Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition

A guide for adults with disabilities

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

Compiled by

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Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
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Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition

A guide for adults with disabilities

This guide contains information and resources for you if you are a college student, recent graduate, or an adult with a disability who is developing a career plan. There are two Career Planning Guides:

- The Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition provides Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation consumers with resources on career development, interviewing, the job search, and more.

- The Career Planning Guide: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Edition, is a companion guide, designed to give your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor tips and resources on career development, workplace challenges, the job search, and more as they assist you and work with area employers.

NOTE: Both guides are available online. You can find them on the Employment Services and Supports page of the Center on Community Living and Career’s website at:

http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=3421
This Career Planning Guide provides you with suggestions and online resources to help you identify your career goals, prepare for employment, and develop job seeking skills. Go through the guide with your Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor, so you can take the next steps toward a great job and career.

You can click on each of the links within the guide and explore as you go. You can also find the links for each of the sites mentioned, in the “Resources” section, beginning on page 10.
Determining a Career Goal

Are you suffering from a little career confusion? This section of the guide will give you a variety of activities and resources for self-assessment. You may have already completed some of these while you were in high school or in your college placement center. However, it might be a good idea to go through the assessments with a Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor who can act as your “career coach” and help you understand your professional strengths and weaknesses, working styles, and workplace preferences. Those will help point you in the right career direction.

Talk with your Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor about what you learn about yourself from each of the following websites and assessments.

- **Hoosier Hot 50 Jobs** Explore videos and hear a Hoosier give an inside look at each position, along with salary information and education/training requirements, through this WorkOne sponsored website. WorkOne offices throughout Indiana can help you decide on a career, find a job, or get training.

- **Learn More Indiana** is a partnership of state and local organizations working to help students of all ages succeed in school, complete college and connect to careers.

- **Career Clusters** The Student Interest Survey for Career Clusters™ is a career guidance tool sponsored by Career Tech Education.

- **My Plan** is an online tool that helps you explore career choice options.

- **Indiana Career Connect** gives you information about specific occupations, best job match, and the job market.

- If you’re still in college, remember to visit the career development or placement center at your college/university.
Preparing for Employment

As a job seeker, you want to strengthen your understanding of your field so you can develop marketable experience. *Landing* the job takes other skills as well. Professional etiquette, networking, and talking about your strengths are just a few of the things you’ll need to know. You can obtain some of these skills by exploring the following resources and suggestions.

**Internship programs** are important for people attending college or seeking employment. The programs below may help you find internships that match your career goals.

- **Emerging Leaders** is a summer internship program for undergraduates and graduate college students, sponsored by the National Business & Disability Council (NBDC).
- **Pathways** is a federal program for college and high school students that offers internships that could lead to federal careers.
- **Indiana Intern.net** is a website where high school and college students can connect to Indiana employers for internship experiences.
- **Entry Point** identifies and recruits students with disabilities studying science, engineering, mathematics, computer science, and some fields of business for internship and co-op opportunities.
- **Internships.com**, allows you to create a profile and search for internships around the country.

**Volunteer** Studies have proven that volunteering or internships are the best predictors of future success in the workplace.

**Chamber of Commerce** or other local business events and clubs in your area can be good places to begin networking for employment opportunities.

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INdorsed Career Ready Graduate Program is offered statewide and gives you the opportunity to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate. A career readiness certificate is a way to show potential employers that you have the skills it takes to do the job.

Informational Interview is an informal conversation with someone working in an area of interest who will provide information and advice.

Exploring Careers Through Job Shadowing is an article about how to set up and prepare for a job shadowing experience.

Indiana Career Connect is a website for Indiana job seekers that provides tools for exploring careers, researching the labor market, discovering good job matches, and developing resumes. You can also do a comprehensive job search on this website.
Preparing for the Job Search

How and what you'll need to prepare will depend on the type of job you're applying for, its location, and whether or not you'll be searching for jobs on your own or with agency support. This list includes resources and tips to consider as you are beginning the job search process.

- **WorkOne**, part of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, can assist you as you develop your resume, cover letter, and portfolio. WorkOne online programs and offices located throughout Indiana can also assist you with the job search itself, help you improve your job qualifications, and more.

