



*While Competitive Integrated 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. Ongoing assessment is needed to ensure decisions continue to be the best choice.*

*Creating unique service/activity combinations may be right for some. Options may include Competitive Integrated Employment, volunteer opportunities, community offerings and lifelong learning. Some of these activities will help you continue to develop work, safety, and other important employment skills. There are some Intellectual Disability/Autism (ID/A) Waiver services that may be available to support these options.*

*While inclusive community activities should be considered first, at times, opportunities especially planned for persons with disabilities will be preferred. The Social, recreation and lifelong learning document on the Office of Developmental Supports webpage will be helpful. Find it here [alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS](http://alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS) As always, working closely with a Supports Coordinator and others in a circle of support and on a planning team is very important.*

**Competitive Integrated Employment** is the first best option to consider for all individuals once they have completed their education. This type of employment is defined as earning at least minimum wage, while working in a fully integrated setting in the community. Many individuals utilize on-going supports to maintain this level of employment. Find examples under the relevant services list on this Fact Sheet.

**Volunteer opportunities** can be helpful in continuing to acquire vocational skills, while gaining a sense of accomplishment and contribution in the community. These experiences may be with or without formal supports.

### **Community offerings**

#### **Drop-in centers and Clubhouses**

Often 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 and from your Behavioral Health Service Coordinator. Also refer to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services publication, *Where to Call - Directory of Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services*, available on the website

#### **Senior Community Centers**

Senior Community Centers provide socialization, companionship, activities and nutrition to individuals 60 years of age and over. Learn more from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging (AAA) here [www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Older-Adults/Senior-Centers.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Older-Adults/Senior-Centers.aspx) or call the SeniorLine at 1-800-344-4319.

#### **Community Centers**

Explore centers that may be available in your neighborhood.

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**Lifelong learning** can be helpful in continuing to acquire skills and information and expanding a persons interests, while gaining a sense of accomplishment and participating in the community. These experiences may be with or without formal supports.

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

Your Supports Coordinator (SC) and intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) service providers work with other agencies such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to help you plan for your future. An Employment and Training Specialist may be of assistance. Your team of support can also help.

### **What can an Employment and Training Specialist (Job Coach) do to help?**

- 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

### **What are some relevant services through the intellectual disability / autism (I/DA) service system?**

**Supported Employment** may include career exploration, job development, application, interviewing, and on-the-job training. Sometimes referred to as Job Coaching. Direct Support Professionals (provider staff, DSPs) support an individual in obtaining and maintaining competitive, integrated employment.

**Advanced Supported Employment** is a job creation model that involves working with individuals to discover personal strengths and interests, while working with employers to customize an employment opportunity. Typically used when traditional Job Development has been attempted without success. Self-employment may also be an outcome of this model. Sometimes referred to as Discovery/ Customized Employment.

**Small Group Employment** was previously known as Transitional Work. These small groups work in the community with DSP support. Typically earning at least minimum wage, this employment option is usually in a non-integrated setting. Work examples include janitorial and grounds maintenance.

**Community Participation Supports (CPS)** encourages community participation and involvement. Based on individualized needs and desired outcomes, this highly personalized service, can provide vocational, social and life skills development. This service category has replaced Pre-Vocational and Adult Training Facilities (ATFs), also referred to as Day Program or Sheltered Workshops.

**Habilitation Supports** are provided in home or community and can be offered as an individual or group-centered support. It typically focuses on working toward social and/or life skills goals.

**Companion Supports** may be appropriate for individuals who require support for their health and safety at home and in some community settings.

**Education Support Service** may consist of payment for adult education including community college, university or other college-level courses, classes, tutoring to receive a GED, and participation in apprenticeships not funded by another system.



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For more information regarding ODS, including additional Fact Sheets visit [alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS](http://alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS)