that protects the rights of individuals with disabilities. This Protection and Advocacy System also administers the SSA-funded Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) program. Each PABSS agency can:

- Investigate any complaint you have against an employment network or other service provider that is helping you return to work;
- Give you information and advice about vocational rehabilitation and employment services;
- Tell you about SSA’s work incentives that will help you return to work;
- Provide consultation and legal representation to protect your rights in the effort to secure or regain employment; and
- Help you with problems concerning your individual work plan under the Ticket to Work program.

These services are free to individuals receiving SSDI or SSI benefits based on disability or blindness. If you want to locate the PABSS agency nearest you, please call 1-866-968-7842 or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY/TDD) for the deaf and hearing impaired.

**DISABILITY PROGRAM NAVIGATORS**

The Department of Labor (DOL) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) jointly established the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) position. DPNs are located in DOL's One-Stop Career Centers and help disabled individuals navigate the challenges of seeking work. The rules surrounding entitlement programs and a fear of losing cash assistance and health benefits often discourage people with disabilities from working. DOL and SSA established the DPN initiative to better inform beneficiaries and other people with disabilities about the work support programs available at DOL-funded One-Stop Career Centers. This initiative develops new/ongoing partnerships to achieve seamless, comprehensive, and integrated access to workforce services for both

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**EARN JOB SEEKER NETWORK**

The Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN) is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. It is the nation’s premier provider of cost-free services to help employers recruit and hire qualified workers to meet their workforce needs.

EARN also offers assistance to employment service providers and job seekers with disabilities. This includes providing job seekers and service providers with job leads from employers specifically interested in including job seekers with disabilities in their recruiting efforts. Whether an individual is working with a service provider or is on a self-directed job search, EARN can help with online and offline support.

Learn more about how EARN can benefit both organizations and job seekers with disabilities by contacting EARN at:

- Toll Free: Monday through Friday,
  9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)
  1-866-EARN-NOW (1-866-327-6669) (Voice/TTY)
- [http://askearn.org/](http://askearn.org/)

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**INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS**

If you are working and have limited income, you may be eligible for an Individual Development Account (IDA) through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program or an Assets for Independence Act (AFIA) grant. An IDA is a trust-like bank account that helps you save your earnings to go to school, buy a home, or start a business. When you make a deposit to the account, a participating non-profit organization matches your deposit. The average match is one dollar for each dollar that you deposit. The Federal government adds an additional match, limited to $2,000 for an individual or $4,000 for a household over the life of the program (usually five years).

If you have an IDA through TANF or an AFIA grant, we do not count any earnings you deposit into your account, any matching deposits, or any interest earned as SSI income or resources. As a result, your SSI benefits may increase.

SSI does not determine whether you are eligible to have an IDA. For more information, go to: [http://cfed.org/programs/idas/](http://cfed.org/programs/idas/).

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**The Job-Seeking Process**

**WORKFORCE SERVICES**

The Office of Workforce Services (WFS) is responsible for providing One-Stop Program Support services (workforce program information, guidance and technical assistance) to the Regional Workforce Boards, as well as providing Labor Market Statistics information to our workforce partners and the general public.
Additionally, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) in its role as the administrative entity to Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) operates under a performance-based contract. The Office of Workforce Services is responsible for managing this contract, which includes specific deliverables and performance requirements in the statewide administration and coordination of workforce services. For more information, go to Workforce Services. Click Directory to find one stop career centers in Florida.

HELP WANTED: LOOKING FOR A JOB

EMPLOY FLORIDA MARKETPLACE


PEOPLE FIRST

Search for government jobs throughout Florida. https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com/

FLORIDA SCHOOL SYSTEM JOBS

Search for a job with Florida’s school system. http://www.teachinflorida.com/  
www.floridajobs.org/

Use these job search engines to find jobs by using keywords that match your interests and the location where you want to work. Narrowing your search criteria will help you focus your job search and will give you more relevant job listings to review and less non-relevant job listings to weed through. Create profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, and VisualCV. A strong personal brand that portrays you in a professional light will provide recruiters, employers, and contacts with a strong positive impression of you as a candidate they should be interested in. Now that you’ve created profiles on networking sites, use them. Connect with everyone you know, because you never know which contact may be able to help you with your job search or put you in touch with someone who can.

JOB SEARCH ENGINES

GETTINGHIRED.COM

www.gettinghired.com is the place where people with disabilities seeking employment, employers committed to hiring people with disabilities, service providers, college disability and career services departments, and disability advocacy groups connect.
MONSTER.COM

One of the best job search engines out there. You can narrow your search by location, keywords, and employer; plus, Monster has plenty of job search extras: networking boards, job search alerts, and online resume posting. For more information, go to: www.monster.com/.

INDEED.COM

Indeed.com is a very solid job search engine. Unlike Monster, you cannot submit your resume from Indeed.com, but the job search engine more than makes up for that by being a meta search engine of many of the major job search engines and job search boards out there. Indeed uncovers a lot of jobs that you wouldn't normally find on most job search sites, and they do a good job of making their job search features as easy to use as possible.

USA.GOV

Think of www.USA.gov as your gateway into the huge world of US government jobs. Navigate to the USA.gov home page, click on the Jobs and Education section, then Government Jobs. You'll find a wealth of resources here to help you find jobs working for United States Government.

CAREERBUILDER

CareerBuilder.com offers job searchers the ability to find a job, post a resume, create job alerts, get job advice and job resources, look up job fairs, and much more. This is a truly massive job search engine that offers a lot of good resources to the job searcher; they have a list of job search communities.

DICE.COM

Dice.com is a job search engine dedicated to only finding technology jobs. It offers a targeted niche space for finding exactly the technology position you might be looking for.

LINKUP

LinkUp is a job search engine that searches for jobs within company websites. For more information, go to: http://www.linkup.com.

YAHOO HOT JOBS

Yahoo! Hot Jobs is one of the largest and most well-known job search engines on the Web.

SIMPLY HIRED

SimplyHired.com offers a very unique job search experience; the user "trains" the job search engine by rating jobs he or she is interested in. SimplyHired also gives you the ability to research salaries, add jobs to a job map, and view pretty detailed profiles of various companies. I highly recommend SimplyHired.

LINKEDIN.COM

LinkedIn.com combines the best of two worlds: the ability to scour the Internet for jobs with its job search engine, and the opportunity to network with like-minded friends and individuals to deepen your job search.
There are all sorts of interesting jobs on Craigslist. Just find your city, look under Jobs, then look under your job category. Non-profit, systems, government, writing, etc. jobs are all represented here.

RÉSUMÉS

It’s important to take the time to write targeted resumes and cover letters that specifically link your qualifications to the hiring criteria for the jobs you are applying for. The hiring manager will be able to see, at a glance, why, and how, you are qualified for the job. You'll have a much better chance of getting an interview than if you send a generic letter and resume.

An overwhelming majority of job seekers make basic mistakes with their résumés - mistakes that ensure that they will not get the interviews they deserve.

The following hyperlinked articles, books, tutorials, instructional videos, and government resources provide detailed information on preparing cover letters and resume writing to help you prepare along with your job application.

- Click here to review resume writing help and tips, including templates, formats, examples, samples, action verbs and cover letters.
- To locate books on resume writing, go to books.
- Writing a resume can be hard work, but here are free resume resources available to help you create a professional level resume.
- Click here to review online resources to assist you with the task of resume writing.
- Monster.com offers many resume writing tips.
- Rutgers University offers information on the how to’s of a Resume Writing Action Plan.
- The University of New Hampshire offers tips on resume writing at http://www.unh.edu/uacc/resume.
- Resumes and cover letters are important documents for your job search. The University of Florida offers resource information on resumes and cover letters.
- Daily Writing Tips offers 44 resume writing tips.
- Click here to review 10 websites with information on resume building.
- University of Michigan has produced an instructional tutorial on writing a winning resume. Click tutorial to review.
- Click here to review a Government resume writing tutorial providing video instruction on resume preparation.
- For help in understanding the federal resume process and to better understand federal resumes, go to:
  - The Federal Application Process
  - Understanding the Federal Resume
• When applying for federal jobs, click here to review a document with helpful instructions on how to federalize your résumé and to assist you in creating a top notch Federal résumé provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.

• REZSCORE: How does your resume score? Find out now free. Go to www.rezscore.com to find out more. Proprietary algorithms read through your resume and analyze it on over a dozen metrics according to the recommendations of hiring managers, HR directors, job search experts, and certified resume writers.

COVER LETTERS

What does it take for your resume and cover letter to make an impact when the employer has received hundreds of resumes for the same position?

Employers do manage to reduce the pool of cover letters and resumes to a manageable number. How they do it can give you some insight in to how to write cover letters that will make the cut. If your cover letter and resume aren't perfect they most likely will be rejected. Perfect means just that - there should not be any typos or grammatical errors.

Employers typically won't even consider a candidate that they cannot see is qualified at first glance. That first glance at your cover letter may be your one opportunity to make a good impression and make it to the next round.

TARGETED COVER LETTERS

Writing a cover letter often seems like a particularly daunting task. However, if you take it one step at a time, you'll soon be an expert at writing letters to send with your resume.

A cover letter typically accompanies each resume you submit. A cover letter should complement, not duplicate your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch. A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression.

There are three general types of cover letters:

1. The application letter which responds to a known job opening
2. The prospecting letter which inquires about possible positions
3. The networking letter which requests information and assistance in your job search

Some excellent samples of cover letters can be found at: jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/letterinterest.htm/

Your cover letter should be designed specifically for each purpose outlined above as well as for each position you seek. Do not design a form letter and send it to every potential employer. An employer can tell when they are reading a form letter, and it has the same effect as spam in their e-mail. Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the specific organization and identify your most relevant skills or experiences (remember, relevance is determined by the employer's self-interest).
• University of Wisconsin-Madison offers a handbook on writing cover letters. For more information, go to [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CoverLetters.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CoverLetters.html).

• Business Insider offers [7 Steps To Writing A Cover Letter](http://www.businessinsider.com/7-steps-to-writing-a-cover-letter).

• Writing a [cover letter](http://www.businessinsider.com/7-steps-to-writing-a-cover-letter) often seems like a particularly daunting task. Click [here](http://www.businessinsider.com/7-steps-to-writing-a-cover-letter) for some instruction information and assistance.

• Forbes.com offers help on how to write a cover letter. For more information, go to [how to write a cover letter](http://www.forbes.com/advice/career/how-to-write-a-cover-letter).

• Susan Ireland’s Resume Site offers [50 cover letter examples](http://www.resumehelper.com/cover-letter-examples). You'll find sample cover letters to human resources, hiring managers, and recruiters. There are even some that respond to newspaper help-wanted ads and online job posts.

