



# FactSheet:

## Employment Services and Day Activities

### DHS Office of Intellectual Disability

*While Competitive Employment is generally considered a first best option, individuals have varying abilities and interests, so there are many employment and day activity choices to consider. When planning for employment and day activities it is important that an individual's preferences, goals, strengths, and challenges be considered with ongoing assessment to ensure they continue to be the best choice. For Intellectual Disability (ID) waiver participants Day Services available may include Licensed Day, Prevocational, Supported Employment and Transitional Work. There are also meaningful day choices available outside of the ID system. Creating unique day services / activities combinations may be right for some individuals. Working closely with their Supports Coordinator and others in their circle of support will be very important.*

#### **What are Employment Services?**

"Employment services" means assistance offered to you so that you can find, learn, keep and enjoy a job that is important to you. Employment services may be able to help you find Competitive Employment or work in another setting.

#### **What is Competitive Employment?**

Competitive Employment is any job in the community where you work with people with varying abilities, can earn at least minimum wage and may have the opportunity to earn benefits such as paid time off and medical coverage.

#### **Who can help me find a job opportunity, even if I am already employed?**

Your Supports Coordinator (SC) and Intellectual Disability (ID) service providers work with other agencies such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and, for transition age youth, local school districts to help you plan for your future. Your team of support, which may include your family, people who support you, and/or a Job Coach, can also help. A Job Coach provides Supported Employment services.

#### **What can a Job Coach do?**

- Help you with career exploration
- Help you develop the skills to find a job
- Assist you with applying and interviewing
- Help you learn how to do your job
- Follow up with you to help you keep your job
- Identify necessary workplace accommodations

#### **Can I work if I get Social Security and / or have Medical Assistance?**

You can still work without losing your Social Security (SSI or SSDI) benefits. You can contact Pennsylvania's BPAO (Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach) Offices at 1-866-302-4333 and, if applicable, your job coach for information. Ask your County Assistance Caseworker how a job will affect your Medical Assistance. More information is also available at [www.WorksForMe-PA.org](http://www.WorksForMe-PA.org)

#### **What if I already work or have a day activity?**

Even if you already work, for instance in a Pre-Vocational "workshop" or attend an Adult Training Facility (ATF), you may still want to look for Competitive Employment. You may also need to continue to develop your work, safety, and other important employment skills. You should talk to your support team members and your Supports Coordinator about your desire to work in Competitive Employment so that you can plan for this goal.

## What may Licensed Day, Prevocational, Supported Employment and Transitional Work offer?

*The choices below may also help you acquire training in work skills, including increasing your independence and “soft skills,” which are skills like attending work on time, practicing good hygiene, and interacting with coworkers appropriately*

### Licensed Day Activities

- Adult Training Facilities (ATF): can provide you with a high level of support and supervision, but less focus on vocational skills and more emphasis on socialization and life skills activities.
- Senior Day Programs are especially designed to meet your needs if you qualify as a senior with ID. Like ATF's, there is more emphasis on social and life skill building activities.

### Pre-Vocational Work

Traditionally known as sheltered workshops, this Facility-Based Employment option is licensed and provides you with a high level of support and supervision, focusing on continuing to acquire vocational skills. You also would have the ability to earn a small paycheck, often through piece-rate work.

### Supported Employment

Also known as Job Coaching, this is support given to you in a competitive work setting. Level of support varies upon the your needs. Supports may include job finding, job training /retraining and consultation on work place accommodations.

### Transitional Work

Also known as mobile work crews or enclaves, these jobs are offered in a non-integrated setting. These small groups work in the community with staff support and supervision. As with Competitive Employment, these jobs typically provide at least minimum wage and may provide earned benefits.

## What meaningful day activities may be available outside of the ID system?

### Volunteering

Many people enjoy participating in volunteer opportunities in their communities. This can provide you with a sense of accomplishment and contribution as well as provide socialization. It may also contribute to acquiring vocational skills and “soft skills”.

### Drop-in centers and Clubhouses

Often offered through Mental Health provider agencies these settings can offer organized activities, life skills support and opportunities for recovery and social development. You can learn more from provider agencies, from your Behavioral Health Service Coordinator and in the AC DHS Where to Call Book at <http://alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147486427>

### Senior Community Centers

Senior Community Centers provide socialization, companionship, activities and nutrition to individuals 60 years of age and over. Learn more from the AC DHS Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

### **Bulletin information**

For additional information about employment from the PA Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), please refer to the following bulletins on the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) website.

- 00-05-07: Office of Mental Retardation (ODP) Policy on Employment
  - 00-06-08: Employment for Individuals in ICFs/MR
- and to the 2013 Gold Book, also on the PA DHS website

**Learn more** at the ODP Consulting website. Search “Employment”.

Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Intellectual Disability  
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For more information regarding OID, including additional FactSheets visit <http://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability.aspx>