- **Pathways** is a program that provides assistance if you're looking for a federal job or career with the government.

- **Entry Point** identifies and recruits students with disabilities studying science, engineering, mathematics, computer science, and some fields of business for internship and co-op opportunities.

- **Networking**, a method of building useful connections and developing relationships with people who can help you in your job search or further your career, is one of the best ways to find a job.

- **Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success** is a federal website where you can learn how to practice “soft skills,” like small talk, on-the-job etiquette, or problem solving.

- **Schedule A** allows federal agencies to avoid using the traditional, and sometimes lengthy, competitive hiring process to fill a vacancy. If you’re interested, go through this with your Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor.

- **RecruitDisability** is a nationwide job board for job seekers with disabilities. It lists job openings around the nation and provides other tools for your job search.

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GettingHired is a national website designed to assist job seekers in the job search.

Center on Community Living and Careers provides information about various state and federal work incentive programs for people who are working, training for a career, or who may be beginning a job search. Work incentives are special employment support programs that can help you continue to receive your Social Security checks and/or Medicaid coverage as your income grows.

My Employment Options offers pointers on how to fill out an application for employment.

WRP (Workforce Recruitment Program) is a nationwide recruitment and referral program that connects employers with students/recent graduates.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs: Department of Labor provides information about apprenticeship programs nationwide. Search by state and county for opportunities.

Job Preparation Tips

- Visit your career placement office at your college or university for other job search guidance.
- Obtain recommendation letters from previous employers, professors in your field, internships, and volunteer sites.
- Pay attention to your personal and public image in your job search preparation:
  - Check how your voice mail sounds. Does it convey a mature and professional personal image? Keep it simple, concise, and clear.
  - Make sure your email address presents a mature, professional image.
  - Check your social network profile. Be aware that employers are using social networks to provide background information on job candidates. Keep privacy in mind, because the details you post on social media could damage your chances for employment.
Preparing for the Interview

Presenting yourself in person to a potential employer is the best opportunity you may have for obtaining the job you want. Being aware of your appearance, understanding body language, doing research, and being prepared with questions and answers are all good strategies that can help you “get the job.”

- **Purdue Career Center** provides excellent video examples of interview tips and the top 10 mistakes to avoid.
- **Body Language** Understanding one’s own body language and how to read others is as important as verbal communication during an interview.
- **Top Ten Interview Questions** Review the commonly asked questions, and practice the sample answers provided in this article.
- **Mock Interviews** can provide practice, feedback, and coaching and help perfect interview techniques.

  Videotaped mock interviews provide excellent feedback. Consider contacting the career development center at your college or university or the local Indiana Independent Living Center to make arrangements with a professional for a videotaped mock interview.

- **8 Mistakes to Avoid During Your Telephone Interview** Watch this video clip to learn about common mistakes people often make, but that you should avoid, during a phone interview.
Disclosing a Disability

Job seekers with disabilities sometimes have a lot of questions about disclosing, or telling someone else, about their disability: Should I disclose my disability to an employer? When and how should I disclose my disability? How could it help me? Could it put me at a disadvantage? How can I focus on my abilities rather than my disabilities?

- **Job Accommodations Network** (JAN) has a brochure called the “Do’s and Don’ts of Disclosure.”
- **Disclosing A Disability in a Job Interview** Read over the tips in this brochure provided by National Association of Colleges and Employers.
- **The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** provides information about the ADA and your employment rights.
- **Accommodations** The Office of Disability Employment Policy provides a website that includes links to information on job accommodations as well as tips on how to ask for accommodations in the workplace.
- **The Voluntary Self-Identification Form** (Scroll down on the webpage to “Self-identification.”) Under the new regulations of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, federal contractors and subcontractors are required to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain individuals with disabilities. All applicants will be offered a self-identification form at both the pre-offer and post-offer stage. It’s your choice as to whether you want to disclose your disability, but in many cases it will be to your benefit to self-identify to your hiring manager if you’re obtaining a job with a federal contractor or subcontractor.
Disclosure Practice Tips

If you’re uncomfortable talking with an employer about your disability, try role playing with your Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor, an employment specialist, and/or family members and friends. Remember:

