Employment for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Pennsylvania

DEVELOPED BY THE AUTISM SERVICES, EDUCATION, RESOURCES & TRAINING COLLABORATIVE (ASERT)
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Table of Contents

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 4
2. Lessons Learned From Research and Practice: Planning for and Supporting Employment .... 5
   2a. Planning for and Supporting Employment ......................................................................................... 5
   2b. Policy and Funding Practices ............................................................................................................ 11
3. Stakeholder Analysis ............................................................................................................................... 13
4. Guidelines for Strengthening Transition to and Support in Employment in PA ...................... 22
5. References .............................................................................................................................................. 26
Appendix A: Programs Addressing Transition to and Support During Employment .............. 29
Appendix B: Research Related to Transition to and Support During Employment .................. 38
Appendix C: Preference Assessment ......................................................................................................... 64
1. Introduction

An increasing number of individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are now transitioning out of the education system into adulthood, where funding, mental and behavioral health services, and opportunities to socialize and contribute to society are all greatly reduced. In 2005, the Bureau of Autism Services, Department of Public Welfare, commissioned a count of individuals with ASD in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Autism Census Project, to help inform their policy and programming, and the results were alarming. According to the study, there are approximately 25,000 to 30,000 individuals diagnosed with autism across the Commonwealth. By 2014, 10,000 of these individuals will be over the age of 21, and the numbers will continue to grow. As was noted in the Pennsylvania Autism Census Project, limitations to the methods of the project likely result in these projections representing an undercount of individuals with ASD in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvanians must anticipate, and plan for the waves of students transitioning out of the education system before the numbers far exceed our capacity to respond. We must ensure that policy and program planning for individuals with ASD transitioning to adulthood and adults with ASD will enhance the quality of life and independence of Pennsylvanians with ASD. Employment supports these aims through meaningful community participation and reduces reliance upon taxpayer-funded programs. In Pennsylvania and across the US, employment services specifically designed to support the needs of adults with ASD need are still very limited.

Adults with ASD report a desire and ability to participate in competitive, community-based employment. Results from the 2009 Pennsylvania Autism Needs Assessment indicated that 65% of adults with ASD represented by the survey were not employed. Twenty percent of them were actively looking for a job. The existing community-based programs to support employment for adults with ASD demonstrate that competitive employment is achievable for individuals with ASD, even those with significant impairment, if the proper supports are offered before, during, and after transition to employment. We can use evidence from successful programs serving individuals with ASD in transitioning to and sustaining employment as well as programs serving individuals with other disabilities to strengthen programs and policy in Pennsylvania.

The purpose of this document is to

- summarize key elements of successful employment programs for adults with ASD based on research and practice,
- provide a Pennsylvania stakeholder analysis of employment services, and
- offer a set of guidelines that can be used to strengthen employment services in the Commonwealth.
2. Lessons Learned From Research and Practice: Planning for and Supporting Employment

Successful employment support programs for adults with ASD share common characteristics including a school to work transition plan, employment supports (e.g., job coaching, behavioral and social skills), inter-agency collaborations and the policies and funding mechanisms needed to sustain these programs. Below, key aspects of successful transition and employment programs are outlined from peer-review literature and best practices to illustrate how ideal programs function and identify barriers that can thwart success. (See Appendix A for a list of programs in Pennsylvania and beyond that support individuals with ASD and other disabilities in achieving and sustaining employment. See Appendix B for summaries of research articles from successful transition and support programs.) In addition to descriptions of model programs in Pennsylvania, examples of programs from Virginia Commonwealth University are highlighted that together can form a model set of programs for employment of individuals with ASD.

Research indicates that when school to employment transition services begin early and focus on developing specific skills that will lead to employment success after secondary or postsecondary education such as vocational skills, interpersonal skills, and self-advocacy, individuals with ASD will have greater employment success.\textsuperscript{11-13} Many individuals do not have access to similar services once they age out of the education system,\textsuperscript{14} thus, transition planning offered through secondary schools may be the only opportunity for some to find employment. Whether individuals with ASD have effective transition planning or not, most will need numerous support services at various stages of their adult lives to find, get, and maintain employment.

2a. Planning for and Supporting Employment

- Transition services should start early and include measurable IEP goals.

Planning for the transition into employment should begin no later than 14 years of age, when students have the in-school instructional time to develop the skills they will need to become more independent and successful in their chosen career path. A student’s individualized education plan (IEP) should include measurable goals that specifically focus on skills needed for a successful transition to prepare them for the less restrictive environment and independence that comes with employment. Students with measurable postsecondary goals in their IEP have been twice as likely to achieve employment;\textsuperscript{15} unfortunately, research has shown that the quality of IEPs tend to be poor and without specified and measurable goals for students with ASD.\textsuperscript{16} Skill building should be specifically
addressed in the IEP with monitored measurable goals (e.g., assessing employment preferences and situational, social, and adaptive skills), all facilitated by a person centered planning approach.7,17

- Students should be offered the opportunity and encouraged to engage in competitive employment during the high school years.

Real world paid employment experiences are not very common for students with disabilities.1,18,19 However, these experiences offer important opportunities to build vocational skills, improve interpersonal workplace skills, and gain more independence.1 Students often need assistance finding and securing job opportunities from teachers, mentors, counselors, or other influential adults in their lives.

- The planning and employment processes should involve collaboration among multiple stakeholders.

Collaboration among stakeholders can facilitate a seamless transition from school to work, identify employment opportunities, and support individuals with ASD in finding, attaining, and maintaining employment. Through interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration as well as business and industry linkage to schools (specific to transition-age individuals) stakeholders can work across systems to create and implement effective fiscal and legislative policies that support individuals with ASD in employment, create more job opportunities appropriate for individuals with ASD, and provide effective and individualized employment and transition services to individuals with ASD.20,21 Stakeholders include the individual, parents and teachers, the

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**Virginia Commonwealth University**

**Rehabilitation Research and Training Center:**

A Multi-Pronged Approach

The VCU employment program involves collaboration between many stakeholders, addresses multiple aspects of the job finding, attaining and maintaining process, engages businesses, and is tailored to individuals with ASD.

**Supported Employment Services:**

- Identify abilities and possible support needs
- Conduct a job search to locate real work for real pay
- Provide and facilitate workplace supports
- Ongoing long-term follow along and retention services both at or away from the work place

**ASD-specific services: Positive behavior support coordinated with employment support services**

- Use system technology supporting cognition (e.g., iPads)
- Self-management tools
- Supported employment + positive behavior support + technology = success

**Assistance to and training for businesses who have interest in diversifying their workforce by hiring individuals with disabilities**

- Identify hiring needs or new work structures
- Refer candidates for interviews
- Provide initial and ongoing jobsite support services
- Provide education and technical assistance on disability and employment related issues
- Person-to-person employment specialists train employers on an as-needed basis
- Train a support team to teach an individual with ASD how to work
IEP team, county vocational rehabilitation professionals and community-based providers. Other stakeholders include potential employers and business organizations, and the lawmakers, advocacy organizations, and state and local governmental entities who create the policies related to and funding for employment programs.

- **The transition from postsecondary settings to work should not be overlooked.**
  
  For those with ASD who attend postsecondary institutions, additional services and program planning for the transition into employment after their postsecondary educational experience is critical. This process should engage available services at the postsecondary institution as well as the system supports outlined for students who do not attend postsecondary institutions.

- **Services throughout the transition and employment process must be tailored to individuals with ASD.**
  
  Individuals with ASD have varying needs. Many individuals display challenging behaviors, communication deficits, and challenges in social interaction. Not all symptoms will be present in all individuals, and each individual will express their challenges differently. All services offered need to account for the unique expression of ASD symptoms in each individual. This requires specialized staff training on ASD and adult issues and effective staff supervision.

- **Employment programs with the most successful outcomes support individuals in learning the skills they need to work independently.**
  
  Many individuals with ASD will need some type of long-term and ongoing support to successfully maintain employment. Even with the provision of long-term support, individuals with ASD may find greater success and job satisfaction when they have the opportunity to function independently. On-site supports to facilitate independence and success should included ongoing job/skill development, a venue to engage in self-determination and self advocacy, and job advancement potential. Comprehensive support services that facilitate independence will also address environmental modifications that may be needed to mitigate distracting or disorienting stimuli. The process of assessing and addressing possible environmental barriers often has to be ongoing as individuals respond to the job and environment.

- **Ensure individuals with ASD and their families understand the benefits of and fiscal issues related to employment.**
  
  Many Social Security and Medicaid recipients and their families may be under the impression that they will lose their cash benefits or healthcare if they are working. However, this is not usually the case, and, once informed of the way the system works, will be enthusiastic participants in employment. Successful transition programs that address this
barrier have included benefits counseling so that individuals with ASD and their caregivers have a full understanding of how employment will impact their benefits.17

- **Address demand-side needs by educating employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with ASD**

  Studies show that many employers who do not want to hire individuals with disabilities do not understand the unique benefits that such individuals provide to their company. Many employers have also expressed fear over costs of hiring individuals with disabilities and fear of legal liability.25 However, once employers understand the potential benefits and gain experience with individuals with ASD and needed accommodations, they often are enthusiastic about hiring these individuals. A preference assessment of businesses in Pennsylvania (see Appendix C) indicated that many businesses would be receptive to trainings on hiring and employing individuals with ASD and would feel more comfortable hiring an individual with ASD if there was a positive behavior support line in place so employers who needed assistance in managing an individual with ASD would know where to turn for support.

  **Model transition and support programs in Pennsylvania**

  There are many Pennsylvania programs that prepare and support the transition to customized and competitive careers. An exhaustive list of all of the programs in Pennsylvania is beyond the scope of this report, however, we provide a few selected examples below.

  **Via of the Lehigh Valley**, a community-based provider organization, runs two programs specifically for individuals with ASD that supports individuals achieving community-based employment, the Community Inclusion and Supported Employment Programs. The Supported Employment program is designed to be a follow-on service after individuals have received job preparation services funded by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Service, including job finding and job placement. This program provides long-term support for individuals with ASD while they work. All supports are designed as a completely individualized program.

  Via’s Community Inclusion program can work in concert with the Supported Employment program through building independent living skills while working on other skills that will help an individual with ASD achieve his or her personal goals. Unlike many support programs that are not designed specifically for individuals with ASD and offer a set menu of services to support general skill-building, goals in the Community Inclusion
program are designed for each individual based on his or her existing skills and aspirations for the future.

Via also offers two programs that, although not designed specifically for individuals with ASD, can be customized according to their needs. The Community Employment program focuses on transitioning individuals with ASD from educational settings to employment and supporting adults in employment. Providers in the Community Employment Program:

- utilize collaboration to help an individual with ASD make a seamless transition from school to work. For example, this often involves working with school personnel to support them in teaching students life and job skills they will need in employment.
- work with the individual with ASD to build a network of natural supports like family, neighbors and friends, to help ensure job stability once the transition has been made.
- assist individuals in determining their employment objectives through job assessments.
- work with local businesses to develop many different employment opportunities.
- work one on one with adults throughout the employment process including job development, job coaching and follow along supports.

