

Competitive Integrated Employment

Messages for Individuals and Families

Addressing individual and family considerations early leads to success.

- **Health Insurance (Medicaid and MED Works):** People thrive in a community where they have access to health insurance that supports their needs.
 - MED Works is an Indiana program designed to allow people with disabilities to work and keep their Medicaid eligibility. This includes those who earn a substantial wage. Individuals will not have to make a choice between work or important health care and support coverage. (See the [Indiana Family and Social Services Administration webpage MED Works](#)).
- **Social Safety Nets—Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI):** People can escape poverty and are better off in community employment.
 - Planning is key to making sure individuals and families understand rights and options, including work incentives, and how to access them as needed.
- **Transportation:** Accessible and affordable transportation is possible.
 - Transportation can include employer provided transportation, public transit, private individuals, ride sharing, family/friend networks and staff.
 - The cost of transportation can be covered by waivers and other resources.
- **Safety:** People can be successful in the community and stay safe.
 - Individuals and their support teams can address safety concerns early and throughout employment.

The belief that everyone can work and contribute to their community is essential.

- Individuals with disabilities receive the same wages, benefits, and opportunities as individuals without disabilities.
- Reasonable accommodations are provided.
- Ongoing support is provided, as long as needed.
- Everyone's employment journey is different.
 - Individuals choose their career based on their interests, strengths, talents, hobbies, and personal goals. There are a variety of ways to identify these areas starting from an early age.

- For many individuals with more support needs, a variety of real-life job experiences allows them to identify their needs for support and accommodations, build career goals, learn specific work skills, and construct a resume. This process is often called “Discovery” in the adult service system.
- The person and, when needed, a support team of their choosing, guide job development and on-going support planning.
- Self-employment is an option for individuals with disabilities and support is available through state and federal programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation.

Resources and supports are available to assist with the employment journey.

- There are state and local agencies that provide both short- and long-term employment-related services. It is important to apply for and access these while in school.
- Informal, personal support tailored to each person, such as employer provided training and co-worker support, ensure true inclusion in the workplace and long-term success. These supports are often referred to as “natural supports.”

Self-advocacy and self-awareness allow for the expression of individual needs, interests, and skills.

- Self-advocacy is the ability of individuals to communicate their needs and wants. Self-awareness involves knowing, understanding, and communicating strengths, areas for support, and skill development.
- Participation in planning and goal setting at an early age will establish high expectations.
- Support from others with disabilities can be helpful and is available for families and individuals with disabilities through various sources such as self-advocacy and family advocacy organizations.

Developed by the Indiana Family Employment First Coalition,
with funding support from the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services’ Bureau
of Disabilities Services, a division of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

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