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### THE INTERVIEW

In a conservative business climate, appearance does matter. In other environments it isn't as important. However, it does make sense to dress your best for the interview, regardless of the dress code at the organization.

#### WOMEN’S INTERVIEW ATTIRE

- Solid color, conservative suit
- Coordinated blouse
- Moderate shoes
- No more than five pieces of jewelry
  - (earrings count as two)
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Skin-matched hosiery
- Conservative make-up & light perfume
- Neatly trimmed, neutral nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

#### MEN’S INTERVIEW ATTIRE

- Solid color, conservative suit and tie
- White long sleeve shirt
- Dark socks, professional shoes
- Very limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Light aftershave or cologne
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

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### PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Keep in mind that in the competitive business world, there are sure to be dozens of other highly qualified candidates going after your job. It’s important to make yourself stand out as someone special. Now is the time to practice exactly how you will sell yourself to a prospective employer during that crucial first meeting.
10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR NEXT INTERVIEW LEAD TO YOUR NEXT JOB

1. Do your homework
Research the company beforehand so that you can showcase that knowledge during the interview. This will boost your credibility with the interviewer and will help you to formulate intelligent questions to ask him or her.

2. Know where you’re going
Make sure to find out where the office is and how to get there. Do you know how long the trip will take? Do you have the name and phone number of the person you’ll be meeting? Do you know where to park? Save yourself time and unnecessary stress by knowing these things before heading to the interview. You may want to scout the location ahead of time to determine if it is accessible for your interview.

3. Look the part
Your clothing should be neat, pressed, and professional looking. As it can be difficult to know the culture of the office environment beforehand, err on the side of conservative. Even if everyone’s wearing jeans when you arrive, you’re still probably better off having shown up in a suit. However, don’t be afraid to inject some personality into your look, and don’t neglect the details. Make sure to have a fresh haircut and clean, neatly trimmed nails.

4. Rehearse beforehand.
Prior to your interview, prepare answers to common questions the interviewer is likely to ask, such as: What are your strengths and weaknesses? Why do you want to work here? Why should we hire you? And the ever popular, Tell me about yourself (see “elevator speech”). Conduct a mock interview with a trusted friend as practice.

5. Secure your references.
Find at least three key people — former supervisors, colleagues, or instructors — who are willing to serve as your professional references. Be sure to secure their permission beforehand, and be certain that they will speak highly of you if contacted by a potential employer.

6. Arrive early.
Be sure to arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview. Visit the restroom and check your appearance in the mirror. Announce yourself to the receptionist to let him or her know that you have arrived and that you have an appointment. Turn your cell phone off so it doesn’t ring during your meeting.

7. Bring necessary documentation.
Make a checklist of documents that you will need for the interview, and make sure that you have them in your briefcase or portfolio before leaving home. These documents may include extra copies of your résumé, a passport, driver’s license, Social Security card, or portfolio of writing samples or other professional work. If you are a recent graduate, you should also bring along your college transcripts. Make sure these items are neatly organized in your briefcase to prevent paper from spilling out.

8. Sell yourself.
The interview is your chance to shine, so now is not the time to be humble. Develop a 25-second sales pitch that hits your high points. In marketing, this is called an “elevator speech,” a compelling overview that answers the question: “why you?” that can be recited in the time it takes to ride the elevator. It should include
your strengths, your abilities, and what sets you uniquely apart from other applicants. Good elevator speeches are concise and compelling to their target audience.

9. Don’t neglect to ask questions.

Based on your earlier research, ask how the responsibilities of the open position relate to the company’s goals and plans for the future. Interviewers are often favorably impressed by candidates who show that they are knowledgeable about the organization.

10. Follow up.

After the interview, don’t forget to send a handwritten note or friendly email thanking the interviewer for his or her time and consideration, as well as restating your interest and commitment to the position. If you don’t hear anything after one week, call to politely inquire when they will be making a final decision.

Remember: Every interview is a valuable learning experience. Even if you don’t get this particular job, when the next interview rolls around, you’ll be much better prepared and more at ease with the whole process. All of which can go a long way to boosting your confidence and improving your chances of being offered the next job.

Job Interviewing Tutorials for Job-Seekers

This free tutorial, full of expert advice and strategies, is designed to help job-seekers become more knowledgeable about all aspects of job interviews.

Job interviews are one of the most critical moments in the whole process of getting a job. If you’re not properly prepared they can be a nightmare. And even the best-prepared of candidates sometimes blow their chances through nervousness caused by not knowing what happens in these highly intense events. Videojug can help. In conjunction with top experts from the field of employment and body language, we’ve made a series of films that will forewarn you of every type of situation, and even question, that’s likely to come up in a job interview, and the correct posture, presentational styles and answers to give. For more information, go to: http://www.videojug.com/tag/job-interviews.

Interviewing Skills

Click here for lessons, interactives, articles, and videos.

The Job Interview Question & Response Database includes 150 of the most typical interview questions that you may face in your job interviews. Questions are in no particular order.

50 Job Interview Questions

Click here to review 50 job interview questions asked by employers, as well as sample answers for each question on the list.

The Job Accommodation Network, through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), at www.askjan.org offers guidance on the Do’s and Don’ts of Disability-Related Questions for job applicants and employers.

Michigan Technological University offers legal/illegal interview questions employers can and cannot ask.

USA Today offers an article on illegal interview questions.
The University of Florida, Office of Human Resource Services offers information on an interview question resource regarding requirements with federal and state law.

**Federal Government Interview Resources**

Preparing for a government job interview is not difficult. It just takes time to research the organization and position, anticipate interview questions and prepare questions to ask the hiring manager. Here are the specific things that you can do to prepare for a government job interview.

Click here to review tips for interviewing for a government job.

Click here for an Interview Survival Kit for Federal job interviews.

Click here for government job interview tips.

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**U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT: INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS AND CURRENT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES**

This website contains information for potential applicants and current Federal employees that describe how to get a Federal job, how positions are filled, how reasonable accommodations are made, and includes resources that can assist with a wide range of issues that pertain to the Federal employment of adults with disabilities.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CO-WORKERS**

This document addresses issues such as how to find out about Federal job openings, how to apply for a job, how to talk about a disability during an interview and how to request a reasonable accommodation if one is needed.

**DISCLOSING YOUR DISABILITY**

If you have a physical disability that will be obvious as soon as you meet someone, the question is: At what point in the job-seeking process do you address the disability? If your disability is outwardly invisible, the question is: Do you tell or not?

**WHEN YOUR DISABILITY IS OBVIOUS**

If you are responding to a job opening, make sure you’re confident you can handle the job as you understand it, given the information you have at the point of applying. Will the ability to drive, see well, communicate without an interpreter, lift objects or help others get around be required? If you don't foresee a problem or if you know how to handle it, go for it.

There may be jobs or positions you have held in the past that prove your ability. If you know previous employers will give you positive recommendations and perhaps even note that your disability either didn't hinder you or gave you an extra leg up, you may feel confident discussing such information and even including it in your cover letters. For example, maybe you were able to work with others with similar disabilities or find ways to do the job that were helpful to other employees as well.

Some employers may pass you by, but others may be excited by your creativity and ability. Certainly bring that up in the interview as part of your strategy for selling yourself. By all means, come to the interview prepared to discuss how your particular disability will be an asset to the job or at least not a major handicap.
WHEN YOU HAVE A HIDDEN DISABILITY

This is a trickier issue. For the most part, the common wisdom is not to disclose prior to receiving a job offer. Interviewers are not allowed to ask you direct questions about whether you have a disability. That doesn't mean you might not get asked indirectly. So be ready for any possibility.

GETTING READY FOR THE INTERVIEW

1. Be prepared to talk about your disability if you are somehow asked a direct question, or if you get a hunch during the interview that it will not negatively affect your candidacy.
2. Be prepared to handle questions about gaps in your work history if you have been out of work due to illness or psychiatric hospitalization.
3. Keep it simple and short. Don't dwell on the problems, but do acknowledge them. Talk about how you imagine you will handle the job and the disability.
4. Highlight skills and experience you have that make the disability less relevant or problematic.
5. Find a few people you trust (if you can, include at least one person who has experience hiring) to listen to your prepared answers. Take their feedback seriously.
6. You may not need to use this material during the interview, but you will be more confident if you feel prepared to answer any potential question.

You have difficult decisions when your disability is one that carries a stigma, such as mental illness, a developmental disability, dyslexia, ADHD, communication disorders and other "mental" disorders, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C. People uneducated about your disability may make assumptions or have unwarranted fears. Talk to others who have similar conditions for ideas and support.

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities is designed for youth and adults working with them to learn about disability disclosure.

Remember: You are a person with unique experiences and talents. Make sure this is firmly planted in your mind before you go to an interview, and find a way to showcase those talents at that important meeting.

JOB ACCOMMODATIONS

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at U.S. Department of Labor
1-800-526-7234
http://askjan.org/

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free service provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). JAN represents the most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available. JAN's mission is to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities by providing employers, employment providers, people with disabilities, their family members and other interested parties with information on job accommodations, self-employment and small business opportunities.
Your rights as an employee with a disability is that a qualified individual with a disability has a right to work (and apply for work) in America free of discrimination by businesses with 15 or more employees. An individual who works for businesses with less than 15 employees may have employment rights under state or local laws.

**Job Seekers**

**ADA Compliance and Other Legal**

**EEOC Fact Sheet: Job Applicants and the ADA**

**EEOC Guidance: Pre-employment Disability-Related Questions and Medical Examinations**

**Legal Resources**

**INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SEEKING EMPLOYMENT**

Individuals with developmental disabilities have a right to apply and be fairly assessed for services through Vocational Rehabilitation as illustrated beginning on page 4 of this guide. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities should also help with employment for individuals with developmental disabilities through supported employment services, Business Leadership Networks, and much more. For more information, go to: [http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/supported-employment/](http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/supported-employment/).

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council offers guidance for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to help with programs and services to go to work. To download helpful employment related materials including specially designed *Go To Work* instructional DVDs and a workbook helping to understand *The Changing Face of Benefits*, go to: [http://www.fddc.org/publications](http://www.fddc.org/publications).

**STUDENT LOANS AND GRANTS**

**The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid**

An education loan is a form of financial aid that must be repaid, with interest. (Scholarships on the other hand, do not have to be repaid.)

Education loans come in three major categories: student loans (e.g., Stafford and Perkins loans), parent loans (e.g., PLUS loans) and private student loans (also called alternative student loans). A fourth type of education
loan, the consolidation loan, allows the borrower to lump all of their loans into one loan for simplified payment. A recent innovation is peer-to-peer education loans. More than $100 billion in federal education loans and $10 billion in private student loans are originated each year.

Federal Student Aid

Federal Student Aid provides information to make it easier to get money for higher education. For more information, go to: http://studentaid.ed.gov.