While the Community Employment Program focuses on individuals with disabilities who are job-ready but need assistance to find, attain, and maintain a job, the Via Works program focuses on training and skill development for those who may not be immediately ready to work individually in the community. Through Via Works, individuals work in small groups of six to eight and are overseen by an employment consultant. The goal is to assist individuals in developing greater self-determination and vocational skills so that they can move to individual community-based employment. All of these services are customized for individuals with ASD and can be accompanied by resource for adults with ASD to connect with each other, their peers, and community resources.

Devereux Pennsylvania, based in Paoli, PA also offers transition and employment support services to individuals with ASD through the Community Adult Autism Partnership Program (CAAPP). CAAPP serves individuals in Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties with comprehensive services including community-based support and skill development in communication, social skills, self-care, work-readiness, employment training, community-based employment experiences and instruction, service
learning and volunteer activities. These are directed through an individual service plan created in collaboration with the individual, his or her family/caregiver, and anyone else that can support the individual in goal attainment that:

- meets specific behavioral and skill needs identified by the individual and his/her team members.
- has goals assessed on a regular basis to ensure they are meeting the individual’s needs
- increases independence.
- works in conjunction with the Community Supported Employment which provides job assessment, job finding and job coaching services.

This program also collects data related to the individual service plan goals to track the individual’s progress and assess how staff can better serve individuals with ASD.

The Ascent program, which is part of CAAPP but designed specifically for students with ASD who are 14 to 21 years old, focuses specifically on assisting school districts to meet the needs of transition-age youth. Devereux staff work with a student’s IEP team to provide:

- a comprehensive assessment including assessments of employment readiness and social and communication skills;
- employment preparation and placement,
- direct instruction in community-based, independent living, social, and communication skills, and
- positive behavior support planning.

One of the unique aspects of this program is its comprehensive and intensive nature. The amount of time Devereux staff spend supporting and teaching individuals with ASD all depends on the amount of time the individual needs and desires to achieve his or her goals. In addition, services are offered in multiple locations including the home and community to ensure that skills are built in the environments in which they will be used.

A notable transition from college to work program is offered by Marywood University in Scranton, PA. The SOAR (Students On-Campus Achieving Results) program is individualized specifically for students with ASD. It prepares students with ASD for competitive employment through course instruction in communication, life skills, and career education and vocational experience. Students in the program are assisted by typical students who act as job coaches and peer mentors.
2b. Policy and Funding Practices

Both policy and lack of funding can stand in the way of successfully assisting adults with ASD in their transition to employment. Policy issues include mission definition, such as laws that stipulate support that adults with ASD are entitled to both on the federal and state levels, and system support issues, such as reimbursement policies which indicate which services are reimbursable and for how much. Below are key lessons from programs that attempted to address policy and/or funding issues.

- **Broad support for employment services for adults with ASD is necessary**
  
  While employment service options for adults with ASD are increasing in Pennsylvania and across the US, most individuals with disabilities including ASD are still employed in sheltered workshops, which limit wages and community engagement. Although there has been an emphasis on community-based employment since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, limited alternatives to sheltered workshops are available, at least partially due to policies that lack an emphasis on funding integrated employment. For example, broad-based support for employment services could help support using Medicaid waivers, an under-utilized source of funding for employment services, to provide access to and funding for employment services for adults with disabilities including ASD.

- **There are many policy and funding options which could incentivize businesses to hire and retain workers with disabilities**
  
  Employers may be unaware or unwilling to employ individuals with disabilities, including ASD, without receiving information on the benefits of doing so. A survey of human resource departments in companies known to be resistant to complying with ADA employment provisions reported that strategies that would be most helpful in regards to hiring workers with disabilities would include: 1) Accommodations subsidized or entirely paid for by a government agency; 2) Outside assistance, provided at no-cost to the business, to help with solving disability- and accommodation-related issues; and 3) Financial incentives for hiring and retaining workers with disabilities which could take the form of tax breaks or subsidies for new workers, or programs similar to those offering incentives to minority- or women-owned suppliers or contractors. In contrast to national data indicating that businesses need incentives, a preference assessment of businesses in Pennsylvania (see

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**Virginia Commonwealth University: Multiple Funding Streams**

In addition to grant funding, VCU collaborates with state and local government to fund its employment services for individuals with ASD.

- Job coaches paid for through milestone funding. (Funding is based on meeting milestones such as acquiring an internship or acquiring an interview.)
- Positive behavior support paid for through Medicaid Waivers. (Medicaid billing code for therapeutic consultative services.)
- No financial incentives for participating businesses. Use the message that “It’s the right thing to do!”
Appendix C) revealed that businesses may not need financial incentives to hire individuals with ASD. Simply knowing there is an appropriate place in their company for an individual with ASD and that they know where to turn if they should need support in managing an employee with ASD was incentive enough.

- **Broad policies that support an individual’s right to employment could ensure a seamless transition and successful employment outcomes**

  Currently, individuals with ASD are entitled to transition and support services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 until they leave the educational system. The transition from school to employment is a major change for individuals as they move from a structured environment to one with less structure and more independence. Individuals with ASD need transition services that can address both sides of the employment equation—school and work—to best support their needs. Collaborative programs that integrate school and employment resources consistently show successful employment outcomes. Integration across systems could be supported by strengthening the IDEA or creating policies related to IDEA implementation at the state and local levels that “explicitly authorize school districts to subcontract with appropriate private agencies at the point of transition to produce direct-hire, individualized employment and adult living outcomes.” Policies could encourage school district staff to integrate resources with community-based providers and the state and local vocational rehabilitation system before graduation.

  Without entitlement to services that can provide long-term support to all individuals with disabilities, many will not have access to the services they need to be successful after secondary school. This policy gap results in a waste of system resources since the system investment in individuals before they graduate is unlikely to result in successful employment without long-term support after graduation. If adults were entitled to services in the same way that youth under the age of 21 are, long-term support would be available to all and employment outcomes would improve.
3. Stakeholder Analysis

This section maps out stakeholders who are in the position to independently and/or as partners impact change in policy and practice in transition to and support during employment for individuals with ASD. The stakeholder analysis is offered with the perspective that the ASERT collaborative may be able to serve as an educational and training entity that can help bridge the gap between some groups of stakeholders to help support and improve the systems that serve individuals with ASD who have the ability and desire to work. In addition, mapping out stakeholders so each entity can see who is responsible for which aspect of a coordinated effort and where the gaps exist can serve to catalyze these stakeholders and others into action related to policy and programming to meet the needs of individuals with ASD.

Stakeholder groups are listed below, arranged by level of service, based on the idea that all services and policies should be centered around the individual with ASD and should be provided in collaboration with his or her needs and desires to live a fulfilling life in the community. At the most basic level is the individual with ASD and his or her family, caregivers and other people in his or her personal support network. Individuals with ASD and their support systems should be at the center of any system providing effective services. This level also includes advocacy and education organizations that support individuals and their families. At the next level, the service provision level, supporting individuals and their families through direct service provision are community-based providers. These may also include local representatives of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation who act as community service providers and make links to state and local support resources. Educational entities are also on the service provision level since they provide direct services to students making the transition from school to work by preparing them for employment with education and vocational skill building. The employer level includes business organizations that can make the connections between employers and individuals and can be key to employers’ receptivity to hiring individuals with ASD. At the program/policy level are local, state, and governmental entities. They make the policies that direct and mandate services and often provide funding to support services. Below is a summary of these stakeholders in Pennsylvania and considerations specific to each stakeholder that could prevent systems change. Strategies to overcome these challenges will be posed in the guidelines section following.

- **Stakeholder: Individuals with ASD and their families**

  Individuals and their families drive or should drive the transition into employment and subsequent employment process at every level and across the lifespan. When individuals with ASD drive the process through, for example, leading IEP meetings or exercising choice
in job placement, they have the opportunity to develop important self-determination and self-advocacy skills, skills essential to success in the workplace. Parents, caregivers, other family member and support systems also play a critical role in the transition to and ongoing employment service process. Their expectations of and support during employment are important components of successful, positive outcomes for individuals with ASD. Self-advocacy organizations such as the National Autism Society of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network, the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, and the Advisory Board on Autism and Related Disorders, Northeast Autism Consortium, the Disability Resource Network, and the Autism Resource Community Hub of the Lehigh Valley are important resources for individuals with ASD to build self-advocacy and for both individuals and their families to learn more about community transition and employment resources.

**Considerations:** Individuals with ASD and their families and caregivers can and should play an active role in defining, preparing for and establishing employment services. Parents/caregivers may need support in working to build their child’s self-advocacy skills and increase his or her independence during the secondary school years since these skills are not always a focus of learning in the educational system. Individuals with ASD transitioning from postsecondary education to employment may have challenges different from those transitioning to employment out of secondary school. Students may need assistance to find and obtain community-based employment support since they may have never thought about accessing such services in the past.

- **Stakeholder: Community-Based Service Providers**

  Community-based service providers provide on-the-ground employment services for individuals with ASD across the Commonwealth, although not all providers offer employment support services. Community-based providers can be certified to provide services for individuals with ASD through training offered by the Bureau of Autism Services. Individual service providers (some of which are highlighted in the “2. Lessons Learned From Research and Practice: Planning for and Supporting Employment” section) offer different mixes of services (For a description of some ASD-specific programs both within and outside Pennsylvania, see Appendix A.) Services are funded by reimbursement from state or local government, consumer fees (either paid by private insurance or out-of-pocket by consumers), or, typically, a mix of two or more payment methods. For individuals who receive health coverage, including funding/reimbursement for behavioral services, through Medical Assistance or Medicaid, research indicates that reimbursement rates may
be a limitation to providers’ willingness to offer ASD-specific services.\textsuperscript{27} While the Autism Insurance Act passed in 2008 (Act 62) mandates private insurers to pay for medical services for ASD, this only covers young children, not all individuals have access to private insurance, and employment services would likely not qualify for coverage under Act 62 even if these other barriers did not exist. In the 2009 Pennsylvania statewide needs assessment, 82% of respondents used Medicaid to pay for services.\textsuperscript{28} If Medicaid reimbursement rates are a barrier to service receipt in Pennsylvania, the survey indicates that a majority of individuals with ASD may have limited access to existing services.

\textit{Considerations:} The 2009 Pennsylvania Autism Needs Assessment indicates that individuals with ASD most commonly report unmet need for employment and transition services, the main reason for which is no providers or a shortage of providers in the local area. This indicates that there are either not enough service providers for all those who need services, there are not enough service providers who provide services to individuals with ASD, or individuals who need services are not aware of resources in their areas. In addition, community-based providers may face system limitations that prevent them from providing services to individuals with ASD, most notably a lack of funding for ongoing services for adults.

- **Stakeholder: Secondary Educational Entities**

\textit{1. High schools:} High schools are an essential part of the transition process. Teachers, counselors, and the IEP team all have a role in preparing an individual with ASD for postsecondary education if that is what he or she chooses. Transition planning should begin at age 14 and be guided by the IEP, [22 PA Code Chapter 14] which should include measurable goals that will focus on skills an individual will need for successful employment and independent living. These should include components for self-advocacy building and community-based work experiences. Individual mentors such as teachers, counselors, or other adults often play key roles in facilitating early work experiences.

\textit{Considerations:} Evidence suggests transition planning for individuals with ASD may not be adequate\textsuperscript{29} and IEP goals tend to be very general\textsuperscript{18} and may not address the specific skills that individuals with ASD will need for successful employment. Self-advocacy should be an important and common focus for IEP goal setting and students should be encouraged and prepared to lead their own IEP meetings when possible. Teachers may take it upon themselves to mentor students with ASD, but may not know about resources to help them be maximally effective.
2. **Intermediate Units and Local Transition Coordinating Councils:** There are 29 intermediate units (IUs) in Pennsylvania, 27 of which are regional service agencies. Pittsburgh and Philadelphia school districts serve as their own IUs. In addition to staff development, technology services, management services, and others, IUs provide special education programs directly to students in public and non-public schools. They also provide community education, which systematically integrates education and community support services to offset non-academic barriers that inhibit learning, and to foster the life-long learning continuum. Local transition coordinating councils are part of local IUs and they specifically focus efforts on promoting effective transition for students with disabilities. Councils are made up of parents, school districts, business representatives, advocates, agency personnel, and IU staff. They provide information to students, parents, educators, businesses, and the community and sponsor informational meetings and programs designed to positively impact the transition process.

**Considerations:** Information about the transition needs of students with ASD is relatively new and emerging, so IU staff, as with staff from many other educational entities, may need to consult with experts to learn about the specific needs of individuals with ASD. Members of transition councils may also need ASD-specific information; however since local transition coordinating councils contain parent representatives, those councils with a parent or caregiver of a child with ASD may be able to benefit from local expertise. Even transition councils who do not have members with personal knowledge of ASD may still have general transition planning information that can benefits students with ASD. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in order to disseminate potentially useful information, transition councils may need assistance in reaching out to and engaging students with ASD and their families.

- **Stakeholder: Postsecondary Educational Entities**

  Postsecondary educational entities include any education after secondary school such as community colleges, private colleges/universities, institutes of technology, and vocational/technical schools. Most employment transition services focus on the transition from secondary school to work, however, the transition from postsecondary educational institutions is becoming increasingly more common. Individuals with ASD who have the aptitude and desire to enter a specialized trade may find it useful to go to a vocational school after high school. Community colleges may be a good fit for individuals with ASD who want to have a postsecondary educational experience but do not feel that a four-year school would be a good fit. Many community colleges are partnering with behavioral health organizations and/or school districts to provide a dual enrollment program. Through these programs, students are enrolled in a secondary school and guided by their IEP but take
classes at a community college for college credit. In all respects, they participate in the community college community but with additional supports. Many of these non-traditional programs focus on building work and independent living skills specifically designed to facilitate a transition to successful employment upon graduation. For individuals with ASD who follow a traditional route of enrollment in community college upon graduation, many schools have specific work oriented programs that also focus on developing work skills while in community college.

There are an increasing number of programs to support individuals with complex needs in postsecondary education, making this option accessible to many who would otherwise not be able to attend. All schools offer some type of services for students with disabilities, mostly focused on support for academic performance, provided students register with the campus disability office. These services may or may not include support in transitioning to employment after postsecondary education. A few schools are beginning to offer programs specifically for students with ASD that are more comprehensive, address social and independent living skills, and, in the later years in school, address the transition out of postsecondary education. These programs are add-ons to existing services and typically cost the student thousands of dollars per year.

**Considerations:** Postsecondary staff will likely face some of the same challenges as secondary school staff when providing services to students with ASD. Many will need additional education and information to learn about the unique needs of students with ASD. Postsecondary institutions will need additional funding streams or alternative methods of funding for ASD-specific programs to ensure that students of all financial means can receive such services. In addition, specific to community colleges, unless a formal agreement between a school district and community college is in place with free-flow of communication, there may be confusion regarding who is responsible for which aspects of student support.

- **Stakeholder: Employers/Businesses Organizations**

  While it is important to engage individual businesses, employers, and industries to educate them about the benefits of hiring individuals with ASD and the supports available to do so, it is neither time- nor cost-effective to do this on an individual basis. In Pennsylvania, two networks that could serve as a linkage to individual businesses and partner in addressing business’s needs are the Pennsylvania Business Leadership Network (PBLN) and local Chambers of Commerce.

  The PBLN is a statewide, employer-driven program designed for business leaders to promote hiring practices that enable qualified people with disabilities to enter and succeed
in the workplace. This network serves both employers and potential employees. It allows employers to share information with one another about the recruitment of and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The network also provides potential employees with linkages to appropriate employment support services in Pennsylvania.

Chambers of commerce are member organizations of businesses that promote the economic health of the communities that they serve. They aim to unite business, government, community agencies, and education for economic success. They host networking opportunities, member activities, business expos, and other events.

Considerations: Since PBLN does not specifically serve individuals with ASD, members may need education and training to understand the unique needs of individuals with ASD. Chambers of commerce face a broader challenge since they do not have a focus on promoting hiring of individuals with disabilities. However, they are committed to the overall health of the community and hiring individuals with disabilities could be in line with the aim of chambers and their members. Member businesses would likely need to be educated on the most basic facts and advantages of hiring individuals with disabilities, and, especially individuals with ASD.

- Stakeholder: Governmental Entities

1. Bureau of Special Education, Department of Education: The Bureau of Special Education under the Department of Education oversees services for individuals with ASD up to age 21 through IEPs. The Bureau’s mission is to “accelerate the learning of children with exceptionalities through an improved educational system focused on results” which it does through technical assistance provided by the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) and by monitoring the special education plans for school districts. These plans set the policies for all special education programs and services offered in and used by the school districts and are the foundation of services that can be offered to students in their IEPs. PaTTAN works collaboratively with local school districts and IUs to provide professional development, technical assistance, and information regarding transition projects, products, and activities to ensure that these entities best serve students with disabilities and have the ongoing capacity to meet their special education plans. PaTTAN staff also offer training to parents of children with disabilities to help guide them in the transition process.

The Bureau is guided in oversight for transition planning by federal and state law. State law stipulates that the IEP of each student must include, “For students who are 14 years of age or older, a transition plan that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and, when appropriate, independent living skills.” Federal law does not stipulate that services must begin earlier than age 16 although it specifically states
that IEPs must include “(1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and (2) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.”

**Considerations:** In the 2009 statewide needs assessment, 1 in 3 caregivers of children with ASD in middle or high school reported an unmet need for transition planning. This suggests that for many, transition planning may not be starting as early as age 14 and/or current transition planning services are not meeting the needs of individuals with ASD. Bureau staff and staff at PaTTAN may need additional resources and support to understand the emerging evidence base for best practices in supporting students with ASD as they transition to employment.

2. **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor and Industry:** The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) offers a range of services for employers, businesses, and industry as well as individuals to help transition from school (ideally from both secondary and postsecondary institutions) to work. They also provide individuals connection to the federal Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program, a program specifically designed for SSI/SSDI beneficiaries so they can test their ability to work while continuing to receive cash and health care benefits and gradually becoming self-supporting. Vocational rehabilitation services are provided through staff at 21 district offices and approved community providers. Most services are time-limited and case closure occurs 90 days from when an individual successfully finds employment. Individuals can access employment services through a referral to OVR or through the Ticket to Work program, although individuals may also choose to receive services through an Employment Network (an approved service provider) under the Ticket to Work program. Vocational rehabilitation services, either through OVR or Ticket to Work are supported by such programs as the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program that is a federal program which ensures that individuals understand how federal benefits work in relation to employment and work incentive programs. Services for businesses, employers and industry include providing on the job training, consultation on available tax credit options, and assistance with worksite accommodations or assistive technology.

**Considerations:** Similar to challenges faced by staff at the Bureau of Special Education, state and local OVR staff and community-based service providers may need additional resources and training to fully understand and meet the support needs of postsecondary students with ASD. Even if OVR staff have additional training in ASD, the structure of the service system may be a limitation to fully supporting individuals with ASD. That is, services
are typically provided for 90 days or less; however, individuals with ASD often need services beyond 90 days, even when they are appropriately tailored to the individual’s specific needs.

3. Department of Public Welfare: Numerous entities within the Department of Public Welfare address and set policy for ASD services in Pennsylvania as described in the subsections below. The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) also houses a comprehensive employment resource called “Works for Me” which directs people with disabilities, including those receiving Social Security or Medicaid benefits, to resources and services provided by state and local government agencies, Centers for Independent Living, and stakeholders that can help them with training and employment. Works for Me is designed to help people navigate the often confusing process of receiving support to find and keep employment while not losing other benefits. Individuals can call to connect to a coordinator who will review their specific situation and guide them to appropriate employment resources.

3a. Bureau of Autism Services: The Bureau of Autism Services (BAS) under the Office of Developmental Programs is one subsidiary under the Department of Public Welfare that serves adults with ASD. BAS currently has two programs serving adults with ASD. The Adult Autism Waiver can currently serve 300 individuals across Pennsylvania and is designed to, among other aims, help an individual with ASD increase independence and reach his/her employment goals. All services are offered through community-based providers who have special training in ASD and meet BAS-defined standards. The second program, the Adult Community Autism Program (ACAP), is a managed care program, not a waiver program, that provides physician, behavioral, and community services through an integrated approach to create a coordinated system of supports. Through the program, BAS can currently serve 200 adults in Cumberland, Dauphin, Chester, and Lancaster Counties. Services are also provided through BAS-approved community providers. While the programs are functionally different, enrollees can access the same set of community inclusion services, although they may not be able to use the same service providers for those services. For both of these programs, priority is given to individuals who are not already receiving ongoing state or federal support.

3b. Bureau of Supports for People with Intellectual Disabilities: The Bureau of Supports for People with Intellectual Disabilities under the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) also has two mechanisms under which individuals with ASD can receive services, although they must also have an intellectual disability. The Consolidated Waiver and the Person/Family Directed Waiver serve individuals aged 3 and older and are designed to help persons with intellectual disabilities live more independently in their homes and communities and to provide a variety of services that promote community living, including self-directed service models and traditional, agency-based service models.
Considerations: Overall, DPW has numerous resources that individuals with ASD can take advantage of, although there are challenges to doing so. For example, resources like Works for Me, which has been funded by a CMS Medicaid Infrastructure Grant that will be ending soon, are not permanent parts of the state infrastructure so can only be of limited ongoing use. Although staff plan to keep the website available, the personalized navigation services through work coordinators will no longer be offered. This could be a huge impediment to successfully accessing resources through Works for Me since the site has a large volume of information, which may not be easy to navigate.

