

A PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

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Making the choice to work

Job vs career

What skills are needed for job

Do you have reliable transportation

Your interests

Be *honest* with yourself

Disability benefits

Be aware that earning money may cause your disability benefits to **stop!**

- **SSI** (Supplementary Security Income)
 - monthly checks are reduced based on monthly earnings
- **SSDI** (Social Security Disability Benefits)
 - has a 9 month trial work period
 - checks stop after 9 months if earning over \$1,180.00 per month in gross wages

Job vs career

Job

- Money
- Something to do
- Short-term
- Minimal training needed
- Network development
- Create reference for future

Career

- Higher wage & benefits
- Longer term
- Interest area
- Usually requires training/education
 - (6 weeks to 8+ years)

Part-time work advantages

- ❑ Test your capabilities
- ❑ Gain experience
- ❑ Creates a references
- ❑ Network opportunities
- ❑ Could lead to full-time
- ❑ May allow you to keep disability benefits

Resume

- 1 to 2 pages (No more)
- Uniform formatting
- No spelling errors
- Use bullet points
- No pictures or colors
- Up to date contact information
- No mention of disability
- Have others double check for errors & uniformity

Goal of Resumes

To briefly represent and highlight your relevant skills and accomplishments

To make a good first impression

Provides a micro-sample of the quality of your work

To verify your qualifications required for the potential job

E-mail address

Should look neutral

Not good:

Bobthegamer@

Funlovingbeth@

Good:

bjones4job@

Phone

Voicemail:

- Make sure it is set-up & active
- Be sure mailbox has enough room
- No music or cute/funny greeting

Check your voicemail daily when applying for jobs

Social media

Potential employers may check your social media accounts to learn more about you.

- LinkedIn
 - ✓ Up-to-date profile with photo (head shot)
 - ✓ Potential employers do look at LinkedIn profiles
- Facebook - Set privacy level to just friends
- Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc – set privacy settings

Looking for a job

- ❑ Network
- ❑ Look beyond the Internet
 - Local newspapers (local library will subscribe)
 - Help wanted signs
 - Company Web sites
- ❑ Keep a log of where & when you applied
- ❑ More networking
- ❑ Look for entry level - Expect to start at the bottom

Networking

Considered the best way to find a job

Your potential network:

- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Teachers
- Co-workers

LinkedIn is an online networking site.

Resources

- ✓ IL Department of Employment Security
- ✓ IL Division of Rehabilitation Services
- ✓ Community Rehabilitation Providers
- ✓ College counselors &/or career placement services
- ✓ Local job clubs

Job fairs

- Dress appropriately
- Go to tables by self
- Bring plenty of resumes
- Ask for a business card
- Attend any educational sessions
- Follow-up

Interviewing

- Be 5 to 10 minutes early
- Dress appropriately
- Go in alone
- Be self-confident and positive
- Briefly educate about your disability
- Show knowledge of employer
- Ask questions about job & company

Interviewing tips

- Offer a firm handshake
- Maintain eye contact
- Smile
- Be concise when answering questions
- Carry a portfolio
- Bring copy of resume and your references
- Turn OFF your cell phone

Disclosure of disability

- Do **not** put on resume, application, or in a cover letter
- If visible, discuss in interview
 - Do not assume potential employer knows anything about disability
 - Explain briefly & factually about spina bifida & any assistive devices you use
 - Anticipate & answer questions briefly
 - Emphasize your *accomplishments* and *independence*
 - Positively state ability to do job tasks – give examples if applicable

Requesting accommodations

- This is an interactive process, which you must usually start
- Be as specific as possible, including cost & where to obtain needed equipment/devices
- Be flexible
- Employers are allowed to say *NO*
 - Undue hardship
 - Safety
 - Speed & quality standards (not covered by ADA)

Education

- Need GED, if not a high school graduate
- College classes
 - On-line
 - In person
- Certification
- Skill training

Volunteer

- To gain experience
- Increase self-confidence
- Can learn new skills
- Creates a reference
- Can put on resume
- Meet people for networking
- Allows you to test the waters
- Shows you are active

Adaptive sports

- Build self confidence
- Can put on resume
- Accomplishments
- Shows you are active
- Meet people for networking
- Opportunities to travel

Summary

- ✓ Be realistic
- ✓ Extra attention to resume
- ✓ Network, network, network
- ✓ Be active and involved

QUESTIONS ???

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