Federal Student Loans

The term federal student loan applies to three different types of loans, which are available through the federal government. The government has several ways to help students pay for tuition, and loans are only one of those ways. The following links discuss and focus on three loan types: Federal Stafford Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, and Perkins Loans.

Federal Pell Grant

A Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Federal Pell Grants usually are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor’s or a professional degree. (In some cases, however, a student enrolled in a post baccalaureate teacher certification program might receive a Federal Pell Grant.)

FAFSA Online - Get Financial Aid Application Help!

Free Application for Federal Student Aid: The Federal Financial Aid Application is the most important financial aid form you can complete to pay for college, but many people either avoid it or make costly mistakes when filling it out. A free, comprehensive Help Guide, Frequently Asked Questions, and Tips and Secrets will help you maximize your financial aid and qualify for scholarships, grants, and student loans. For more information, go to: http://www.fafsaonline.com/.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education released a new interactive loan counseling tool to provide students with financial management basics, like information about their current loan debt and estimates for student loan debt levels after graduation.

FAAST, INC. / ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST) is a non-profit organization that provides Floridians with disabilities of all ages access to assistive services and technology. FAAST was created under the Assistive Technology Act, a Federal statute. Though education, training, assessment, device lending, financial assistance and outreach, FAAST works to maximize the ability of individuals with disabilities and their family members, guardians and advocates to obtain assistive technology in education, employment, community living and telecommunications.
Assistive technology (AT) is any item that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. AT can be bought, improvised or modified. AT enables users to actively pursue community living, employment, education and recreation with greater independence. Some examples of AT are speech communication devices, adapted computers, mobility equipment, aids for daily living, home and vehicle modifications and even personal digital assistants (PDAs).

FAAST, Florida’s “tech act program”, provides the following services to Floridians with disabilities and their families:

- AT demonstrations, assessments and training
- AT Device Lending and Device Recycling
- Financial assistance for obtaining assistive technology
- Affordable and accessible housing advocacy
- Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Resources
- Information and referral

There are six FAAST Regional Demonstration Centers throughout the state that offer training, device loans and a wealth of technology-related resources. www.faast.org also features statewide assistive services and technology provider listings; a searchable database of affordable housing, including HUD and USDA subsidized properties; a directory of funding sources for assistive technology; and ATBay, the online community for buying, selling and trading AT.

**FAAST DEVICE LOAN PROGRAM: AN ASSET FOR JOB-SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS**

FAAST’s statewide device loan program provides short term device loans that allow users to try assistive technology and discover if it will meet their needs. One of the many benefits of this program is that it provides the opportunity to users to interact with the technology in a variety of environments including home, school and work. An individual with a disability, family member, caregiver, professional or educator may borrow up to three devices at a time for up to 30 days, based on availability. Users can browse the program’s inventory and order a device online. Shipping is free. Employers can use this free resource to assist employees in identifying appropriate assistive technology for job accommodations, ensuring that the devices they purchase will meet needs and provide value.

**The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc.**
3333 W. Pensacola St.
Bldg 100, Suite 140
Tallahassee, Florida 32304
Voice (850) 487-3278
Toll-Free in Florida 1-888-788-9216
Fax (850) 487-2805
www.faast.org

**TELEWORK**

The terms “telework,” “telecommuting,” “flexible workplace,” “remote work,” “virtual work,” and “mobile work” are all used to refer to work done outside of the traditional on-site work environment. These terms are defined in different ways and used in different contexts to refer to anything from jobs that are completely...
virtual or mobile, to arrangements that enable employees to work from home a few days per week or per month.

This type of work is especially beneficial to employees with disabilities who may have difficulty performing work duties in a typical work environment. Telework allows employees to perform basic job functions from their home. The most common telework opportunities include call center and customer service positions.

The benefits of telework include the ability to establish working hours that are flexible, increased safety within the work environment, and the opportunity to have a modified work space designed for the individual in their own home. Another benefit of telework is savings on transportation costs including maintenance and fuel.

Telework is offered through various types of agencies and organizations. A helpful way to determine if telework is right for you as an employee is to take the Telework questionnaire. This is a tool that can help assess whether the option of Telework is a good vocational fit.

This questionnaire can be accessed at **Self-Assessment Questionnaire.**

[www.teleworktoolkit.com/index.html](http://www.teleworktoolkit.com/index.html)

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**SELF-EMPLOYMENT**

**SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS**

The **Florida Small Business Development Center Network** (FSBDCN) is a statewide economic development partnership between higher education and other stakeholder organizations dedicated to providing entrepreneurs and established businesses with the assistance needed to start, grow and succeed, contributing to the Florida economy.

The FSBDCN serves as the statewide single point of contact for the advancement of an entrepreneurial environment; thus, creating a positive foundation for the development and growth of micro, small and medium enterprises in Florida. The Network's focus on the critical needs of businesses drives its direction and performance expectations. The Florida SBDC program is the most experienced economic development network serving Floridians statewide.

Click [here](http://www.teleworktoolkit.com/index.html) to find a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) near you.

**SCORE**

SCORE is America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. They offer advice online and in-person at one of our 364 offices nationwide. Get biz advice today.

SCORE Has Helped 8.5 Million Small Businesses

SCORE has helped Vermont Teddy Bear, Vera Bradley Designs, Jelly Belly Candy. Click [more successes](http://www.teleworktoolkit.com/index.html).

Every year, SCORE helps almost 20,000 businesses start. The next success story could be yours. Just ask SCORE.

**HOW SCORE CAN HELP YOU**

SCORE offers many free services. Here are some of our most popular resources:

- **Ask SCORE Online:** Choose a mentor and ask him/her your biz question
- **Visit Your Local SCORE Office:** Make an appointment with a mentor or attend a workshop
Online Workshops: Try a free, online workshop or register for a lunch-time webinar
Business eNewsletters: Biz tips and interview with leading experts

SCORE BUSINESS COUNSELORS

SCORE’s 12,400 volunteer counselors have more than 600 business skills. Volunteers are working or retired business owners, executives and corporate leaders who share their wisdom and lessons learned in business. Learn more about volunteering with SCORE.

HOW SCORE WORKS

SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business" is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small business start, grow and succeed nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

SCORE is headquartered in Herndon, VA and Washington, DC and has 364 chapters throughout the United States and its territories, with 12,400 volunteers nationwide. Both working and retired executives and business owners donate time and expertise as business counselors. SCORE was founded in 1964. More about SCORE's history

SCORE CEO Ken Yancey welcomes you

SCORE Florida

The purpose of the SCORE Florida website is to enable Chapters in the state to share information and resources in order to better serve our clients. Registered users are able to conduct member searches by industry/experience, by skill, or by a combination of both criteria. Members may sign on to the site using their existing SCORE user name and password.

Search results contain the names, email addresses and Chapter contact information of members in the state, including those in a member's own Chapter. This allows members in a Chapter to locate members in other Chapters when they have a client whose needs may not be met by members within their own Chapter.

For non-members, map links to the SCORE Chapters in the state, website sponsors and the SCORE National and SBA websites are provided. They may access Chapter contact information by clicking on any Florida county.

The same map and map links also appear on the page accessible to members after they logged on.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. We recognize that small business is critical to our economic recovery and strength, to building America's future, and to helping the United States compete in today's global marketplace. Although SBA has grown and evolved in the years since it was established in 1953, the bottom line mission remains the same. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands and Guam.
Established in 1916 as Florida’s first statewide business advocacy organization, the Florida Chamber is the state's most powerful federation of employers, chambers of commerce and associations, representing more than 139,000 grassroots members with more than 3 million employees. The Florida Chamber unites Florida's business community with its powerful combination of legislative, grassroots, and political tools.

The Florida Chamber aggressively works within the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of state government to advocate legislation critical to the continued improvement of Florida’s business climate and sustained economic development across the state.

The Florida Chamber is committed to fighting for jobs and defeating legislation threatening Florida’s free enterprise system.

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Today many people with disabilities are turning to the flexibility of self-employment and entrepreneurship to meet both their career aspirations and financial goals. Starting your own small business doesn't have to be difficult. The following information includes useful tips to help develop your small business.

DISABILITY.GOV

Disability.gov provides information related to starting a small business in the Employment section of the Web site. Visitors can find resources on financial assistance, tax incentives, business plans, technical support and training. State resources and additional information about self-employment and entrepreneurship in specific states can be accessed on the left side of the page by clicking on the "Information by State" menu and choosing a particular state. www.disability.gov/

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, SERVICES & SUPPORT

Many states and local communities offer programs and services that help veterans and people with disabilities start small businesses. The following resources answer frequently asked questions, provide counseling and direct visitors to local development centers.

The Department of Labor’s (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at http://www.dol.gov/odep/ includes links to programs, publications and frequently asked questions related to small business entrepreneurs. The site also offers the Small Business Self-Employment Service (SBSES) which provides resources on writing business plans, financing and other issues specific to developing a small business.

The Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) offer local one-on-one counseling to prospective and current entrepreneurs in the areas of planning, financing, management, technology, government procurement and other business-related topics. This site directs visitors to local SBDC contact information.
**SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business"** is a nonprofit organization that educates entrepreneurs about the development, growth and success of small businesses nationwide. Both working and retired executives and business owners donate time and expertise as business counselors. Visitors can attend online workshops, receive free face-to-face counseling and access a database of information and resources.

**Growing Customers: Critical Considerations for Small Enterprises Owned by Individuals with Disabilities** is an article by The Rural Institute at the University of Montana’s Center for Excellence in Disability Education, Research and Service that explains how to build a good customer base.

One of the largest benefits of entrepreneurship is having the flexibility to do something you love when, where and how you want. The [Department of Labor’s (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)](https://www.dol.gov/odep) connects prospective entrepreneurs to resources that explain the benefits of self-employment and share success stories.

### RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

Veterans are a growing force within the disability community. The following resources provide assistance and support for veterans and members of the military who want to establish or expand a small business:

The [General Services Administration (GSA)](https://www.gsa.gov) connects disabled veteran business owners to federal business opportunities and provides assistance during the contracting process. Resources are available on local Small Business Utilization offices, multiple award schedules and the VETS Government wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC).

The [Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD)](https://www.sba.gov/vets) offers entrepreneurial development services through Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC). The VBOCs provide business training, counseling and mentorship on topics such as international trade, franchising, Internet marketing and accounting.

The SBA’s [Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative](https://www.sba.gov/vets/loans) offers veterans low interest loans for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases.

The Start-up USA's [Online Training Seminars](https://www.startupusa.org) address concerns related to launching a successful veteran-owned business.