In addition to barriers that may prevent information dissemination, DPW-funded services which are offered through community-based providers, may be subject to the same system barriers mentioned above including potential issues with reimbursement rates and lack of ongoing funding for services. In the case of BAS programs, lack of funding results in a limited number of people able to enroll in the programs.

4. Department of Health: An important aspect of a successful transition to adulthood and full participation in the community for individuals with ASD is timely receipt of health services. This is often not possible without health insurance. While benefits counseling is offered for adults and transition-age youth who want to work through the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program, the Department of Health has transition guidance through the Special Kids network designed to ensure that there is no gap in health care coverage upon transition and before individuals have access to the adult service system.

Considerations: Department of Health staff may need assistance in reaching out and providing information to individuals with ASD and their families. In addition, they may need assistance in conveying existing information to community-based providers who often provide a direct point of contact for adults with ASD who did not receive such information at some point during their transition.

5. County-level Governmental Entities: While county-level entities, such as offices of developmental disabilities and offices of mental health and mental retardation, are overseen by corresponding state-level offices, they do have their own funding and administer most of the on-the-ground services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Individuals with developmental disabilities can receive a range of employment services, although they have to qualify (i.e., have mental retardation) and be enrolled in either the Consolidated Waiver or the Person/Family Directed Waiver.

Considerations: Similar to challenges staff at the state-level face, county-level staff may need additional training to understand the specific employment support needs of individuals with ASD.
4. Guidelines for Strengthening Transition to and Support in Employment in Pennsylvania

The following guidelines are intended as suggestions, based on the above lessons learned and stakeholder analysis that provide a roadmap for enhancing employment services for individuals with ASD in Pennsylvania.

- **Provide training to all those involved in the IEP and transition process whether that transition occurs from a secondary or a postsecondary educational institution.**

  Successful seamless transition relies on the knowledge of those guiding students with ASD through the process. Therefore, it is essential that those involved in the transition process have an understanding of ASD so they can effectively serve students with ASD. At all levels, but especially at the secondary school level, staff will likely need additional training to understand how to best modify the transition process for individuals with ASD. Training should include learning how to facilitate opportunities to develop self-advocacy and independent living skills, engage families earlier and more consistently, facilitate community-based work experiences, implement community-based instruction, and link to OVR services to ensure proper supports are in place before a student graduates. In order to support individuals and families, educational staff need to be familiar (or fluent) with funding streams for adults, options for service providers locally, and other issues related to transition such as guardianship, selective service, and other options. At the community college and four-year college level, training should focus on staff at disability offices about the transition needs of students with ASD, how to facilitate linkage to OVR services, and facilitating community-based employment opportunities.

- **Provide training for and technical assistance to community-based providers to enhance employment services for transition age individuals and adults with ASD.**

  The needs of transition-age youth will likely be very different from older adults with ASD seeking employment since many will be looking for their first full-time job or employment that will take the place out of school. Community-based providers certified by BAS to serve individuals with ASD may need additional training and technical assistance to help youth with ASD make a seamless transition to employment.

  While ASD-specific training can be provided through BAS for adult employment services, community-based providers may need additional information (possibly in the form of a guide) and/or training to address one of the major barriers to employment for individuals with ASD – understanding how benefits such as healthcare and SSI/SSDI cash benefits, will be affected by employment. There are resources at the state-level through which individuals with ASD can learn how employment would impact such benefits; however this information may not be getting out to consumers.

  Community-based providers could also benefit from more intensive training and technical assistance related to provision of ongoing employment services for individuals with ASD. Since working with individuals with ASD can be challenging and will likely not...
be learned through training courses alone, added technical assistance will ensure better services for individuals with ASD. This could take the form of phone or teleconference support in addition to on-site behavioral support.

- **Provide training and support to community-based providers so they will first and foremost consider competitive employment options for individuals with ASD and not use sheltered employment as a fall back.**

  Research indicates that the culture of a community-based service provider will influence whether individual providers work with individuals with ASD to find competitive or sheltered employment. To ensure that individuals with ASD are offered and supported in the best opportunities for success at competitive employment, providers must believe that everyone can be successful at competitive employment if the right situation can be found and the right supports are offered.

- **Facilitate demand-side activities so businesses want to hire individuals with ASD.**

  No matter how many employment services exist for individuals with ASD, if employers do not want to hire these individuals, there will be limited opportunities for success. Therefore, it is important to address the demand-side of employing individuals with ASD. A preference survey of select businesses in Pennsylvania describing the training needs that would facilitate successful support for employees with ASD is provided in Appendix C. In addition to the survey, research and practice suggest that the following demand-side activities may be effective in promoting hiring of individuals with ASD.

  o Training for the Pennsylvania Business Leadership Network so they will understand the unique employment needs of individuals with ASD.

  o Education for local chambers of commerce related to hiring people with disabilities in general as well as specific information about hiring individuals with ASD. This could involve an ASD “ambassador” to talk about what individuals with ASD may have to offer businesses.

  o A training program for supervisors and managers that can be delivered by community-based providers.

  o A directory of outside resources (both sources of expertise and information) that businesses can access to assist with solving specific accommodation challenges.

  o A guide for businesses outlining the tax incentives and other resources that support hiring individuals with disabilities.

  o A guide for county offices of developmental disabilities that guides staff through the process of developing business interest in hiring individuals with ASD or other disabilities.

- **Facilitate collaboration at the local and state levels**

  While grassroots collaboration will ideally be an organic process, many times local organizations, businesses, schools, families, and other stakeholders need guidance in how to work together and a forum for establishing common ground. Encouraging collaboration
could include a guide for collaboration at the local level aimed at specific stakeholder groups who might want to initiate an effort to identify and foster employment opportunities for individuals with ASD. As described in the Preference Assessment in Appendix C, an opportunity exists to engage locally-owned business in this process.

Collaboration at the State level is also necessary since governmental entities set the overarching policies that will affect those operating at the local level. Often collaboration between governmental entities involves some type of interagency agreement. Formalizing these agreements is an effective way to delineate roles and ensure task accountability among various stakeholders. Providing information to state agencies about mechanisms that can be used to formalize such relationships may make such agencies more willing to collaborate on activities such as sharing financial resources for specific activities, expertise, or staff training.

Currently there is a memorandum of understanding between the Pennsylvania Departments of Education, Public Welfare, Labor and Industry, and Health. While this is encouraging and it specifically mentions collaboration around transition services, it only addresses students age 3-21, not adults, and it states that “students with disabilities may be eligible for, but are not otherwise entitled under State and Federal law, to other services, including but not limited… vocational rehabilitation services [and] employment and training services…” Such memoranda should not overlook the importance of these services as a part of the right to education.

- **Retool policies and practices within federal and state programs to help support the needs of all individuals with ASD.**

  The structure of existing services may present barriers to providing long-term support that individuals with ASD need to succeed in employment. For example, success through OVR is typically measured after 90 days, after which time services are usually withdrawn and cases are closed. Not only is this often not enough support for many individuals, by measuring success at this point, the OVR system may not be capturing true long-term employment success for individuals with ASD. Services need to be expanded to ensure long-term success.

  In addition to service expansion, policies can also be retooled to better support individuals with postsecondary educational degrees. Services for this population should be specifically addressed in program policies so that there is guidance for further staff education and expanded employment opportunities. Individuals with ASD may want to seek employment services through the Ticket to Work program since it offers more flexibility in service providers than programs offered through OVR. However, ASD is not listed as a disability served. The ticket to work structure should be changed to ensure that individuals with ASD can be served appropriately.
Collect statewide and local data.

The current service system has a limited capacity to track employment success. OVR typically tracks employment results for only 90 days. While programs under the Office of Developmental Programs, such as the Autism Waiver and ACAP do capture this information, they are only able to serve a small subset of adults with ASD seeing employment in Pennsylvania. It would be beneficial to have information about all individuals with ASD to better understanding whether the system is successful and where specific challenges exist in order to know where to make improvements. This could be achieved by creating and instituting a web-based reporting system for community-based providers who provide services to individuals with ASD. There may need to be incentives associated with such a system to encourage providers to use it. A baseline could be established by a statewide employment survey. Information collected should include:

- Where people are employed/type of employment
- Salary
- Length of employment
- Types of and how much employment services individuals with ASD are using
- How service providers communicate with state and local governmental entities to coordinate services
- Barriers to employment (e.g., lack of transportation)
5. References


Appendix A: Programs Addressing Transition to and Support During Employment

Note: This is a sample of employment programs both within and outside of Pennsylvania and is not meant to be inclusive of all programs. There are two subsections within this appendix. The first addresses programs specifically for individuals with ASD, and the second (beginning on page 34) describes programs for individuals with ASD or other disabilities. While individuals with ASD may take advantage of the second set of programs described, they are not specifically designed for the ASD population.

