Career Planning Guide:
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Edition
A guide for Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors working with college students, recent graduates, and other adults with disabilities

Compiled by
Center on Community Living and Careers
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Indiana University

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Career Planning Guide:
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Edition

A guide for Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors working with college students, recent graduates, and other adults

This guide contains information and resources for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors coaching college students, recent graduates, and other adults who are developing a career plan.

The Career Planning Guide: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Edition is designed to give counselors coaching tips and resources on career development, workplace challenges, the job search, and more.

The Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition, a companion guide to the VRC Edition, provides consumers with resources on career development, interviewing, the job search, and more.

Coaching Tips and Resources for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Consumers who require minimal supports for career planning may benefit from counseling in career exploration and in developing an understanding of how their disability will impact various careers and workplace environments. Best practice strategies and resources are listed in this guide for your use as you “coach” your consumers during the employment process. This extra bit of coaching can lead to successful employment outcomes for both the individual and employer.

Using this Guide

This Career Planning Guide, developed for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, is a companion piece to the Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition. Both editions are available on the Employment Services and Supports page of the Center on Community Living and Career’s website.

- Go through the entire guide first, so you can become familiar with the resources, coaching tips, and materials that could be most useful for your consumer’s individual needs.
- Next, schedule time with your consumer, so you can go through the resources in the Job Seeker Edition with him or her.
- In “Additional Resources,” listed online, you’ll also find common job interview questions to help you practice with your consumers and fact sheets about applying for federal jobs.
Pre-Employment Skill Development

- Work with your consumer to help him/her identify a career goal. Tools are available to assist in identifying strengths, interests, abilities and preferences. Review the self-assessment tools provided in the Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition. Share these tools with your consumer and/or assist him/her in completing assessments if needed.

- Many of the individuals you work with may already have a good resume and cover letter. Review the documents and provide feedback. If you think your consumer might benefit from them, show him/her how to access some of the many available online or other resources for creating a strong resume and cover letter.

- Individuals may need to work on interpersonal skills including interviewing techniques. Review the interview resources listed in the Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition and discuss them with your consumer. Practice answering the common interview questions with your job seeker. You can find sample questions in the “Additional Resources” section online.

- Consider assisting your consumer by arranging a videotaped mock interview with you, a co-worker, a Independent Living Center professional, or other source. Review the video with the consumer and provide feedback. Your consumer may be highly educated, for instance, but may lack interpersonal skills when interviewing. Examples of things to consider and look for:
  - How is his/her eye contact?
  - How is his/her body language?
  - What is his/her handshake like? Is it a firm handshake?
  - Does he/she smile often or at appropriate times?
  - How is the tone and volume of his/her voice?
  - Does he/she ramble rather than give a concise answer?

Also, see the document, “Job Interview: The Attitude Meter” in the “Additional Resources,” listed online, for behaviors to observe and evaluate during a mock interview.
Workplace Challenges & Solutions

Discuss and identify your job seeker’s individual workplace challenges and impediments to employment. Examples of impediments to successful employment could be:

- Noisy buildings
- Chaotic work settings
- Too much going on at once
- Insufficient training period
- Inconsistent schedule
- Expectation of social interactions
- Office politics

Work together to determine what solutions or accommodations are needed to alleviate or soften the impact of the challenge. Examples of solutions/accommodations might include:

- High degree of solitary work
- Clear-cut procedures
- Extended training period
- Consistent scheduling
- Mentoring

Self-advocacy is another important skill some consumers need help developing. Available resources focus on adults in higher education, the workforce, and specific disabilities. Share and review these resources with your consumers.

- Wrightslaw has an article geared toward adults in higher education or in the workforce.
- Tips for Self-Advocacy in the Workplace focuses on tips for people with learning disabilities.
The Job Search

- Review the resources in the “Preparing for the Job Search” section of the Career Planning Guide with your consumer. Many online websites have local and national listings for job seekers.

- Encourage your consumer to register with WorkOne, which is part of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Let your job seeker know that WorkOne’s online programs and offices throughout the state can assist job seekers by helping them improve their job qualifications and by assisting with the job search itself.

- Visit the TACE Online Tool Kit for Job Placement and Employment Professionals.

- Discuss the possibilities of federal employment, changes in 503 policy, and how they could benefit your consumer. (For more about this, see p. 5 of this guide.) Refer to Schedule A and USAJOBS. Also, see the fact sheet on new 503 regulations from the U.S. Department of Labor and “The ABCs of Schedule A for Applicants with Disabilities” from the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in “Additional Resources.”

- Working with Indiana Businesses and Business Outreach and Information are webpages featured through the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community’s Center on Community Living and Careers website. They offer links to trainings (e.g. “Disability Culture,” “Coaching and Natural Supports”) and other business outreach information that may help you as you work with your consumers and with potential employers.

- EARN Employer Assistance Resource Network provides resources to employers to recruit, hire, retain and advance employees with disabilities. It’s another great resource to share with businesses as you assist your consumer in the job search.

- WRP (Workforce Recruitment Program) is a recruitment and referral program that connects college students and recent graduates with disabilities to employer internships and permanent jobs nationwide.

- Internships.com allows students to both search for internships and create an online profile that employers can access. Now partnered with the disability employment advocacy campaign Think Beyond the Label, Internships.com and its employer companion site Smart Hire, increase opportunities for students and businesses to connect with one another.
Disclosing a Disability

Review the resources found in the “Disclosing A Disability” section of the Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition with your consumer and discuss how and when to disclose his/her disability and how to request accommodations, if needed.

Job Accommodations Network (JAN) This JAN brochure, the “Do’s and Don’ts of Disclosure,” may be particularly helpful.

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 for federal contractor or sub-contractor jobs will be offered a self-identification form at both the pre-offer and post-offer stage. In many cases, it will now be to the consumer’s benefit to self-identify, which is a change from the advice given to many consumers in the past.

The Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form was recently approved by the Office of Management and Budget. (Scroll down the web page, to the “Self-identification” section.)

If your job-seeking consumer has had little success in disclosure situations, or if he/she feels uncomfortable doing so, he/she may want to try role playing with you, an employment specialist, and/or family members and friends. Be sure to review the disclosure practice tips with your consumer. They’re located on p. 9 of the Career Planning Guide: Job Seeker Edition.
Website Resources Used in this Guide

Business Outreach and Information Resources
http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=3604

EARN
http://askearn.org/

Internships.com
http://www.internships.com/group/thinkbeyondthelabel

Job Accommodation Network
http://askjan.org/media/eaps/disclosureEAP_doc

Online Toolkit for Job Placement and Employment Professionals
http://tacesoutheast.org/myportal/toolkit/topic3/topic3_q2_b.php

Schedule A
http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/initiatives/lead/abc_applicants_with_disabilities.cfm

Smart Hire

Tips for Self-Advocacy in the Workplace
http://www.ldonline.org/article/6011/

USAJOBS
https://www.usajobs.gov/
Website Resources Used in this Guide, continued

The Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form
http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm

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

Working with Indiana Businesses
http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=3603

WorkOne
http://www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/

Wrightslaw
http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.selfadvo.nancy.james.htm
This guide was compiled by:

**The Center on Community Living and Careers**  
**Indiana Institute on Disability and Community**  
**Indiana University**

1905 North Range Road  
Bloomington, Indiana 47408  
[www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc)  
812-855-6508

**September 2014**

Please note: Website 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:  


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