### RESOURCES FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Young entrepreneurs are the essence of the true American dream. The following resources provide support and assistance for young entrepreneurs with disabilities who want to establish or expand a small business:

The [Department of Labor’s (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)](https://www.dol.gov/odep) encourages youth with disabilities to participate in entrepreneurship programs. The site offers resources that explain the benefits of owning a small business and entrepreneurship education.

[Start-Up USA](https://www.startupusa.org), a web site that offers self-employment technical assistance, resources and training provides answers to [frequently asked questions](https://www.startupusa.org) about self-employment for youth with disabilities.

The [Job Accommodation Network (JAN)](https://www.jansections.org) provides a list of federal government offices and resources that support and assist young entrepreneurs during the small business development process.
The **Small Business Learning Center** offers free online business courses on topics such as business management, surviving in a down economy, e-commerce and accounting.

The **Small Business Administration's Small Business Planner** helps business owners manage each stage of the business lifecycle from start to finish.

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### WRITING A BUSINESS PLAN

The core foundation of a successful business is a well-developed business plan. The following resources include sample plans, software and other forms of support to help entrepreneurs during the writing process:

- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) provides a list of [business plan resources](#), including sample plans, software, Webinars and weekly videos to assist business owners in establishing and running a business.

- Self-Employment Technical Assistance, Resources & Training (START-UP/USA) directs individuals with disabilities to self-employment services. The site offers information on how to write a business plan, fact sheets, case studies, small business resources and contact information for state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

- The **Training and Technical Assistance for Providers (T-TAP)** offers an online seminar that covers critical factors in considering business feasibility, developing financial resources, basic business plan development and the identification and access to community small business resources.

- [Business.usa.gov](http://business.usa.gov) is a government resource that educates small business owners about a variety of issues. Information is available on writing a business plan, starting a green business, finding a business location and buying a franchise. For more information, go to: [http://business.usa.gov/](http://business.usa.gov/).

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### SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATORS

Starting a business of any kind is risky. Small business incubators are programs that protect and assist young firms during their initial development. The following resources link entrepreneurs to programs that aid the survival of their business:

- The **National Business Incubation Association (NBIA)** provides support and resources that assist small businesses during the start-up period. The site addresses frequently asked questions about small business incubators.

- [MICROenterprise Matters](http://microenterprise.org) is a national membership organization that helps business owners who do not have access to traditional sources of business education. Members receive training and technical assistance, financial assistance, access to markets and information about economic literacy and asset development.

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### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Whether you have started a small business or want to establish one, you won’t know all the answers about every business-related issue. START-UP/USA releases online training seminars on current issues that concern business owners. The following seminars cover financing a small business:

- **How to Finance a Business: Self-Employment Course**
  
  [www.start-up-usa.biz/training/online_seminars/f_scott/index.cfm](http://www.start-up-usa.biz/training/online_seminars/f_scott/index.cfm)
ADDITIONAL FUNDING

There are a number of private and public funding sources for starting a small business.

Business.usa.gov offers information on locating small business financing, from grants to loans, and includes necessary application documents.

The Job Accommodation's Network (JAN) includes a number of resources on financial assistance from the Small Business Administration and other organizations. Additionally, the site provides a list of state economic development and funding resources.

The Small Business Administration offers a variety of loan programs for very specific purposes.

SMALL BUSINESSES

Establishing and Maintaining a Small Business

Today many people with disabilities are turning to the flexibility of self-employment and entrepreneurship to meet both their career aspirations and financial goals. Starting your own small business doesn’t have to be difficult. The following information includes useful tips to help develop your small business.

Where Can I Find Information?

www.Disability.gov provides information related to starting a small business in the Employment section of their web site or go to: https://www.disability.gov/employment. Visitors can find federal and state resources on financial assistance, tax incentives, business plans, technical support and training. State resources and additional information about self-employment and entrepreneurship in specific states can be accessed by clicking on the "Search State Resources Only" menu and choosing a particular state, such as: Florida.

What Small Business Programs, Services & Supports are Available in Your Community?

Many states and local communities offer programs and services that help individuals with disabilities and veterans start small businesses. The following resources answer frequently asked questions, provide counseling and direct visitors to the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and local job development centers.

SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business" is a nonprofit organization that educates entrepreneurs about the development, growth and success of small businesses nationwide. Both working and retired executives and business owners donate time and expertise as business counselors. Visitors can attend online workshops, receive free face-to-face counseling and receive help on developing a small business plan essential to starting a small business.

You can also access a database of information and resources by going to: http://www.score.org. The Florida SCORE has map links to the SCORE Chapters closest to you, website sponsors and the SCORE National and Small Business Administration (SBA) websites can be located and you may access Chapter contact information by clicking on any Florida county.
The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) offer local one-on-one counseling to prospective and current entrepreneurs in the areas of planning, financing, management, technology, government procurement and other business-related topics. For more information, go to: http://www.sba.gov/content/small-business-development-centers-sbdc/. This site directs visitors to local SBDC contact information. Go to: http://floridasbdc.org/main.php.

The Small Business Training Network offers a virtual campus housing free training courses, workshops and knowledge resources designed to assist entrepreneurs and other students of enterprise. For more information, go to: www.sba.gov/training.

The Small Business Administration's Small Business Planner helps business owners manage each stage of the business lifecycle from start to finish. For more information, go to: http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business.

Most small businesses rely on lenders to provide the capital they need to either open a business or to finance capital improvements. Without loans, many small business owners would be unable to realize their dreams of opening a business or expanding their operations. For more information, go to: http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants/.

Small business grants are closer than you think. In fact, the small business grant you need to start or expand your business may be available right in your own home state. For more information, go to: http://usgovinfo.about.com/od/smallbusiness/a/flbusiness.htm.

Fact Sheet: Tax Breaks for Small Businesses: America’s entrepreneurs and small business owners continue to grow their businesses and create jobs due to unprecedented tax cuts that have been signed into law over the past two years. This includes billions of dollars in tax relief from laws such as the Recovery Act, the Small Business Jobs Act, the HIRE Act, the Affordable Care Act, and the Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. For more information, go to: http://www.sba.gov/content/fact-sheet-tax-breaks-small-businesses/.

Top Tax Deductions for Your Small Business. Using these tax deductions for your small business can save you money.

A Dozen Deductions for your Small Business. Here are a dozen deductions that even savvy small-business owners and entrepreneurs sometimes forget.

Enacted into law as part of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (the Jobs Act), the Small Business Lending Fund (SBLF) is a dedicated investment fund that encourages lending to small businesses by providing capital to qualified community banks and community development loan funds (CDLFs). For more information, go to: http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sb-programs/pages/small-business-lending-fund.aspx.

Investigating financing options for a small business? We've got some in the trenches advice for you on finding the funding that's just right for your startup venture. For more information, go to: http://www.startupnation.com/business-articles/890/1/AT_FindingFundingThatsRight.asp.
The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST) operates the New Horizon Loan Program that can assist borrowers with disabilities who are qualified debt to income with assistive technologies related to small businesses. For more information, go to: [http://www.newhorizonloanprogram.org/](http://www.newhorizonloanprogram.org/) or call 1-888-788-9216, ext. 107.

What Resources are Available for Entrepreneurs?

Entrepreneurs are the essence of the true American dream. The following resources provide support and assistance for entrepreneurs with disabilities who want to establish or expand a small business:


**Start-Up USA** is a site that offers self-employment technical assistance, fact sheets, resources, case studies, small business resources, training, seminars covering financing a small business, provides answers to frequently asked questions about self-employment for individuals with disabilities, and much more. For more information, go to: [http://www.start-up-usa.biz/](http://www.start-up-usa.biz/).

**Accessing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services** This Q and A fact sheet is the first in a series on accessing resources to support self-employment outcomes. Self-employment is recognized as an "employment outcome" under the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, which are contained in Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). There are two sections of the Act where self-employment, telecommuting, and establishing a small business are mentioned as employment outcomes.

**How to Finance a Business: Self-Employment Course:** [http://www.start-up-usa.biz/training/online_seminars/f_scott/index.cfm/](http://www.start-up-usa.biz/training/online_seminars/f_scott/index.cfm/)

**What is a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)?**  [http://www.start-up-usa.biz/training/online_seminars/sullivan_pass/index.cfm/](http://www.start-up-usa.biz/training/online_seminars/sullivan_pass/index.cfm/)

**Free Accounting and Bookkeeping Tutorials** The Tutorial Selection recommends sites providing free tutorials and courses about various small business subjects. Links are included to a tutorial site dedicated to bookkeeping and accounting tutorials and topics, to other sites providing accounting tutorials and bookkeeping and accounting information and topics as well as to recommended tutorials and topics about marketing, statistics, economics, project management, excel, and word. For more information, go to: [http://www.dwmbeancounter.com/](http://www.dwmbeancounter.com/).

**Free confidential consulting for small businesses in any stage** Here you'll find online tutorials covering a range of topics, with targeted content responding to several critical areas for small businesses. For more information, go to: [http://tutorials.pasbdc.org/index/resources/onlinelearning.asp](http://tutorials.pasbdc.org/index/resources/onlinelearning.asp).
How To Guides  Technology evolves so quickly, that at times it can feel impossible to keep up. That's why we offer how-to guides, tips and tutorials. They'll help you to get the most out of your technology tools -- so you can get back to running your business. For more information, go to: http://www.smallbusinesscomputing.com/how-to-guides.

How Do I Write a Business Plan?

The core foundation of a successful business is a well-developed and feasible business plan. The following resources include sample plans, software and other forms of support to help entrepreneurs during the business plan development process:

START-UP USA directs individuals with disabilities to self-employment services. The site offers information on developing a business plan.

The Training and Technical Assistance for Providers (T-TAP) offers an online seminar that covers critical factors in considering business feasibility, developing financial resources, basic business plan development and the identification and access to community small business resources. For more information, go to: http://www.t-tap.org/training/onlineseminars/griffin/griffin.htm.

Business.USA.gov is a government resource that educates small business owners about a variety of issues. Information is available on writing a business plan, starting a green business, finding a business location and buying a franchise. For more information, go to: http://business.usa.gov.

TOOLS FOR FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

The FAAST New Horizon Loan Program, through support from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, provides a comprehensive 52-page general self-help resource guide designed to provide basic tools to find sound financial resource information.

Tools for financial independence within this guide are designed to assist individuals with resources on the how to’s of budgeting, establishing and maintaining credit, repairing credit, student loan resource information, home ownership resources, establishing and maintaining small businesses, state and federal tax information, savings plans, retirement planning, and much more.

For your convenient reference, the financial resources within this guide have been hyperlinked to provide easy access to informative websites, frequently asked questions (FAQs), factsheets, articles, tutorials, and other relevant financial resources. To find a financial resource that may be of assistance to you, please refer to the Table of Contents that includes a detailed list of financially relevant topics and subjects, along with page numbers.