### ASD-Specific Programs

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Western Pennsylvania Regional Center for Autism (UPMC)</td>
<td>Pennsylvania (Western)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.upmc.com/Services/autism/adult/Pages/vocational-training.aspx">http://www.upmc.com/Services/autism/adult/Pages/vocational-training.aspx</a></td>
<td>The Supported Employment Program provides job coaching and help in securing and keeping competitive employment for adults who have developmental disabilities, including people who may be on the autism spectrum. The program provides an individualized assessment, and staff assist in finding jobs that match the person’s interests and abilities. The program also includes job assessment and training for transitional-age, high school students preparing to leave the school system. (Also includes a sheltered workshop option called “Vocational Training Center”.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devereux Community-based Adult Autism Partnership Program (CAAPP)</td>
<td>Pennsylvania (Southeast)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_community_services_programs">http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_community_services_programs</a></td>
<td>CAAPP focuses on increasing independence and enhancing the quality of life for transition-aged teens and adults across the autism spectrum. Independence is achieved through a combination of assessment, positive behavior support planning and community-based instruction. CAAPP services include community-based support and skill development in communications, social skills, self-care, work-readiness, vocational training, community-based employment experiences and instruction, service learning and volunteer activities.</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ascent Program from Devereux CAAPP</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_community_services_programs">http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_community_services_programs</a></td>
<td>The Ascent program will help school districts meet the unique needs of transition-aged students who do not benefit from spending a full school day in the classroom. The program focuses on building independence and employment readiness through community-based instruction and positive behavior support planning. Program components include: 1) assessment, 2) employment preparation and placement, 3) positive behavior support planning, and 4) direct instruction in community-based skills, independent living skills, social skills, and communication skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devereux Community Supported Employment</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_community_services_programs">http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_community_services_programs</a></td>
<td>The overall goal of Community Supported Employment (CSE) is to achieve independence that is appropriate and comfortable for the individual within his or her community-based employment position by utilizing natural supports such as co-workers and supervisors. As the individual develops confidence and acquires the skills needed to maintain employment, job coaching is faded as appropriate. Job assessments are conducted to identify an individual’s strengths, preferences and areas of need. Employment Specialists work with individuals on resume building, interview skills, job placement, and employment-related social interactions. Support staff is then used to assist the individual with maintaining their employment. Ongoing communication between the Employment Specialist and employers help determine any problems or issues an individual may encounter while working.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodwill of Southwestern PA</td>
<td>Southwestern PA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.goodwillswpa.org/workforce-development">http://www.goodwillswpa.org/workforce-development</a></td>
<td>The PASSAGES Program (Providing Autism Support Services to Achieve Gainful Employment!) is open to individuals with a diagnosis of ASD and whose goal is to obtain and maintain competitive employment. Through classes four days a week, students can improve their ability to understand work and related issues, interact with others, adapt to workplace demands, use alternate ways of expression and behavior, self-advocate, manage time and resources, adapt to hiring practices, create or modify a resume, interview effectively, and get and keep a job. Staff assist in the job search process and provide on-the-job supports when an individual first starts work.</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>POW&amp;R (Program of Autism Delaware)</td>
<td>Delaware (Newark)</td>
<td><a href="http://delautism.org/AdultServices/POWRServices.aspx">http://delautism.org/AdultServices/POWRServices.aspx</a></td>
<td>POW&amp;R offers individualized vocational and recreational supports to adults funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Autism Delaware. These include: Vocational services (e.g., assessment, placement, job development, job training and follow-along services); supported employment; self-employment; social and recreational opportunities; volunteer experiences; meaningful community activities; and family support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ServiceSource Delaware</td>
<td>Delaware (Statewide)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.servicesource.org/services-by-state/delaware/autism-services-delaware">http://www.servicesource.org/services-by-state/delaware/autism-services-delaware</a></td>
<td>The ServiceSource Delaware Regional Office offers a specialized employment program serving adults over the age of 18 who have been diagnosed on the autistic spectrum and adults with Asperger’s Syndrome. Services include: Vocational counseling; Job coaching; Personalized instruction and training; Networking with employers; and peer mentoring. On-going support helps individuals to stay employed or to recognize when it is time to move to a working environment more suitable to their skills and interest.</td>
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<td>Job Path</td>
<td>New York (NYC)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jobpathnyc.org/">http://www.jobpathnyc.org/</a></td>
<td>The Supported or Customized Employment Program is designed for people who need intensive job coaching and long-term support. The Transitional Employment Program helps people who have the ability to move into the workplace with time-limited assistance. Job Path staff conduct personal needs assessment and place individuals in an appropriate program. Central to the employment programs is the discovery process, during which staff spend time with individuals, their families and friends, and in their neighborhoods to understand each person’s strengths, abilities and needs to create a job development plan. Some people spend time at a job site where they receive a stipend while trying out different job tasks. As part of the job development process, each person learns how to complete job applications and prepare for interviews. Once a person is placed on a job, Job Path provides support and coaching to help them learn the required tasks and adjust to the workplace. Job Path follows up and steps in whenever help is needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supported Employment program of the Autism Society of North Carolina</td>
<td>North Carolina (Statewide)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/">http://www.autismsociety-nc.org/</a></td>
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<td><strong>The Supported Employment Program</strong> matches individuals with ASD to jobs that suit the individual’s abilities and interests. Anyone with ASD in North Carolina can receive supported employment through this program and these services are integrated with treatment. Employment specialists coordinate plans with a treatment team including case managers, therapists, and psychiatrists. With competitive employment as the goal. The job search starts soon after a consumer expresses interest in working. There are no requirements for completing extensive pre-employment assessment and training or intermediate work experiences (like prevocational work units, transitional employment, or sheltered workshops). Follow-along supports are continuous. Individualized supports to maintain employment continue as long as consumers want the assistance.</td>
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<tr>
<th>TEACCH</th>
<th>North Carolina (Chapel Hill and Greensboro)</th>
<th><a href="http://teacch.com/">http://teacch.com/</a></th>
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<td><strong>In the TEACCH Supported Employment program</strong> staff work with clients to develop an individualized person- and family-centered plan for each client or student, rather than using a standard curriculum. The program uses 4 different models of supported employment: the standard placement model, the shared support model, the mobile crew model, and the one-to-one model. Within each of these models, an emphasis is placed on the individual’s strengths and interests, identifying appropriate job and vocational settings, applying structured teaching techniques, collaborating with families, caregivers and employers, and providing the necessary long-term support services. Employment support often includes structuring the physical environment, using visual supports to make the sequence of daily activities predictable and understandable, and using visual supports to make individual tasks understandable. TEACCH also runs an adult social group for individuals in supported employment.</td>
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<td>Groden Network of Programs: The Cove Center</td>
<td>Rhode Island and Massachusetts</td>
<td><a href="http://www.grodennetwork.org/adults/cove-center.asp">http://www.grodennetwork.org/adults/cove-center.asp</a></td>
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### Programs That Serve Individuals With ASD and Other Disorders

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AHEDD</td>
<td>Pennsylvania (statewide)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ahedd.org/index.html">http://www.ahedd.org/index.html</a></td>
<td>AHEDD offers comprehensive employment services to prepare individuals with disabilities for and support them in employment. Pre-employment activities can include an emphasis on job seeking skills, career exploration, and community-based work assessments. AHEDD’s role is to facilitate successful employment through job coaching, proactive follow-along support, and provision of technical assistance to the employer. AHEDD provides community based work assessments and internships for young adults. In addition, AHEDD coordinates job related services or supports as needed, including transportation, benefits counseling, and assistive technology.</td>
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| Via         | Pennsylvania (Lehigh Valley) | [http://www.vianet.org/](http://www.vianet.org/) | Via’s [School-to-Work Transition Services](http://www.vianet.org/) works with students who are graduating from high school to help them move seamlessly from school to work. Working with school personnel, Via focuses on job development and training to make the transition to work as smooth as possible.  

Via’s [Community Employment Program](http://www.vianet.org/) offers comprehensive support to help individuals with autism transition to and be supported in employment. Community Employment staff work one on one with adults throughout the employment process including job assessment to determine their job objectives, job development, job coaching and follow along supports. Via works directly with businesses in the local community so they can offer clients a range of employment options. Via staff also help adults increase their natural network of support, like family, neighbors and friends, to help ensure job stability.  

**Via Works** focuses on training and skill development for people with disabilities so they may move on to individual jobs in the community. A Via Works team, supervised by a Via Works employment consultant, can be contracted for services at a business. A small group of six to eight individuals with disabilities will work at a business site under the supervision of a Via Works employment consultant and offer a variety of contract services. |
<p>| Skills of Central Pennsylvania, Inc. | Pennsylvania (Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Somerset, Clearfield, Jefferson, Centre, Clinton, Lycoming, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Adams, Cumberland, Perry, and York Counties) | <a href="http://www.skillsofcentralpa.org/index.php">http://www.skillsofcentralpa.org/index.php</a> | Employment services begin with a comprehensive, person-centered vocational assessment for community-based employment. Services begin with Job Assessment and Finding which will guide staff in providing the support necessary for the individual to obtain paid or volunteer work in the community. Once individuals are matched to jobs, Skills can provide situational assessments (job tryouts) and ongoing assistance in developing the communication, socialization, self-direction, self-help, and adaptive skills necessary to maintain employment in a community setting as needed. Skills Employment Specialists also consult with businesses about eligibility for WOTC tax credits when applicable. |
| Project SEARCH | Over 200 Sites Internationally (Started at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital) | <a href="http://projectsearch.us.dnnmax.com/OurPROGRAM/FAQ.aspx">http://projectsearch.us.dnnmax.com/OurPROGRAM/FAQ.aspx</a> | The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youth with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life. The Project SEARCH model involves an extensive period of training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long-term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, job coaches, and employers. Students attend the program for a full school year in the host business/hospital. The business provides access to an on-site classroom that can accommodate up to 12 students. The site is staffed by a special education teacher and one to three job coaches to meet the educational and training needs of the students (usually funded by Vocational Rehabilitation and a supported employment agency and/or the school). Data is submitted to the national Project SEARCH database. Graduates receive follow-along employment supports. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Program/Department</th>
<th>Region/Location</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wildwoods Employment Services</td>
<td>New York (Albany County)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wildwoodprograms.org">www.wildwoodprograms.org</a></td>
<td>The mission of Wildwood Employment Services is to provide businesses with competent employees and give individuals with ASD and other developmental disabilities an opportunity to thrive in the workplace. The menu of program services includes: diagnostic vocational evaluation; situational assessments; job development; on-site and off-site training support; follow-along; advocacy; benefits advisement; and transition to work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MN Works!</td>
<td>Minnesota (statewide)</td>
<td><a href="http://mnworks4you.org/">http://mnworks4you.org/</a></td>
<td>MN Works! is a centralized organization that bids on state contracts on behalf of Licensed Vendors to obtain employment for people with disabilities. MN Works! is the combined efforts of MN Habilitation Coalition, MN Day Training and Habilitation Programs and MN Association of Community Rehabilitation Organizations lobbying together to obtain a state grant that is administered through the Department of Employment and Economic Development. MNWORKS! assists Minnesota agencies providing employment services to people with disabilities with preparing and participating in bids for larger contracts of work. They will combine services available from multiple agencies to service statewide or regional contracts. MN Works! also provides a toolkit for cities and counties to help them recreate the Capital Internship Program in partnership with the Minnesota State Senate to provide people with physical and mental disabilities work experience at the state capital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positively Minnesota (Department of Employment and Economic Development)</td>
<td>Minnesota (Statewide)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/People_with_Disabilities/index.aspx">http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/People_with_Disabilities/index.aspx</a></td>
<td>Provides counseling to help individuals with disabilities set and achieve job goals, training to help develop work skills, assistance in finding suitable employment, technology to help on the job, and financial assistance under certain circumstances. Long-term job supports – also referred to as ongoing supports or extended services – typically provide assistance in training or retraining job tasks, dealing with schedule changes, adjusting to new supervisors, advancement to new job tasks or positions, and managing changes in non-work environments or life activities that affect work performance. Services fall within three categories: Supported Employment, Community Employment and Center-based Employment.</td>
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<td>Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Connections</td>
<td>Virginia (Metro Richmond and Fredericksburg)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.worksupport.com/bizconnect/Homepage.html">http://www.worksupport.com/bizconnect/Homepage.html</a></td>
<td>Business Connections is a supported employment service that addresses the needs of individuals with disabilities and community employers. The program supports individuals by assisting them in identifying their abilities, possible support needs; conducting a job search to locate real work for real pay, providing and facilitating workplace supports as needed, and ongoing long term follow along and job retention services both at or away from the work place. Business services include assisting employers with identifying hiring needs or new work structures, referring candidates for interviews, providing initial and ongoing on the jobsite support services to ensure the employer’s business requirements are being met by the new hire, and providing education and technical assistance on disability and employment related issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model Transition Program</td>
<td>Virginia (statewide)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.worksupport.com/projects/project.cfm/39">http://www.worksupport.com/projects/project.cfm/39</a></td>
<td>The Model Transition Program for secondary transition programs empowers selected school divisions to develop expertise in customized employment and other initiatives to improve post-school employment outcomes for students who need supports. Application for the Model Transition Program selection is open to school divisions in Virginia who wish to submit documentation surrounding their current practices in secondary transition. Two school divisions will be selected to receive extensive technical assistance and professional development. Creation and implementation of a model program is the desired outcome.</td>
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### ASD-Specific Articles