- Be positive.
- Focus on your skills and qualifications. Don’t present your disability as a weakness. Disability does not equal inability. You may have some wonderful strengths, such as attention to detail or a sense of humor, that could be just what an employer needs in the workplace. Be sure to mention them.
- Be ready to talk about any workplace accommodations you may need. Workplace accommodations are things like special computer keyboards, voice recognition software, or even a flexible schedule. Talk with your counselor about how to emphasize the increased efficiency and productivity that an accommodation will bring. And remember that most accommodations are inexpensive.
- Be ready to answer any questions an employer may have about your disclosure. Talk about possible questions and answers with your counselor. If, for example, you think an employer might be concerned or have questions about how co-workers will communicate with you, brainstorm some good answers.

(Adapted from the Alberta Government’s Learning Information Service.)
Website Resources Used in this Guide

**Determining a Career Goal, p. 2**

- Hoosier Hot 50 Jobs [https://netsolutions.dwd.in.gov/hh50/](https://netsolutions.dwd.in.gov/hh50/)
- WorkOne [http://www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/](http://www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/)

**Preparing for Employment, p. 3**

- Emerging Leaders [http://www.viscardicenter.org/services/nbdc/emerging-leaders/students.html](http://www.viscardicenter.org/services/nbdc/emerging-leaders/students.html)
- Pathways [https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads](https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads)
- Indiana Intern.net [http://indianaintern.net/](http://indianaintern.net/)
- Entry Point [http://ehrweb01.aaas.org/entrypoint/](http://ehrweb01.aaas.org/entrypoint/)
- Internships.com [http://www.internships.com/group/thinkbeyondthelabel](http://www.internships.com/group/thinkbeyondthelabel)
- Volunteer [http://www.volunteermatch.org/search/index.jsp?l=Indiana%2C+USA&k=&_kk=volunteering%20indiana&_kt=e179971f-62ca-4162-bfc3-0146c3266f3d&qclid=CMGCvPqKqbwCFY1AMgod23AAxw](http://www.volunteermatch.org/search/index.jsp?l=Indiana%2C+USA&k=&_kk=volunteering%20indiana&_kt=e179971f-62ca-4162-bfc3-0146c3266f3d&qclid=CMGCvPqKqbwCFY1AMgod23AAxw)
- INdorsed Career Ready Graduate Program [http://www.cdpi.org/indorsed](http://www.cdpi.org/indorsed)
Informational Interview [https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/InfoInterview.stm](https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/InfoInterview.stm)

Job Shadow [http://internships.about.com/od/internships101/a/whatisjobshadowing.htm](http://internships.about.com/od/internships101/a/whatisjobshadowing.htm)

WorkOne [http://www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/](http://www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/)

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Pathways [https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads](https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads)

Entry Point [http://ehrweb01.aaas.org/entrypoint/](http://ehrweb01.aaas.org/entrypoint/)


Recruit Disability [http://recruitdisability.org/](http://recruitdisability.org/)


Center on Community Living and Careers [http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pagId=3692](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pagId=3692)


WRP (Workforce Recruitment Program) [https://wrp.gov/AboutPre.do](https://wrp.gov/AboutPre.do)

Registered Apprenticeship Programs: Department of Labor [http://oa.doleta.gov/bat.cfm](http://oa.doleta.gov/bat.cfm)
Website Resources Used in this Guide, continued

Preparing for the Interview, p. 7


Top Ten Interview Questions [http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/top-10-interview-questions.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/top-10-interview-questions.htm)


Indiana Independent Living Centers [http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2762.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2762.htm)

8 Mistakes to Avoid During Your Telephone Interview [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4T12VM2Dsc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4T12VM2Dsc)

Disclosing a Disability, p. 8

Job Accommodations Network [http://askjan.org/media/eaps/disclosureEAP.doc](http://askjan.org/media/eaps/disclosureEAP.doc)


Accommodations [http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Accommodations.htm](http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Accommodations.htm)

The Voluntary Self-Identification Form [http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm) (Scroll down to “Self-identification.”)
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Please note: Online resources listed may change frequently. We will make every effort to update this guide, available on the Employment Services and Supports page of the Center on Community Living and Careers, website at:

http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=3421

Send an email to jtijerin@indiana.edu to alert us of broken links or new resources you think we should consider including in the next edition.