This self-help resource guide is not a substitute for legal advice. As with many other FAAST self-help resource guides, this guide contains hyperlinks to an array of helpful reference materials and is available on the New Horizon Loan Program website at www.newhorizonloanprogram.org and on the FAAST website at www.faast.org/resources/library.
FAAST, Inc. offers a free online magazine featuring up to date information on FAAST programs and services that also can be helpful to you and employers. FAAST, Inc. provides information on the latest assistive technologies, low cost and free apps and software for individuals with disabilities, comprehensive information and assistance resources, and much more. Information provided within online issues of the FAAST Access magazine are conveniently hyperlinked for your reference.

You can sign up to start receiving the free online FAAST Access magazine in just a few easy steps:

Go to [www.faast.org](http://www.faast.org)

Go to Newsletter Sign up (bottom of FAAST homepage)

Enter your email address and click “go”.
Section II: For Employers
The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (hereinafter "ADA") is a federal civil rights law. It was enacted by Congress in 1990 and amended in 2008 to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in access to employment, government services and programs, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008

Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed into law on September 25, 2008, taking effect January 1, 2009, clarify and reiterate who is covered by this law’s broad civil rights protections. The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 revises the definition of “disability” to more broadly encompass impairments that substantially limit a major life activity. On September 25, 2008, the President signed the ADA Amendments Act which emphasized that the definition of disability should be construed in favor of broad coverage to the maximum extent permitted by the terms of the ADA. This makes it easier for an individual seeking protection under the ADA to establish that he or she has a disability within the meaning of the ADA. Full text of the ADA Amendments Act can be found at http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa.cfm.

Definition of Disability as amended:

“(1) DISABILITY.—The term ‘disability’ means, with respect to an individual—

“(A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;

“(B) a record of such an impairment; or

“(C) being regarded as having such an impairment (as described in paragraph (3)).

“(2) MAJOR LIFE ACTIVITIES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1), major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

“(B) MAJOR BODILY FUNCTIONS.—For purposes of paragraph (1), a major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

“(3) REGARDED AS HAVING SUCH AN IMPAIRMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(C):

“(A) An individual meets the requirement of 'being regarded as having such an impairment' if the individual establishes that he or she has been subjected to an action prohibited under this Act because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity.

“(B) Paragraph (1)(C) shall not apply to impairments that are transitory and minor. A transitory impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less.
For status updates on future amendments to the ADA, check periodically at [www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa_notice.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa_notice.cfm). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website contains a wealth of information on this topic. Their document is entitled ‘The ADA: Your Employment Rights as an Individual with a Disability’.

For more specific information about ADA requirements affecting employment contact, contact the EEOC at: [http://www.eeoc.gov/contact/](http://www.eeoc.gov/contact/).

**Title I: Employment**

The ADA was enacted to ensure that all qualified individuals with disabilities enjoy the same employment opportunities available to persons without disabilities. Title I of the Act provides protections for qualified individuals with disabilities. The person must be otherwise qualified to do the job; that is the employee must meet the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position.

The ADA prohibits disability-based discrimination against qualified individuals in all employment activities including: application, testing, hiring, assignments, evaluation, disciplinary actions, training, promotion, medical examinations, layoff recall, termination, compensation, leave, and benefits and privileges of employment. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability. A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice, or the work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.

The ADA requires an interactive process, when necessary to identify the appropriate accommodation. Both the employer and employee are obligated to engage in this process. The steps include:

1) Consult the person with the disability;
2) Work with the individual to identify appropriate accommodations;
3) Consider the preference of the individual;
4) Select the accommodation that best serves the needs of the individual and the needs of the workplace; and
5) Ensure that the essential functions of the position can be performed if the accommodation is made.

An employer is prohibited from disclosing an employee’s disability or ADA accommodations to co-workers; however, the supervisor/manager should be informed about accommodation requests and decisions. Any medical documentation gathered during the ADA accommodations process must be kept confidential in a separate file.

**Title I Scope of Coverage**

- Employers with 15 or more employees
- Covered entities include private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies, labor unions, and joint labor-management committees
- United States government, private membership clubs, and Indian tribes are exempt
- Provision in Title II extends employment requirements to all state and local governmental entities, regardless of size.
General Rule
No covered entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability, because of the disability of such individual in regard to the job application procedures; the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training; and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

No covered entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability because of the disability with regard to three Aspects of Employment:

1. Application process: Employers may find it helpful to note on applications that applicants may request reasonable accommodation for the hiring process and to specify a contact person.
2. Performance of the essential functions of a job
3. Enjoyment of equal benefits and privileges of employment: Social and professional functions, such as a staff retreat, fall under the category of “benefits and privileges of employment,” and the employer is required to accommodate participation by employee with a disability.

Qualified Individual
A person with a disability who meets the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position held or desired, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question.

Doesn’t mean a disability has been certified, but rather it means that the person is otherwise qualified to do the job, with or without an accommodation.

Essential Functions: Why the Job Exists

Definitions include:
The primary job duties intrinsic to the job.
They do not include marginal or peripheral functions that are incidental to the performance of primary job functions.

Evidence a task is essential includes:

- Employer’s judgment
- Job description
- Time spent on task
- Consequences of not performing the task
- Past or current employees’ experience

Collective bargaining agreement An employer is not required to reallocate essential functions as a reasonable accommodation.

Example: Receptionist

Essential functions: answering the phone and greeting visitors

Marginal function: receiving the mail

The job candidate has limited dexterity. He needs to be able to access the phone and show visitors to the conference room.

Possible job accommodation: A hands-free headset for the telephone.
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

An employer must provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability.

A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice, or the work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.

REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATION

- May be made by an employee or applicant;
- Family member, friend, health professional, or other representative may request on behalf of an individual;
- Can be in plain English and need not mention the ADA or use the phrase “reasonable accommodation”;
- Can be verbal or written; and
- Employer can ask the employee if he or she needs an accommodation.

According to the EEOC, an employer may ask an employee with a known disability whether he/she needs a reasonable accommodation when it reasonably believes that the employee may need an accommodation. For example, an employer could ask an employee that’s deaf and who is being sent on a business trip if he/she needs reasonable accommodation. Or, if an employer is scheduling a luncheon at a restaurant and is uncertain about what questions it should ask to ensure that the restaurant is accessible for an employee who uses a wheelchair, the employer may first ask the employee. An employer also may ask an employee with a disability who is having performance or conduct problems if s/he needs reasonable accommodation.

EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Restructuring a job by redistributing marginal job functions
- Altering when or how an essential job function is performed
- Part-time or modified work schedules
- Obtaining or modifying equipment or devices
- Modifying examinations, training materials, or policies
- Providing qualified readers and interpreters

According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Job Accommodation Network, more than half the accommodations needed by employees and job applicants with disabilities cost nothing and of those accommodations that cost money the typical expenditure by the employer is around $600.

PROCESS FOR DETERMINING A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

1. Consult the person with the disability
2. Work with the individual to identify appropriate accommodations
3. Consider the preference of the individual
4. Select the accommodation that best serves the needs of the individual and the needs of the work place
5. Ensure that the essential functions of the position can be performed if the accommodation is made
6. Make the process interactive
7. Seek the services of a rehab engineer or assistive technology professional
UNDUE HARDSHIPS

An action that is “unduly costly, extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or that would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of the business” is known as an “undue hardship” to the employer. These include actions that are impose significant difficulty or expense, when considering:

A. Nature and cost of accommodation
B. Overall financial resources of the site/sites involved, number of persons employed, and effect on expenses/resources of the site
C. Type of operation and geographic separateness
D. Impact of accommodation on the operation of the site

An employer is not required to provide an accommodation if it would result in an undue hardship.

If the employer can show that the cost of the accommodation would impose an undue hardship, the employer would still be required to provide the accommodation if funding is available from another source such as a state VR agency. Also, to the extent that a portion of the cost of an accommodation causes undue hardship, the employer should ask the individual with a disability if s/he will pay the difference. If an employer determines that one particular reasonable accommodation will cause undue hardship, but a second type of reasonable accommodation will be effective and will not cause an undue hardship, then the employer must provide the second accommodation.

An employer cannot claim undue hardship based on employees' (or customers') fears or prejudices toward the individual's disability. Nor can undue hardship be based on the fact that provision of a reasonable accommodation might have a negative impact on the morale of other employees. Employers, however, may be able to show undue hardship where provision of a reasonable accommodation would be unduly disruptive to other employees' ability to work.

Other Title I Provisions

- Pre-Employment Inquiries
- Confidentiality
- Documentation
- Personal Devices
- Refusal of Accommodation

To review EEOC Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, click here.

SOUTHEAST ADA CENTER (FORMERLY KNOWN AS SOUTHEAST DBTAC)

The Southeast ADA Center (formerly known as Southeast DBTAC) can provide information, training, and guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and disability access tailored to the needs of business, government, and individuals at local, state, and regional levels. The Southeast ADA Center also conducts research to reduce and eliminate barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency and to increase the civic and social participation of Americans with disabilities.
They are one of ten regional centers in the ADA National Network funded since 1991 by the National Institute on Disability & Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and a project of the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) of Syracuse University.

We are located in Atlanta, Georgia and serve as the regional office for an extended leadership network of Local and State Affiliates from eight (8) states in the U.S. Southeast Region.

1-800-949-4232 (voice/TTY)

Website:  http://www.adasoutheast.org/

The DBTAC: Southeast ADA Center—a project of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University—is one of ten regional resource centers funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) of the U.S. Department of Education. Our purpose is to provide accurate ADA information, informal technical assistance and training on the ADA to employers, business, government, and people with disabilities. All calls are confidential!

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) offers guidance regarding pre-employment inquiries by employers concerning disabilities.

Under the law, employers generally cannot ask disability-related questions or require medical examinations until after an applicant has been given a conditional job offer. This is because, in the past, this information was frequently used to exclude applicants with disabilities before their ability to perform a job was evaluated.

Employers are permitted to ask limited questions about reasonable accommodation if they reasonably believe that the applicant may need accommodation because of an obvious or voluntarily disclosed disability, or where the applicant has disclosed a need for accommodation.

Employers may ask if the applicant will need an accommodation to perform a specific job duty, and if the answer is yes, the employer may then ask what the accommodation would be.

The employer may not ask any questions about the nature or severity of the disability.

The EEOC offers a question and answer factsheet on The ADA: Your Employment Rights as an Individual With a Disability.

The EEOC offers guidance on prohibited employment policies/practices and Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination.