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Employment Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do sheltered workshops enhance employment outcomes for adults with autism spectrum disorder?</td>
<td>Robert Evert Cimera, Paul Wehman, Michael West and Sloane Burgess</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>For adults with cognitive disabilities, sheltered workshops were ‘negative value-added’. That is, participating in sheltered workshops diminished the future outcomes achieved once individuals became competitively employed, perhaps because the skills and behaviors individuals learned in sheltered workshops had to be ‘unlearned’ in order for the workers to be successful in the community.</td>
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</table>
| Transition from school to work for students with autism spectrum disorders: understanding the process and | Carol Schall, Paul Wehman and Jennifer L. McDonough                     | 2012 | • The first practice associated with favorable transition outcomes is the design of high school internships that result in employment before the individual graduates from high school. It is critical that educators and community support programs emphasize employment as a desired and measured outcome prior to graduation from high school.  
• Youth with ASD can be empowered in the workplace with the use of equipment such as smart phones and personal digital assistants  
• School programs should include more opportunities to improve social competence, self- |
achieving better outcomes.

- Parents play a key role by supporting their child with ASD through the transition process and providing workplace and community contacts. Their participation in the transition process should be encouraged.
- Supported employment is arguably the single most influential practice that results in employment for youth with ASD. Other emerging programs include business partnerships, customized employment, and self-employment.

### Career Interests and Self-Estimated Abilities of Young Adults With Disabilities

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<th>Authors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sherri Turner, Lesley Craig Unkefer, Bryan Ervin Cichy, Christine Peper and Ju-Ping Juang</td>
<td>2011</td>
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</table>

- Helping young adults with disabilities explore their own interests and abilities as they relate to the world of work, through computer-assisted career-guidance systems such as DISCOVER, could help them identify potential occupational opportunities they had not previously considered.
- Counselors could help young adults with disabilities link to employers who are willing to provide a broader range of work opportunities for them.
- Assisting employers to develop not only the structures to employ young adults with disabilities, but helping employers develop the efficacy to know that they can employ them in ways that contribute to organizational success is critical to assisting more young adults with disabilities to not only find work, but to work in occupations that are congruent with their vocational personalities.

### Employment and post-secondary educational activities for young adults with autism spectrum disorders during the transition to adulthood

<table>
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<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor Julie Lounds and Seltzer Marsha Mailick</td>
<td>2011</td>
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</table>

- More autism focused adult services are needed that will allow youths with ASD who do not have intellectual disability to achieve their maximum level of independence and develop sustainable careers.
- There might be a group of youths with ASD in the mid-level of functioning—not severe enough to receive adult day services but too severe to function independently—who are “falling through the cracks” during the transition to adulthood.
- A comorbid psychiatric diagnosis was a barrier to employment in the study.
### Predictors of Postschool Employment Outcomes for Young Adults With Severe Disabilities

**Erik W. Carter, Diane Austin and Audrey A. Trainor**

2011

- Paid work experiences during high school were strongly associated with postschool work status during students’ first 2 years after leaving high school.
- Vocational education policy should emphasize the development of work experiences in natural settings.
- Family members—particularly parents—may play a more prominent role in facilitating early employment opportunities for young adults with severe disabilities, particularly given persistent critiques of the capacity of adult service systems to adequately support the employment of these graduates.
- It was actual, hands-on work experience—rather than preparatory or indirect experiences—that was most prominent in the final model for young people with severe disabilities.
- "Summary of performance" document (IDEA, 2004) has the potential to improve practice through the individualized summation of the functional impact of school-based opportunities.

