

# FAQs

## What is Supported Employment?

Supported employment is a job placement and support service for people with the most significant disabilities to assist them in finding and keeping a job. The basic premise of supported employment is that all persons, no matter the severity of disability, have the ability and right to work.

A number of employment strategies for people with disabilities are based on supported employment principles such as the following:

- Consumer choice - the preferences of the consumer are essential, and the options and choices regarding work are founded on the consumer's requirements and skills.
- Competitive employment is the goal, focusing on local full-time or part-time employment that pays at least minimum wage and is open to anyone;
- The job search begins almost immediately after the consumer conveys an interest in employment, and there are no prerequisites required prior to this process;
- Follow-up support systems work on a steady basis, and individualized provisions continue until the consumer no longer wants assistance.

## Why is Supported Employment Needed?

Supported employment has made it possible for individuals with moderate-to-severe levels of disabilities to become active, wage-earning members of the workforce. Research on supported employment shows that people who receive supported employment services have increased social networks and more money. Plus, over time, supported employment is more cost effective than other employment services.

## Be an Advocate!

*Tips for getting the most out of your supported employment services:*

**Be curious!** Don't be afraid to ask questions. Not sure about what you want to do, how to deal with problems you encounter, or what to tell your boss about your disability-related issues? Ask your supported employment provider.

**Be proactive!** Before going to work, find out how to coordinate working with receiving social security disability benefits.

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*The Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC) is a partnership that provides training and technical assistance to promote employment and full community participation for people with disabilities through cutting edge technologies, evidence based practice and research.*

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## Frequently Asked Questions Supported Employment

### How does it work?

Before a job is found, an employment service provider assigns a job developer to work with the person to learn about their work history and goals. Support needs are discussed, as well as transportation options and hours available for work. Pre-employment activities may occur to help an individual explore interests. Some of these include job shadowing/touring, temporary work experience, and on-the-job assessments. All of this information, along with the person's input, helps with finding a job or career match.

Once a job is found, training begins. The individual's support and training needs are assessed and in most cases, the job developer or a job coach can provide the initial support.

If the worker has minimal outside support on the job, the follow-along phase will involve frequent communication with the employer to ensure all is going well. If changes occur such as changing job tasks or having additional responsibilities, the service provider or job coach will work with the person to make sure support needs are met.

### Where can I access services?

Nationally, state vocational rehabilitation programs and long-term care agencies are good starting points for information about supported employment services. These agencies provide information about local supported employment providers.

Supported employment services are provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), Supported Employment agencies, or independent Job Placement Specialists.

In Wisconsin, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) keeps a list of contracted service providers. Also, Wisconsin's long-term care providers can offer information on agencies in your area.

### Resources

#### Department of Labor

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/archives/fact/supportd.htm>

#### APSE

Association for Persons in Supported Employment  
<http://www.apse.org>

### PERC Related Materials

Materials related to this topic can be found on the PERC website - these materials include free trainings, resources, and the latest research.

[www.percthinkwork.org](http://www.percthinkwork.org)

### Comments? Suggestions?

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