For more information you may choose to contact the EEOC toll-free at 1-800-669-4000 or go to www.eeoc.gov. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has released four revised publications on protection against disability discrimination in the workplace. The publications describe how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to job applicants and employees with cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, and intellectual disabilities. You can find these documents on the EEOC website under Disability Discrimination.
EEOC COORDINATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Federal laws concerning workplace discrimination are enforced by different Federal agencies. The EEOC is responsible for coordinating the Federal government’s employment non-discrimination effort. The EEOC is required to review regulations and other EEO policy-related documents before they are issued to ensure consistency in the Federal government's effort to combat workplace discrimination. For more information, go to: [http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/coordination.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/coordination.cfm).

AN EMPLOYER’S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE EEOC’S 2013 INITIATIVES

Click [here](#) to review an employer’s guide to navigating the EEOC’s 2013 initiatives.

EEOC INTERNAL ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

Click [here](#) to review an *Employers’ Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*.

EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS

During job interviews, employers should focus on the ability of an applicant to perform the job, not on an applicant’s disability. Employers may not ask questions about: nature of a disability, severity of a disability, condition causing a disability, prognosis regarding a condition/disability, or whether the applicant will need treatment or leave because of the disability. During an interview, employers may not generally ask applicants if they need reasonable accommodation to perform a job.

However, if an employer knows a particular applicant has a disability, either because it is obvious or because the person has voluntarily revealed it, and the employer reasonably believes the disability might require accommodation to perform the job, the employer is entitled to ask the following two questions:

1. Do you need reasonable accommodation to perform the job?
2. If the answer is yes, what accommodation do you believe you need?

The need for reasonable accommodation is not a valid reason to reject an applicant.

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

All requests for reasonable accommodation, all decisions concerning reasonable accommodation, and any related medical information must be documented and maintained in a separate and confidential file by the designated individual (ADA coordinator or HR director).

When the disability and/or need for accommodation is not obvious, the employer may ask the individual for reasonable documentation about his/her disability and functional limitations. The employer is entitled to know that the individual has a covered disability for which the employee needs a reasonable accommodation. Reasonable documentation means that the employer may require only the documentation that is needed to establish that a person has an ADA disability and that the disability necessitates a reasonable accommodation.
An employer may require that the documentation about the disability and the functional limitations come from an appropriate health care or rehabilitation professional. It may be helpful for the employer to make clear to the individual that the information is being requested to verify the existence of an ADA disability and the need for a reasonable accommodation.

An employer does not have to provide as reasonable accommodations personal use items needed in accomplishing daily activities both on and off the job. Thus an employer is not required to provide an employee with a prosthetic limb, a wheelchair, eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other similar devices if they are also needed off the job. However, items that might otherwise be considered personal may be required as reasonable accommodations where they are specifically designed or required to meet job-related rather than personal needs.

An employee may refuse an accommodation. If, however, the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of the job, then he or she may no longer be a qualified individual with a disability.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology encompasses devices that increase function, independence, participation, and productivity for people with disabilities, as well as the services needed for using these devices. AT can range from easy-to-obtain and inexpensive products like electric staplers to sophisticated, specialized adaptations for computer access. There are many AT solutions that can assist in a variety of occupations and workplaces.

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. provides information to employers and others on assistive technology and how it can help individuals with disabilities in employment; understanding the employer’s responsibility for providing assistive technology; and how to locate, try, and buy assistive technology devices and services, including employer resources and incentives. For more information, go to www.faast.org.

WORK OFFSITE

The terms “telework,” “telecommuting,” “flexible workplace,” “remote work,” “virtual work,” and “mobile work” are all used to refer to work done outside of the traditional on-site work environment. These terms are defined in different ways and used in different contexts to refer to anything from jobs that are completely virtual or mobile, to arrangements that enable employees to work from home a few days per week or per month.

This type of work is especially beneficial to employees with disabilities who may have difficulty performing work duties in a typical work environment. Telework allows employees to perform basic job functions from their home. The most common telework opportunities include call center and customer service positions. The benefits of telework include the ability to establish working hours that are flexible, increased safety within the work environment, and the opportunity to have a modified work space designed for the individual in their own home. Another benefit of telework is savings on transportation costs including maintenance and fuel.

www.teleworktoolkit.com/index.html
Employer Incentives

**TAX BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES WHO HAVE EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

Businesses accommodating people with disabilities may qualify for some of the following tax credits and deductions. More detailed information may be found in the IRS publications referenced.

**DISABLED ACCESS CREDIT**

The Disabled Access Credit provides a non-refundable credit for small businesses that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities. An eligible small business is one that that earned $1 million or less or had no more than 30 full time employees in the previous year; they may take the credit each and every year they incur access expenditures. Refer to Form 8826, Disabled Access Credit (PDF), for information about eligible expenditures.

**BARRIER REMOVAL TAX DEDUCTION**

The Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly. Businesses may claim a deduction of up to $15,000 a year for qualified expenses for items that normally must be capitalized. Businesses claim the deduction by listing it as a separate expense on their income tax return. Also, businesses may use the Disabled Tax Credit and the architectural/transportation tax deduction together in the same tax year, if the expenses meet the requirements of both sections. To use both, the deduction is equal to the difference between the total expenditures and the amount of the credit claimed.

**WORK OPPORTUNITY CREDIT FOR VETERANS**

The *American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (ATRA)* extends the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) for hiring certain workers through Dec. 31, 2013.

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 made changes to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), including adding new categories to the qualified veterans targeted group and expanding the WOTC to make a reduced credit available to tax-exempt organizations for hiring qualified veterans. For more information, click here.

Click here to review EEOC Issues New Guidance on Employer Responsibilities to Disabled and Returning Service Members. Click here to review Veterans and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A Guide for Employers.

**CLASSIFICATION OF WORKERS IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS**

Many businesses misclassify workers in a sheltered workshop as independent contractors when they really are employees. *Revenue Ruling 65-165* discusses the treatment of such workers in each of the following categories:

1. Individuals in training in a rehabilitation program designed to prepare them for placement in private industry. The intent of the training, which averages 16 weeks in length, is to accustom the individual to
industrial working conditions. These individuals are not employees of the workshop for federal employment tax purposes while they are being trained.

2. Regular workshop employees who have completed training and are capable of performing one or more jobs in the sheltered workshop temporarily if awaiting placement in private industry or permanently if unable to compete in regular industry. These individuals are paid by the workshop that provides working conditions and pay scales comparable to those in private industry, fixes working hours and production schedules so an employment relationship is intended. The trained workers in the workshop are employees for federal employment tax purposes.

3. Individuals working at home that are incapable of working in the workshop that are able to produce salable articles and may sell them wherever they please. These individuals are not considered employees as no employer-employee relationship exists under the usual common law rules.

Additional information about these business topics concerning accommodations for individuals with disabilities are in:

Publication 535, Business Expenses
Form 8826, Disabled Access Credit (PDF)
Form 5884, Work Opportunity Credit (PDF)
Form 3800, General Business Credit (PDF)
Instructions to Form 3800
Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit (PDF)
Instructions for Form 8850

There is also a wide array of tax benefits available to persons with disabilities, ranging from standard deductions and exemptions to business and itemized deductions to credits. Information about these issues can be found here.

Workforce Investment Act-Florida
The Basics

WHAT IS A ONE-STOP CENTER?

Each local area is to establish a one-stop delivery system through which core employment-related services are provided and access is provided to other employment and training services. The access to services must be provided through at least one physical one-stop center in each local area, which may be supplemented by networks of affiliated sites. The programs providing services through the one-stop system are referred to as one-stop partners. For more information, go to one-stop.

The local board, with the agreement of the local elected official, develops and enters into a memorandum of understanding with one-stop partners. The board also designates one-stop service center operators and conducts oversight of the partners and centers. "Designated" one-stop partners are programs that must provide core services through the one-stop, and include programs authorized under:
• Title I of the Workforce Investment Act;
• The Wagner-Peyser Act;
• The Adult Education and Literacy title of this Act;
• The Vocational Rehabilitation Act;
• The Welfare-to-Work grants;
• Title V of the Older Americans Act;
• Postsecondary vocational education under the Perkins Act;
• Trade Adjustment Assistance;
• Veterans employment services under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.;
• Unemployment compensation laws;
• Community Service Block Grants;
• Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and
• Additional programs also may be partners in the one-stop center with the approval of the local board and local elected official.

The partners and local boards, subject to the approval of the chief elected official, enter into a written memorandum of understanding describing the services to be provided, how the costs of the services and operating costs of the system will be funded, methods for referral of individuals between the one-stop operators and partners for appropriate services and activities, and other matters deemed appropriate.

The local board, with the agreement of the chief elected official, selects the operator of a one-stop center through a competitive process. The board may also designate a consortium of not less than three one-stop partners to operate a center. The operators may be a public or private entity, or a consortium of such entities, which may include post-secondary educational institutions; the Employment Service authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, private for-profit or non-profit entities, government agencies, one-stop partners, or other organizations. In addition, the bill contains a grandfathering provision that allows the Governor, local elected official, and local board to continue to designate any one-stop operator that was designated as an operator under a one-stop system established prior to the enactment of this title.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 rewrote federal statutes governing programs of job training, adult education and literacy and vocational rehabilitation. The Act was signed by the President in August of 1998 and was the first major reform in the nation’s job training programs in fifteen years.

In addition to replacing the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), it mandates the use of One-Stop Operating Systems. The Act is designed to streamline services, eliminate duplication of services and empower individuals to obtain the services and the skills they want and need. More flexibility for the Local Workforce Development Boards to operate programs, along with more accountability for their programs, is an essential part of the Act.

The goals of the WIA are to improve the quality of the workforce, enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation and to reduce welfare dependency.

States were given the option to implement WIA early or wait until the mandatory date of July 2000. Florida opted to implement early and started on July 1, 1999. Florida Leaders had already addressed many of the same goals outlined in the Workforce Investment Act with the implementation of the Workforce Florida Act.
WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER THE WIA PROGRAM?

There are three categories of individuals addressed in Title I of the Workforce Investment Act, Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth.

Adults are any individuals over 18 years of age who may not fit the criteria for other categories.

Dislocated workers are individuals who become unemployed and are eligible to receive Unemployment Compensation or have established an attachment to the labor market. Also included in the Dislocated Worker category are displaced homemakers.

Individuals who are employed but need services to obtain or retain employment, which leads to self-sufficiency, as defined locally, may be eligible for assistance as an Adult or Dislocated Worker.

Youth services participants are individuals from 14 years to 21 years of age, who are low income and face one or more of the specified barriers. Youth who fall between the ages of 18 and 21 years may receive services as a youth or adult or both at the same time.

WHAT ARE THE THREE LEVELS OF SERVICE?

The WIA is based on a three-tier approach to the provision of employment and training services. An individual participating in the WIA program will receive services in the following order:

Core Services - At a minimum, an individual must receive at least one core service such as an initial assessment or job search and placement assistance before receiving intensive services.