### Teaching adolescents with autism to describe a problem and request assistance during simulated vocational tasks

**Kim M. Dotto-Fojut, Kenneth F. Reeve, Dawn B. Townsend and Patrick R. Progar**

2011

- The purpose of the present study was to determine whether adolescents with autism could be taught to approach an instructor posing as a work supervisor, describe a problem, and request assistance when a work-related problem was encountered.
- This was only tested with 4 people.
- Instructional methods were successful in teaching adolescents with autism effective assistance seeking during problem situations.
- Although the participants in the study all were able to seek assistance they rarely varied their language from the scripts.
- It is unknown whether the training procedures could be effective when used directly in a community work setting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The use of auditory prompting systems for increasing independent performance of students with autism in employment training</th>
<th>Joyce Montgomery, Keith Storey, Michal Post and Jacky Lemley</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Self-operated auditory prompting systems are prerecorded antecedent cues to increase the likelihood of an individual performing a certain action.</td>
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<td>• The self-operated auditory prompting system was effective for increasing the on-task behavior of the participants, however, without continuing to use the system participants could not sustain on-task behavior.</td>
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<td>• The use of self-operated auditory prompting systems has been well documented for individuals with developmental disabilities as an effective strategy for individuals who: forget steps of a task and need step by step instruction for the acquisition of skills (Taber et al. 1998; Taber-Doughy, 2005; Cihak et al. 2007a), have poor accuracy and quality in completing tasks and need self-evaluation prompts (Grossi, 1998; Alberto et al. 1999), remember directions but become distracted easily and often need prompts of encouragement (Taber et al., 1999; Hughes et al. 2006) need both prompts of encouragement and self evaluation (Post et al., 2002).</td>
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<td>• Only tested with 2 individuals.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Workforce And Independent Living Skills Training Model for Individuals with High Functioning Autism or Asperger's Disorder who Exhibit Savant Skills or Giftedness: A Pilot Program’s Outcome</th>
<th>David Crowe, Shahrokh Shafaie, Allen Lincoln, David King, G. Elaine Beussink, Alison Blake and Carol Statler</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The goal of the Tailor Institute program is to identify the specific skills and talents of gifted individuals with high-functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger’s disorder (AD) and to translate these savant skills into long-term career opportunities, in order to empower these individuals to achieve independence and to reduce or eliminate their need for government supports.</td>
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<td>• There are four distinct training components in this model: (a) training of the implementing agency’s support staff, student interns, and/or volunteers; (b) independent living skills training of the program participants; (c) workforce skills training of the program participants; and (d) training of the host employers and co-workers.</td>
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| Community-Based Vocational Instruction Using Videotaped Modeling for Young Adults With Autism Spectrum Disorders Performing in Air-Inflated Mascots | Keith D. Allen, Dustin P. Wallace, Diana J. Greene, Scott L. Bowen and Raymond V. Burke | 2010 | - One challenge with using videotaped modeling to teach vocational skills is finding a job that can be appropriate and also easily modeled and video recorded.  
- Only tested with 3 people.  
- Results demonstrate that individuals with ASD can perform in a relatively noisy, chaotic social environment if given rather predictable demands and the proper skills. |
| Employment and adults with autism spectrum disorders: Challenges and strategies for success | Dawn Hendricks                      | 2010 | - Given the heterogeneity among individuals with autism, for employment to be procured and maintained in the community, there must be a variety of services and supports provided.  
- Need on-the-job support services and services should be autism-specific.  
- Job, work tasks, and environment must be considered. Providers should consider job preferences and can use preference assessments.  
- A primary component of existing supported employment programs is receptivity and knowledge of the employers and co-workers.  
- Services that lead to best outcomes include individualized on the job training that targets job tasks, acclimation to the job site, and social integration.  
- May need to incorporate workplace modifications or adaptations.  
- Extended support may be needed to avoid later deterioration in work performance. Supports can be internal and/or external. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of two instruction methods to increase employment options for young adults with autism spectrum disorders</th>
<th>Raymond V. Burke, Melissa N. Andersen, Scott L. Bowen, Monica R. Howard and Keith D. Allen</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The vocational training program evaluated included behavioral skills training, and a “performance cue system” (i.e., a proprietary iPhone application adapted for the study) to teach targeted social-vocational skills to six young adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.</td>
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<td>• by itself, the performance cue system (PCS) can (a) help people with ASD be successful in work environments requiring complex skill sequences, (b) facilitate the learning of complex skill sequences that are more than five times longer than sequences reported in prior studies with PDA-based cue systems (Davies, Stock, &amp; Wehmeyer, 2003), and (c) facilitate learning of skill sequences at faster rates than behavioral skills training alone.</td>
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<td>• The PCS substantially reduced the amount of training time required to get participants to criterion levels of performance.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive behavior support: Supporting adults with autism spectrum disorders in the workplace</th>
<th>Carol M. Schall</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Positive behavior support (PBS) is a behavior intervention model that presents opportunities to implement socially valid behavior interventions in supported and competitive workplaces.</td>
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<td>• The fact that PBS must be implemented in the visible public context of work may make it more difficult to implement. There is typically a smaller number of paid support staff to implement the intervention, access to behavioral consultation services is usually limited, and businesses typically have a lower tolerance for the time and resources it may take to implement PBS interventions.</td>
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<td>• The fundamental components in the application of PBS include functional behavior assessment, multicomponent intervention, utilization of multiple perspectives and methodological practices, lifespan perspective, improved quality of life, collaboration between stakeholders, and an emphasis on prevention of the problem behavior.</td>
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</table>
| Teaching adolescents with autism to describe a problem and request assistance during simulated vocational tasks | Kim M. Dotto-Fojut, Kenneth F. Reeve, Dawn B. Townsend and Patrick R. Progar | 2010 | • The study assessed the effects of graduated guidance, scripts, and script fading to teach four adolescents (12-13 years old) with autism in a simulated vocational setting to approach an instructor, describe a work-related problem, and request assistance.  
• Although the target skills did generalize to another room not used during teaching, it is unknown whether the training procedures would promote generalization of the target skills from the simulated setting to an actual work setting.  
• Adolescents with autism can effectively learn to discriminate when it is appropriate to ask for assistance and when it is not. |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Effects of Covert Audio Coaching on the Job Performance of Supported Employees | Kyle Bennett, Michael P. Brady, Jack Scott, Charles Dukes and Michael Frain | 2010 | • Covert audio coaching (CAC) technology consists of a two-way radio system, where the coach has a radio transmitter and the individual being supported has a radio receiver with an attached earpiece.  
• Only tested with 3 people.  
• As early as 1992, Wehman, Sale, and Parent highlighted essential features of interventions for supported employees (i.e., interventions should be minimally intrusive, efficient, reinforcement based, and systematic). The CAC intervention is consistent with these recommendations.  
• The individual being supported improved quickly (within 8–15 sessions), and the duration of the coaching was quite brief. |
| Vocational Rehabilitation Services Received by Youth with Autism: Are They Associated with an Employment Outcome? | Jaime Lugas, Jaimie Timmons and Frank A. Smith | 2010 | • The purpose of this brief was to: (1) Determine differences in services received by youth with autism compared to youth with other disabilities; (2) Identify services that are most closely associated with an employment outcome for youth with autism; and (3) Establish if large percentages of the group are receiving these successful services.  
• Receipt of services, including job placement and job-search services, and services that involve workplace supports, had a significant positive relationship to achieving an employment outcome. |
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Independence in Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Review of Three Focused Interventions</td>
<td>Kara Hume, Rachel Loftin and Johanna Lantz</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>- The core deficits of ASD coupled with intervention strategies that encourage over-reliance on adult support, contribute to poor long term outcomes for adults with ASD in employment, housing, and relationship development. Self-monitoring, video modeling, and individual work systems each emphasize a shift in stimulus control from continuous adult management to an alternative stimulus and have proven successful in addressing executive function deficits and increasing independence.&lt;br&gt; - Some of the most successful interventions targeting increased independence skills emphasize a shift in stimulus control from continuous adult management (e.g., paraprofessional support) during instruction to an alternative stimulus.&lt;br&gt; - Best practices for working with students with autism are both positive and proactive and focus on increasing independent functioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting More Able Students on the Autism Spectrum: College and Beyond</td>
<td>Ernst VanBergeijk, Ami Klin and Fred Volkmar</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>- Direct connections should be made between what the individual is learning in college and the world of work. Explicit preparation is crucial.&lt;br&gt; - Once the student on the spectrum has been hired, the student must be explicitly taught what the requirements of the job are.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Positive Work Behavior with Literacy-Based Behavioral Interventions: An Intervention for Students and Employees with Developmental Disabilities</td>
<td>Jessica L. Bucholz and Michael P. Brady</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>- This article describes how literacy-based behavioral interventions (LBBIs), instructional interventions that use print or pictures as an instructional medium, can help teachers, job coaches, and employers who work with individuals with disabilities encourage positive work behaviors.&lt;br&gt; - Includes step-by-step procedures for creating a LBBI.&lt;br&gt; - LBBIs furnish information that helps individuals know what to do in a given situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Title</td>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Key Findings</td>
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| Use of Vocational Rehabilitative Services Among Adults with Autism         | Lindsay Lawer, Eugene Brusilovsky, Mark S. Salzer and David S. Mandell | 2008 | • Successful competitive employment for people with ASD and mental retardation may depend on the presence of on-the-job supports, which include job coaching, follow-up and follow-along, and job retention services.  
• Individuals who use vocational rehabilitation services return the investment through taxes within 2 to 4 years, on average.  
• Vocational rehabilitation (VR) expenditures were much higher for individuals with ASD than for those with other impairments except people with mental retardation. This difference may be due to the additional needs of people with ASD. Alternatively, the VR system may not be structured to provide services to individuals with ASD in the most cost-efficient manner |
| Effective Transition Planning for Learners with ASD                        | Peter F. Gerhardt                                         | 2007 | • There is critical need to revisit the ways in which learners with disabilities are prepared for adult life beyond the classroom, in the community, and on the job.  
• Preparation for adult life should include, but not be limited to: (1) considering all learners to be "employment ready"; (2) viewing first jobs as learning experiences; (3) promoting creativity in job development; (4) providing co-worker training; and (5) developing active ties with the local business community.  
• Continuing underemployment of individuals with ASD are due to the disconnect between the potential of adult learners with ASD and 1) the resources of the systems designed to provide programmatic support; 2) the absence of a legislative entitlement to services as an adult; 3) inadequate or inappropriate transition planning; and, to some extent 4) limited interest in supporting adult learners in general and, in particular, those with greater cognitive or behavior challenges. |
| Enhancing job-site training of supported workers with autism: a reemphasis on simulation | L. Perry Lattimore, Marsha B. Parsons and Dennis H. Reid | 2006 | • The study compared job-site plus simulation training for teaching job skills to four supported workers with autism to provision of training exclusively on the job. Job-site training occurred in a small publishing company during the regular work routine, and simulation training occurred in an adult education site for people with severe disabilities.  
• For 3 of the 4 individuals, job-site plus simulation training resulted in a higher level of skill or more rapid skill acquisition than did job-site-only training. Results suggested that job-site training, the assumed best practice for teaching vocational skills, is likely to be more effective if supplemented with simulation training. |
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
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<th>Key Findings</th>
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| "I Do That for Everybody": Supervising Employees With Autism        | David Hagner and Bernard F. Cooney | 2005 | - The supervisors of 14 successfully employed individuals with autism were interviewed to examine their supervisory practices and their perceptions of employees with autism.  
- Three supervisors recommended that employers be provided with job try-out opportunities so that they might “give it a chance” and see for themselves that autism is not a barrier to employment. Two supervisors mentioned the need to be direct and precise in communicating with an employee with autism, two supervisors emphasized the need to look at each job and each potential employee individually, and two supervisors recommended treating employees with autism “normally,” including holding an employee with autism accountable “like you hold anyone else accountable.”  
- Other individual recommendations included (a) remembering to focus on the end result—getting the job done—rather than insisting on one particular way of getting something done, (b) being willing to commit up-front company staff time until the appropriate supports and job structure are in place, and (c) making sure consultation and back-up assistance from a disability support organization are available to the employer.  
- Efforts to identify “good” employers and assess individual supervisory and management styles should be a critical component of the job search. |
| Competitive employment for people with autism: Correlates of successful closure in competitive and supported employment | James Schaller and Nancy K. Yang | 2005 | - Customers with autism may need varying levels of support across a variety of domains including behavioral issues, communication and social skills, responses to change, and instructional strategies. A lack of support may result in productivity problems or social or behavioral issues, while too much support may inhibit the individual’s growth in the job.  
- Decision-making about levels of support for a customer with autism requires collecting comprehensive information from a variety of sources across several contexts, including employment sites and the community in general. This process often needs to be ongoing as an individual responds to the job and the environment.  
- Multicultural training for rehabilitation counselors would help improve outcomes for all individuals. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Autism, employment, and the role of occupational therapy</th>
<th>Leisa C. Capo</th>
<th>2001</th>
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<td>• In addition to assessment, job development and job placement/training can be performed by an occupational therapist.</td>
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<td>• Occupational therapists can evaluate environmental supports and barriers and identify natural supports.</td>
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<td>• Occupational therapists can train natural supports, such as coworkers, supervisors, or family members in the use of adaptive equipment or techniques, environmental adaptations, sensory needs of the person, and compensatory strategies to help the person perform job tasks.</td>
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<td>• As a team member in the supported employment process, occupational therapists can train job coaches about adaptive equipment, sensory and motor needs and compensations, and collaborate with other interdisciplinary team members on success and needs of the person on the job site. This may include providing advocacy in the work environment and community to employers and co-workers.</td>
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<tr>
<th>TEACCH-Supported Employment Program</th>
<th>Jill Hinton Keel, Gary B. Mesibov and Amy V. Woods</th>
<th>1997</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Division TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children and Adults).</td>
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<td>• Division TEACCH utilizes three different models of supported employment: individual placement model, dispersed enclave model, and mobile crew model. Within each of these models, there is an emphasis on identifying and utilizing individual strengths and interests, identifying appropriate jobs, and providing necessary long-term support services.</td>
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<td>• Successful characteristics of workplaces for individuals with autism: jobs are predictable and can be adapted to a schedule for the individual; receptivity of the employers and coworkers. TEACCH staff provide information and training to everyone at the job sites; existence of clearly defined work tasks and work areas with few distractions.</td>
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<td>• The most important factor in the success of Division TEACCH’s supported employment program is its emphasis on long-term support services.</td>
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### Employment Articles Addressing Multiple Disabilities

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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Key Employment Ideas</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Place to Be, Not a Place to Go</td>
<td>Tera Roberts</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>- In terms of employment, what is important is informed choice, a willingness to take a few risks, and a safety net of support.</td>
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<td>- A provider must employ specialized professionals to provide the functions of job placement, job coaching, and on-going supported employment services.</td>
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<td>- Staff must have specialized training in job development methods, job training, task analyses, and they should have supervisory experience in varied trades.</td>
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<td>- An experienced employment staff represents an agency that values informed choice, a little risk taking, and is willing to provide the necessary resources of support. Provider agencies that assign supported employment or vocational services to residential staff or some employee that doesn’t seem busy enough, will never have long-term success.</td>
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<td>- Employment and vocational programs must also reflect competency in funding sources and compliance to scores of regulations.</td>
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<td>- The best employment programs stand ready to help families identify potential funding sources for services and explain any requirements for accessing those services.</td>
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Choosing Employment: Factors That Impact Employment Decisions for Individuals With Intellectual Disability

Jaimie Ciulla Timmons, Allison Cohen Hall, Jennifer Bose, Ashley Wolfe and Jean Winsor

2011

- Qualitative interviews with individuals with ID, 7 working in sheltered workshops and 9 working in the community, and an employment support provider and family member who could add additional information.

- Families were influential because they (a) role modeled employment and (b) instilled the belief that work was an expectation of adulthood.

- Teachers and other high-school staff provided the first exposure to work that often set the individual in a particular employment-related direction. These early employment experiences shaped the way individuals thought about employment, influencing preferences, career planning, and self-confidence related to work.

- The community rehabilitation providers’ culture affects the way staff perceives and offers employment options. Those that offer sheltered employment along with community-based employment opportunities can affect development of good employment skills since sheltered workshops are seen as a fall-back for those who become unemployed, even if they are not really a good option.

