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Disability and Employment: Information and Resources

Americans with disabilities are active and contributing members of our society. Employment is the economic engine of our nations, our communities and our families. Employment promotes greater independence, self-sufficiency, productivity and improved quality of life. By reducing physical barriers and false perceptions, employment opportunities can be increased for people with disabilities and our country can benefit from the additional talents, creativity, dedication and hard work.

National Level Resources

Federal Employment Resources: Today, there are many resources available to job seekers who have a disability. The Federal Government promotes the hiring of individuals with disabilities through several programs and initiatives.

USAJOBS (www.usajobs.gov) is the official job site of the Federal Government. It is a one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information. Administered by the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), USA JOBS participates in the New Freedom Initiative "Schedule" which is an appointment authority specifically used to hire persons with a disability into the Federal government.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) (www.ssa.gov) manages the social insurance program, consisting of retirement, disability, and survivors' benefits. To qualify for these benefits, most American workers pay Social Security taxes on their earnings and future benefits are based on the employees' contributions. The Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs are the largest of several Federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities. SSI pays benefits to adults with disabilities and children who have limited income and resources. The Social Security Disability Insurance program pays benefits to people with disabilities and certain family members who have worked long enough to pay social security taxes. SSA also oversees the **[Ticket to Work program](#)** which aims to increase opportunities and choices for SSI or SSDI

beneficiaries who want to obtain employment. The program provides a ticket to the individual who can use it to obtain services from Employment Networks.

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) (www.dol.gov/odep) provides national leadership by developing and influencing disability related employment policy and practices that affect people with disabilities. ODEP maintains an informative Web site. ODEP announced the New Freedom Initiative in 2001 which comprises a comprehensive set of proposals aiming to insure that Americans with disabilities have the opportunity to learn and develop skills and engage in productive work.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) (www.askjan.org) is a free consulting service of ODEP operated by West Virginia University providing individualized worksite accommodation solutions, technical assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and information about self employment options.

State Level Resources

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) (www.dars.virginia.gov) provides vocational rehabilitation services to include counseling and guidance, job search and placement assistance, skill training and other vocational training and education. DRS has multiple field offices located within the communities of the persons who they serve.

Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) (www.vec.virginia.gov) provides employment assistance for workers including job referral and placement, and referral to training and job search skill building activities. They provide access to thousands of job listings. They also provide services related to unemployment.

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VDBVI) (www.vdbvi.org) develops extensive individualized employment-focused programs for eligible persons.

Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) (www.vats.org) assists all people with obtaining appropriate assistive technology. Assistive technology pertains to everything from hearing aids to wheelchairs to computers. All regional sites have many devices that can assist individuals at the workplace, school, at home or in the community. They also have a knowledgeable staff to demonstrate how the devices work.

Medicaid WORKS is a work incentive program offered by Virginia Medicaid for people with disabilities who are employed or want to go to work. For more information, read this [fact sheet](#).

Northern Virginia Resources:

Fairfax County Community Services Board (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board) provides case management and related services for people with mental health and for people with mental retardation. Employment services are provided under contracted community-based organizations.

Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (www.myskillsource.org) operates 5 One-Stop SkillSource Centers, which, free of charge, offer skills assessment, career training, job placement, personalized counseling, interview and resume preparation, and job search assistance.

Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (www.nvrc.org) is a non-profit organization for deaf and hard of hearing persons and their families. While they do not offer direct assistance in seeking employment, their services can help people with hearing loss prepare to seek employment.

Brain Injury Services (BIS) (www.braininjurysvcs.org) helps individuals with case management, cognitive rehabilitation, independent living skills training, respite care, clubhouse programs and social skills training all of which contribute towards successful employment outcomes.

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