Intensive Services - At a minimum, a person must receive at least one intensive service such as development of an individual employment plan with a case manager or individual counseling and career planning, before receiving a training service.

Training Services - There is not a federally required minimum time period for participation in intensive services before receiving Training services. Training may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who:

- Have received at least one Intensive service and have been determined unable to obtain or retain employment through such services;
- After an interview, evaluation or assessment and case management, have been determined by a One-Stop operator or One-Stop partner, to be in need of training services and to have the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training program;
- Select a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities either in the local area or in another area to which the individual is willing to relocate.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN CORE SERVICES?

There are two levels of core services, unassisted and assisted, available through the one-stop system to eligible individuals who are adults or dislocated workers.

UNASSISTED CORE SERVICES

Core services that are generally low-cost, self-service and consist primarily of providing information are unassisted core services and do not require registration (performance measurement). It is recommended that the Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs) track unassisted core services for "head count" purposes via the
existing ODDS information system. RWBs also have the option of using data tracking systems they have
designed if preferred.

The following core services are general, unassisted services and if provided as a stand-alone service, do not
require an individual to be registered and therefore subsequently followed-up for performance measurement
purposes:

1. Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling), orientation to the services available through the
One-Stop system;
2. Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive services needs;
3. Job search and placement assistance individually or in groups through the Job Information Service (JIS),
the Professional Placement Network (PPN), computerized file search, and where appropriate, career
counseling;
4. Provision of employment statistics information, including accurate information relating to local,
regional and national labor market areas such as job vacancy listings in such labor market areas,
information on the job skills necessary to obtain the jobs, information relating to local occupations in
demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupation;
5. Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training
services;
6. Provision of information regarding how the local area is performing on the local performance measures
and any additional performance information with respect to the One-Stop delivery system in the local
area;
7. Provision of accurate information relating to the availability of supportive services including child care
and transportation, available in the local area and referral to such services as needed;
8. Provision of information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
9. Assistance in establishing Welfare-to-Work eligibility and other non-WIA training and education;
10. Resource room usage, Internet browsing, Internet accounts;
11. "How to" group sessions (e.g. writing a resume);
12. Job referrals (informational, e.g., job scouts, referrals in non-exclusive hiring arrangements, short -
term or seasonal placements); and
13. Talent referrals (informational, e.g., talent scouts, referrals of resumes without further screening).

ASSISTED CORE SERVICES

An assisted core service is individualized help that goes beyond general information or self-service and are to
be entered into the Management Information System (MIS).

The following is a list of assisted core services. At this time all assisted core services should be data entered
into the current MIS system with the MIS Activity Code #02. New WIA codes have been established for
assisted core, training and intensive services.

1. Individual job development;
2. Job clubs;
3. Screened/assisted referrals (testing and background checks done before referral or when operating as
the employers agent in order to fill job orders);
4. Follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in WIA activities who
are placed in unsubsidized employment for not less than 12 months after the first day of employment
as appropriate; and
5. Adult and dislocated worker eligibility determination under WIA prior to referral to intensive services (included as assisted core rather than unassisted in order to work within the existing MIS system).

**WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN INTENSIVE SERVICES?**

Adults and dislocated workers who are unemployed or under employed and who have not obtained employment through core services, may be referred to intensive services for additional placement services. When intensive services are received, a participant is considered registered in WIA and will be followed-up for performance measurement purposes. The participant receiving intensive and training services will figure into a RWDB’s performance calculation. The following are intensive services (WIA section 134(d)(3)(C), and Consultation Paper on Performance Accountability Measurement for the WI System under Title I of the WIA, II, B, and Table 1.):

Comprehensive, specialized objective assessment of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers which may include:

1. Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
2. In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
3. Development of an individual employment plan
4. Group counseling
5. Individual counseling and career planning
6. Case management;
7. Short-term prevocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct and
8. Stand-alone adult education and literacy training

**WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN TRAINING?**

Adult and dislocated workers who do not obtain employment following intensive services may be referred to training in order for these individuals to secure employment. The training must be directly linked to occupations in demand in the area or another area if the individual is willing to relocate. A WIA Status Change will be completed and key entered in the MIS to enroll these individuals into training.

The following are examples of allowable training:

1. Occupational skills training including training for nontraditional employment
2. On-the-job training
3. Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs
4. Private sector training programs
5. Skill upgrading and retraining
6. Entrepreneurial training
7. Job readiness training
8. Adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with training
9. Customized training

(Reference: [WIA section](#) 134(d)(4)(D) and Consultation Paper on Performance Accountability Measurement for the WI System under Title I of the WIA, II, B and Table 1.)
WHERE DO YOUTH PARTICIPANTS FIT IN?

Youth programs include an objective assessment of each youth's skill levels and service needs, a service strategy, preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities or unsubsidized employment (as appropriate). They also demonstrate strong linkages between academic and occupational learning and effective connections to intermediaries with strong links to the job market and employers.

The other required elements of youth programs include:

1. tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention;
2. alternative school services;
3. adult mentoring;
4. paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. occupational skills training;
6. leadership development opportunities;
7. supportive services;
8. follow-up services for not less than 12 months as appropriate; and
9. comprehensive guidance and counseling.

In addition, each program must provide summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning, but unlike JTPA law, no separate appropriation is authorized for the summer jobs program.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR ADULT PROGRAMS?

To be eligible for Adult Programs under the Workforce Investment Act, an individual must be 18 years or older. In areas where funding is limited, priority of services for intensive services and training should be given to low income adults and public assistance recipients. The Regional Workforce Board will outline in its local plan if funding is limited and if priority of service will be given to those individuals. Core services are available to everyone regardless of funding limitations.

All participants must receive at least one core service and be unable to obtain employment before being referred on to intensive services. Furthermore, an individual must receive an intensive service and be unable to obtain employment before a referral to training. The WIA does not designate time periods that an individual must remain in core services or intensive services before moving on to the next available level of service.

Individuals between 18 years of age and 21 years may be served as an Adult or under Youth Programs or both.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAMS, INCLUDING DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS?

Dislocated workers are eligible for services through a one-stop center. To be eligible for service under the Dislocated Worker Program an individual is: terminated/laid off or notified of lay off; eligible for or has exhausted unemployment compensation benefits or has worked long enough to establish an attachment to the labor market; and unlikely to return to his previous occupation or job.
Also, individuals who are laid off due to:

1. Plant closures or substantial layoffs at a plant or facility
2. Being employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that that facility will close in 180 Days. In cases where there has been a general announcement of a plant closure, individuals may receive Core Services only.

Also included as Dislocated Workers are Self-Employed individuals, Farmers, Ranchers, and Fishermen who are unemployed due to economic conditions or a natural disaster.

Displaced Homemakers who have been dependent on the income of another family member and are no longer receiving that support and who are unemployed or underemployed and having difficulty in obtaining work or upgrading employment will be eligible for services provided through the Dislocated Worker Program.

**WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR YOUTH?**

Youth must be ages 14-21, low income, and meet at least 1 of the 6 specified barriers to employment (see below). There is a 5 percent window for non-low-income youth if they experience one or more specified barriers to school completion or employment. In addition, at least 30% of funds must be expended on out-of-school youth.

**Barriers for youth are:**

1. Deficient in basic literacy skills
2. A school drop-out
3. Homeless, runaway or a foster child
4. Pregnant or parenting teen
5. An offender
6. An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or secure and hold employment.
7. Regional Workforce Boards will define the last barrier in their plans.

**Barriers for 5 percent who are not low-income are:**

1. Individuals who are school dropouts.
2. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3. Individuals with educational attainment that is one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the age of the individuals.
4. Individuals who are pregnant or parenting.
5. Individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities.
6. Individuals who are homeless or runaway youth.
7. Individuals who are offenders.
8. Other eligible youth who face serious barriers to employment as identified by the local board.
REGISTRATION

WHAT PAPERWORK MUST BE COMPLETED?

The MIS 1 and 2 must be completed either by paper or electronically for State tracking purposes. The JT screens have been modified to capture assisted core services more accurately. Currently, a MIS Status Change is needed to enroll these individuals into intensive services.

WHAT TYPES OF DOCUMENTATION ARE NEEDED?

The types of documentation needed for the WIA programs are the same types that have been used in the past for the JTPA programs. Regional Workforce Boards will set their own guidelines for types of documentation necessary.

WHERE AND WHEN MUST AN INDIVIDUAL REGISTER?

Individuals will be able to register for services at one-stop centers, satellite offices or with service providers in the area where they live.

Each WIA sub-recipient is required to collect and maintain records on WIA eligible individuals. Under WIA, reporting requirements vary by intensity of service, funding source and funding availability. Registration is not required for individuals receiving only self-service/informational (core) services. According to the WIA; Interim Final Rule, Part 663:

"Individuals who are primarily seeking information and do not seek direct, one-on-one staff assistance, do not need to be registered. However when an individual seeks more than minimal assistance from staff in taking the next steps toward self-sufficient employment, then eligibility must be determined. Registration is the point at which information that is used in performance measurement begins to be collected."

It is recommended that the RWBs track unassisted core services for "head count" purposes via the existing ODDS information system. RWBs also have the option of using data tracking systems they have designed if preferred. Tracking of unassisted core services is optional at this time but RWBs should keep in mind that Federal-reporting requirements might remove this flexibility at some later date.

Data on individuals receiving assisted core services, intensive and training, individualized help that goes beyond general information or self-service, are to be entered into the Management Information System (MIS). This information will be tracked for the purposes of providing data for State and Federal reports.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

The bill requires (with three exceptions) that training be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), through which a participant chooses among eligible providers. Specifically, the one-stop system provides participants with the list of eligible providers and related performance information. The participant then chooses the program that best meets his/her needs, with payment arranged through the ITAs. Training may be provided through a contract for services in lieu of an ITA for: on-the-job training and customized training; where there are an insufficient number of providers to meet the competitive purposes of ITAs. Contracted training may also be provided for programs offered by community-based organizations or other private agencies that serve special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment.
Individual Training Accounts are for Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Youth who are between 18 years and 21 years of age and are being provided services in an Adult Program may use ITAs.

THE GENETIC INFORMATION NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2008

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) took effect on November 21, 2009, and prohibits genetic information discrimination in employment.

Definition of Genetic Information – “Genetic information includes information about an individual’s genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual’s family members, as well as information about any disease, disorder, or condition of an individual’s family members (i.e. an individual’s family medical history). Family medical history is included in the definition of genetic information because it is often used to determine whether someone has an increased risk of getting a disease, disorder, or condition in the future.”

Under GINA, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of genetic information for employment purposes, or to harass a person because of genetic information.

THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, SECTIONS 501 AND 505

Federal employees and applicants are covered by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, instead of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The protections are mostly the same.

PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT POLICIES/PRACTICES

Under the laws enforced by the EEOC, discrimination is forbidden in every aspect of employment, including job advertisements, recruitment, application and hiring, job referrals, job assignments and promotions, pay and benefits, employment references, reasonable accommodation and disability, reasonable accommodation and religion, training and apprenticeship programs, harassment, terms and conditions of employment, pre-employment inquiries, dress code, and constructive discharge/forced resignation. For further discussion about each of these specific issues, go to www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm.

Information on the number and handling of complaints (known as a “charge”) of employment discrimination by the EEOC under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Filing a Charge of Discrimination: If you believe you have been discriminated against at work, you can file a Charge of Discrimination with the EEOC. This must be done before you can file a job discrimination lawsuit against the employer. In general, the Charge of Discrimination must be filed within 180 calendar days from the day the discrimination took place. The deadline can be extended to 300 calendar days if a state or local agency also enforces a law that prohibits employment discrimination on the same basis. For more information on filing a charge, go to www.eeoc.gov/employees/charge.cfm.

Federal employees and job applicants have similar protections, but a different complaint process and time limits. The first step is to contact an EEO counselor at the agency where you work, or where you applied for a job. Generally, you must contact the counselor within 45 days from the date of discrimination. In most cases, you will have a choice of participating either in counseling or in an alternative dispute resolution program, or mediation. For more information on how federal employees and job applicants should file a charge, go to www.eeoc.gov/federal/fed_employees/complaint_overview.cfm.
**FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)**

If an employer has 50 or more employees and has 50 or more employees each working day during at least 20 calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year, the FMLA will apply. The U.S. Department of Labor enforces the FMLA. The FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to:

Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:

- the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- to care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
- any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on “covered active duty;” or
- Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member’s spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

Call 1-866-487-9243 for more information or go to [FMLA](https://www.dol.gov/esa/fls/fmla/).  

**WORKPLACE EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Every workplace should have emergency evacuation procedures in place; a comprehensive plan should provide for prompt assistance to individuals with disabilities, or those whose medical conditions may necessitate it. Federal disability discrimination laws do not prevent employers from obtaining and using medical information in the event of an evacuation. For more information on these rights and responsibilities, go to [www.eeoc.gov/facts/evacuation.html](https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/evacuation.html).

**UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

The Reemployment Assistant Program (Unemployment Compensation) is a program in the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. Unemployment insurance provides temporary wage replacement benefits to qualified individuals who are out of work through no fault of their own. For more information, go to [Reemployment Assistance Programs](https://www.floridaworks.com/).  

**EXCEPTED SERVICE -- APPOINTMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, CAREER, AND CAREER-CONDITIONAL APPOINTMENT (SCHEDULE A HIRING AUTHORITY)**

Schedule A is an appointing authority, or hiring authority. It is an Excepted Service appointment for persons with disabilities. The regulations guiding the Excepted Service -- Appointment of Persons with Disabilities and Career and Career-Conditional Appointment are found in the [Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 5 CFR § 213.3102(u)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=0909a3f79570a46b21c194327d740083&rgn=div5&view=text&node=5:213.3102(u)&part=5). Using the Schedule A appointing authority, candidates who meet the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) guidelines can be hired non-competitively without the typical recruitment headaches,
without posting and publicizing the position; and without going through the certificate process. The following documents provide guidance for Hiring Manager, HR Professional, and the Disability Program Manager.

**Schedule A for the Hiring Manager**

**Schedule A for the Human Resources (HR) Professional**

**Schedule A for the Disability Program Manager**

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**U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT: HR PROFESSIONALS**

This [website](#) is designed to provide human resources professionals with information for recruiting and hiring employees with disabilities and providing reasonable accommodation in appropriate circumstances. Pertinent laws, executive orders, hiring authorities, a model employment plan, and technical information that human resources professionals need to recruit, hire, and retain employees with disabilities are included. It also contains suggestions for working with and integrating people with disabilities into the workforce.

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**U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT: MANAGERS**

This [website](#) is designed for Federal managers to help them understand the laws, hiring authorities, and technical aspects of recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees with disabilities. Certain hiring authorities can be utilized to bring highly qualified people with disabilities into Federal employment rather quickly and managers are encouraged to become familiar with them and utilize them to the greatest extent possible. Information about interviewing people with disabilities, the roles of selective placement coordinators, and the certification process are also included. The resources section includes a list of useful websites and organizations that address disability issues.

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**NONPROFIT EMPLOYERS – NONPROFIT RISK MANAGEMENT CENTER**

The mission of the [Nonprofit Risk Manager Center](#) is to help nonprofit leaders become risk aware. We help leaders identify and appreciate critical risks and take action. We offer [RISK HELP™](#), web tools, [in-person and virtual training](#), and custom consulting solutions. We provide reliable counsel on risk issues ranging from employment practices, to risk oversight and governance, enterprise risk management, fraud prevention, financial risk management, and youth protection. The Center has a 20-year history of advising best-in-class nonprofits and delivering practical resources to help nonprofits pursue their missions. The Nonprofit Risk Management Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors.

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**FEDERAL AGENCIES: RECRUITMENT OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

**FEDERAL DISABILITY WORKFORCE CONSORTIUM (FDWC)**

The FDWC’s mission is to improve the current landscape of employment for people with targeted disabilities within the Federal workforce. The Consortium seeks to expand the current pool of talent within the Federal workforce through improving recruiting, hiring, retention, and advancement of employees with disabilities, especially those with targeted or more severe disabilities. For more information, go to: [www.fdwc.info](http://www.fdwc.info).
LEADERSHIP FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (LEAD)

**LEAD** is the EEOC's initiative to address the declining number of employees with targeted disabilities in the federal workforce. The goal for this initiative is to significantly increase the population of individuals with severe disabilities employed by the federal government. This national outreach and education campaign seeks to (1) reverse the trend of decreasing participation in federal employment; (2) increase the awareness of hiring officials about the declining numbers of people with disabilities in federal employment; (3) educate federal hiring officials about how to use special hiring authorities to bring people with disabilities on board, particularly those with severe disabilities; (4) educate applicants with severe disabilities about how to apply using the special hiring authorities available; and (5) supply information and resources on recruitment, hiring, and providing reasonable accommodations.

STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS: RECRUITING CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

A U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet providing resources to help employers recruit individuals with disabilities. For more information, go to: [www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm).

ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS REGARDING FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This [website](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm) includes a list of links to organizations and publications related to the employment of people with disabilities.

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students can be an excellent source of qualified people with disabilities. Many colleges and universities have career centers and/or disability resource centers that work with students with disabilities to help them find employment, both short and long term. Federal agencies can work with these centers to find qualified students with disabilities who are interested in Federal employment and can contribute to the work of the agency. For more information, go to: [www.opm.gov/disability/hrpro_3-05.asp](http://www.opm.gov/disability/hrpro_3-05.asp).

ACCOMMODATION RESOURCES

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES: ACCOMMODATIONS RESOURCES FOR FEDERAL MANAGERS

This [website](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm) lists a variety of resources that are available to assist federal managers in making accommodations so they can hire, retain and advance qualified individuals with disabilities.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: POLICY GUIDANCE ON EXECUTIVE ORDER 13164: ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

This [Policy Guidance](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/connect.htm) explains the provisions of Executive Order 13164, which requires federal agencies to establish effective written procedures for processing requests for reasonable accommodation by employees and applicants with disabilities. The Guidance also provides background information on the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and sets forth instructions for implementing each of the procedural requirements of the Executive Order.
The Job Accommodation Network is a free consulting service designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities by: (1) providing individualized worksite accommodations solutions, (2) providing technical assistance regarding the ADA and other disability related legislation, and (3) educating callers about self-employment options.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued a comprehensive report addressing strategies to reverse the declining participation rate of federal employees with targeted disabilities. The report reiterates the call for the federal government to be the nation’s model employer, providing equal opportunity to all Americans, including those with disabilities.

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) has conducted numerous studies over the years that address various pieces of the Federal hiring system. This perspectives report brings together some of the key issues presented in these past reports. Specifically, the purpose of this report is to inform reform efforts by:

(1) Summarizing key findings of recent MSPB research on hiring issues;
(2) Articulating the Board’s perspective regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the Federal hiring system; and
(3) Identifying and promoting hiring practices that support merit-based selection.

In Florida, vocational rehabilitation programs that can assist eligible individuals with disabilities achieve meaningful careers are located within the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE). The general Vocational Rehabilitation agency is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). To learn more about how the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation can help employers find qualified employees with disabilities, go to: www.rehabworks.org/ or call toll-free (800) 451-4327 (Voice/TDD). To learn more detail about vocational rehabilitation programs and services, go to page 2 of this guide.

Created by the Florida Legislature in 1990 (§413.615, F.S.), the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, parent organization of The Able Trust, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public/private partnership. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Vocational rehabilitation is the focus of The Able Trust's programs and grants. For more information, go to: www.abletrust.org.
In Florida, within the State Department of Education there is also a Division of Blind Services (DBS). DBS has several programs including a Vocational Rehabilitation Program that is subject to the same terms and conditions as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation listed above. To learn more about how the Division of Blind Services-VR Program can help employers find qualified employees with disabilities, go to: dbs.myflorida.com/ or call toll-free 1-800-342-1828. To learn more detail about the programs and services within the Division of Blind Services, go to page 7 of this guide.

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) in its role as the administrative entity to Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) operates under a performance-based contract. The Office of Workforce Services is responsible for managing this contract, which includes specific deliverables and performance requirements in the statewide administration and coordination of workforce services. For more information, go to Workforce Services. Click Directory to find one stop career centers in Florida.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities can help employers with employment of individuals with developmental disabilities through supported employment services, Business Leadership Networks, and much more. For more information, go to: http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/supported-employment/.

Goodwills of Florida offer job placements specialists assistance for individuals with disabilities and employers. To locate a Goodwill in Florida, go to: http://locator.goodwill.org/.

The U.S. Small Business Administration offers employers resource information for hiring individuals with disabilities. For more information, go to: www.sba.gov.

The Center for Personal Assistance Services (PAS) provides research, training, dissemination and technical assistance on issues of personal assistance services in the United States and Florida. For more information and Florida resources, go to PAS.

The Learning Academy at the University of South Florida (USF) provides employers with resource information.

FAAST, INC.

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for all Floridians with disabilities through advocacy and awareness activities that increase access to and acquisition of assistive services and technology. FAAST, Inc. may also be able to help employers identify assistive technologies through AT assessments and skills development training, AT loans and much more. For more information, go to: www.faast.org. FAAST, Inc. also offers a free online FAAST Access magazine spotlighting assistive technologies, information and referral assistance, apps and software, and much more. To subscribe to the free online FAAST Access magazine, click here and scroll down to Newsletter Sign up.