- The job developer emerged as the most influential person during the job search, often directing decision-making about employment choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
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</table>
| Community-Based Summer Work Experiences of Adolescents With High-Incidence Disabilities | Erik W. Carter, Audrey A. Trainor, Nicole Ditchman, Beth Swedeen and Laura Owens | 2011 | • Partnerships with vocational rehabilitation and community agencies may be particularly important for supporting youth during transition time (Certo & Luecking, 2006) and schools can play a connecting role in linking students and their families to these formal supports.  
• It is important to expand the secondary curriculum to address a broader range of transition-related skills (e.g., self-determination, vocational, social) that prepare youth for adulthood.  
• Connecting youth to employment experiences during the spring semester allows time to familiarize students with their jobs, establish coworker supports, address unexpected problems, and enable youth to become more independent. At the same time, such experiences—if successful—may raise or reinforce summer employment expectations among youth and their parents. |
| Connecting Employers With People Who Have Intellectual Disability            | Richard G. Luecking                           | 2011 | • Studies of employer views on people with intellectual disability reveal three distinct tendencies: negative or inadvertent stereotyping, disengagement from any process that might put them in contact with job seekers who have intellectual disability, or unfavorable hiring disposition based on a specific experience. Unless and until employers are actually exposed to specific individuals with intellectual disability, they are unlikely to regard them as people who could contribute to their operations.  
• Even when employers express an affirmative desire to hire people with disabilities, they often experience difficulty finding applicants or understanding the array of disability-specific entities that have a role in promoting and facilitating employment.  
• Employment service providers do not speak the same language as employers, and disability employment service providers and employers use different success metrics. (Use project SEARCH as a way to better connect employers and employment service providers.)  
• Attention to demand-side activities can yield more effective and sustained connections between employers and people with intellectual disability. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of a Multi-site Transition to Adulthood Program for Youth with Disabilities</th>
<th>Brewer David, Karpur Arun, Pi Sukyeong, et al.</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Model Transition Project (MTP) in New York State provided resources and a policy framework to encourage representatives from local education agencies, vocational rehabilitation, community rehabilitation providers, business and industry, postsecondary education, and other human services agencies to engage in collaborative service delivery in an effort to improve the preparation and outcomes of transition-age youth.</td>
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<td>• The RFP requirement that MTP grantees had to engage at least four community partners may have afforded students additional opportunities for employment and self-determination instruction than what might typically occur during students’ transition years.</td>
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<td>• MTP students with measurable post-secondary goals in their IEP were twice as likely to participate in work experiences as their peers without measurable post-secondary goals.</td>
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<td>• In some states and localities, VR agencies report having counselors with dedicated caseloads of only transition-age youth or counselors co-located within secondary schools.</td>
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<tr>
<th>National call for organizational change from sheltered to integrated employment</th>
<th>Patricia Rogan and Susan Rinne</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<td>• The purpose of the article is to contend that organizational change from sheltered to integrated employment is not only possible but necessary, and a federal Employment First agenda must be advanced. Findings are reported from interviews with senior managers from 10 organizations that have shifted their service delivery to community employment.</td>
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<td>• The federal government, through the Medicaid program, continues to spend four times more money on segregated adult day programs, including day habilitation and prevocational services, than on supported employment, and there is no preference for integrated employment within the Medicaid program.</td>
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<td>• Changeover process included: strategic planning, forming a leadership/change management team, conducting extensive staff training, flattening the organization's structure, redefining position descriptions, utilizing a person-centered planning, involving key stakeholders at all points, diversifying funding (blended/braided), connecting and communicating with the community, benchmarking, gathering data, and ceasing subminimum wage certificates.</td>
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<td>• At the state level, one director indicated that the state must set employment expectations in all of their policies and procedures. Funding is critical.</td>
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<td>• Need to develop an employment first policy at the state level for success, align policy, funding, and practice; develop quality indicators for service providers; gather and use data for decision-making and accountability; expand and support comprehensive transition services; and provide training and support for organizational change in every state.</td>
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### Person centered planning in a transition program for Bronx youth with disabilities

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<th>Author(s)</th>
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| Erin E. Croke and Ashleigh B. Thompson | 2011 | - The program included five key interventions: 1) Saturday morning workshops which included a mix of recreation activities such as sports or drama, as well as self-determination and pre-vocational curricula; 2) SSA benefits counseling focusing on providing counseling about unique SSA waivers available to project participants to ensure that youth and their families understood the impact of work on their benefits; 3) Person centered planning entailing the promotion of self-advocacy on the part of the youth and their parents by identifying educational, career and quality of life goals; 4) Summer and after school jobs offered through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), a city-wide program funded by NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD); and 5) Referrals and follow-up during which youth were eligible to receive 10 additional months of more individualized services, including but not limited to: career development support, after-school jobs, academic supports, continuing education courses, benefits counseling, and referrals to appropriate services.  
- Scaling up the person centered planning (PCP) program was difficult.  
- Transition planning for youth with disabilities must begin earlier than age 17 or 18.  
- In order to help youth reach their unique goals, interagency collaboration is essential.  
- Projects administering PCP should broker partnerships with other service providers in the community, and establish referral processes for connecting youth with supplemental services that will help them reach their goals. Sharing the PCP with the youth’s school guidance counselor or transition coordinator may also be helpful. |

### Personal assistance services in the workplace: A literature review

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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Key Points</th>
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| Denetta L. Dowler, Tatiana I. Solovieva and Richard T. Walls | 2011 | - Financing personal assistant services (PAS) in the workplace is complex and is a source of confusion for employees, employers, and service providers.  
- Current mechanisms for paying for PAS in the workplace are out-of-pocket private expenses, employer contributions, and public funding. Public coverage may come from (a) state vocational rehabilitation agency, (b) Supplemental Security Income (SSI), (c) Social Security Work Incentives including Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE), (d) state Medicaid waiver funding, or (e) Medicaid via the state Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) authorized under the 1999 Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act.  
- PAS can lead to successful employment of people with disabilities when other accommodations cannot provide adequate workplace support. Additionally, the evolution of workplace PAS is dependent on development of realistic PAS policy and funding options. |
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| Perspectives of Adolescents With Disabilities on Summer Employment and Community Experiences | Audrey A. Trainor, Erik W. Carter, Beth Swedeen, Laura Owens, Odessa Cole and Shane Smith | 2011 | - It is important to recognize and incorporate adolescents’ motivations to earn money when planning for summer. If unpaid experiences are more abundantly available and adults believe that these offer stepping stones to future work or postsecondary educational opportunities, this should be made explicitly clear through conversation and planning, given that teenagers may not readily recognize these longer-term benefits.  
- To increase involvement in community activities, teenagers may need help identifying and connecting with these potential opportunities. For adolescents with disabilities who are from families with limited economic resources, guidance may be needed to access financial support for camp fees, summer excursions, and expenses associated with sports participation.  
- Self-determination instruction has consistently been identified as an evidence-based practice with positive effects on postsecondary transition for adolescents with disabilities (Algozzine et al., 2001). If not already doing so, transition teams should consider implementing a self-determination curriculum and assessing students’ present levels of performance in this area.  
- A component of effective transition programming may be the identification of an adult who can fulfill the roles of job coach and mentor.  
- Adolescents with disabilities may also benefit from explicit support and guidance in the development of interpersonal relationships and social skills that promote positive interactions with coworkers, supervisors, and other community members. |
| Waging a Living: Career Development and Long-Term Employment Outcomes for young Adults With Disabilities | Lauren Lindstrom, Bonnie Doren and Jennifer Miesch | 2011 | - Participants benefitted from the presence of a set of services and supports offered through the high school. All participants had transition specialists or teachers who served as advocates and mentors.  
- Individual attributes such as self-efficacy, motivation, and coping skills played a clear role in the ability to obtain and maintain living wage employment over time.  
- With a few notable exceptions, most participants worked at minimum wage jobs in the early transition years and only were able to advance through ongoing education, stable work experiences, determination, and persistence.  
- Adult mentors helped youth with disabilities successfully complete high school, linked them to the world of work, and supported the process of independent exploration and decision-making.  
- We need to be cautious and ensure that secondary school reform efforts designed to promote rigor and increase academic performance do not produce unintended and potentially negative consequences for youth with disabilities preparing for adult roles in the community since academic difficulties do not mean that employment will not be successful. |
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<th>Title</th>
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| Why Don’t Employers Hire and Retain Workers with Disabilities?     | H. Stephen Kaye, Lita H. Jans and Erica C. Jones | 2011 | • Public policy strategies to improving hiring and retention of workers with disabilities: 1) accommodations subsidized or entirely paid for by a government agency, 2) no-cost, outside help with solving disability- and accommodation-related issues, 3) tax breaks for hiring and retaining workers with disabilities  
• Incentives could include tax breaks or subsidies for new workers, or programs similar to those offering incentives to minority- or women-owned suppliers or contractors: “Get them to hire them first and see their abilities. Then at least the worker has a foot in the door.”  
• The single solution most often endorsed by respondents is increased and improved training for supervisors and managers on disability issues. There was strong support for sources of expertise that managers and supervisors could turn to when needed including government funded or other freely available experts from outside the organization who could come in and assist with solving specific accommodation problems.  
• Organizations providing ADA and disability training to managers, supervisors, and human resources personnel need to expand their focus to emphasize not only legal requirements but also problem solving strategies, information resources, and concrete solutions to accommodation and disability issues.  
• A greater emphasis needs to be placed on communicating to employers that people with disabilities can be effective, productive, and reliable employees; one approach would be to feature employed people with diverse disabilities as trainers or as participants in the training.  
• Advice to employers should also include guidance on procedures they could implement to improve the accommodation process and ensure a more hospitable workplace for employees with disabilities. |
| Collaboration between Supported Employment and Human Resource Services: Strategies for Success | Michal Post, Camille Campbell and Tom Heinz      | 2010 | • Two case studies are presented: one involving a successful collaboration with county human resource managers in negotiating a change in the hiring process and the other discussing the results of a negotiated agreement between the state level WorkAbility Program office and a company’s national human resource office. Both cases resulted in the hiring of individuals with disabilities.  
• Use of Project SEARCH in public sector job. |
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| Does Supported Employment Work?                                       | Melayne Morgan McInnes, Orgul Ozturk Demet, Suzanne McDermott, et al.  | 2010 | • The purpose of the article was to investigate whether job coaching leads to stable employment in community settings.  
• The supported employment program has four components: (1) assessing skills and developing a plan for achieving competitive employment; (2) identifying a job suitable for the individual; (3) placement and job-site training; and (4) follow-up.  
• Job coaching services provided by state disability boards.  
• Evaluations of job coaching programs suggest that they are effective and cost-effective relative to the alternative of sheltered workshops or other services. |
| Employment and Volunteering for Adults With Intellectual Disability Employment and Volunteering | David Trembat, Susan Balandin, Roger J. Stancliffe, et al.               | 2010 | • Adults with intellectual disabilities should have access to the same volunteering opportunities as their peers without disability along with the support they require in order to volunteer successfully.  
• Volunteer agencies and supported employment programs alike must clearly differentiate between situations in which adults with ID are offered the opportunity to volunteer and situations in which they are required to complete work experience as part of an employment program. Furthermore, the purpose and likely outcomes of the practical experiences provided by these programs must be clearly articulated.  
• Based on the limited research to date, volunteering alone appears unlikely to lead to employment for most people with disability.  
• Family members and staff need to explore and present all three options of paid work, voluntary work, and work experience to work-age adults with ID. |
| Impact of the Special Education Vocational Education Program (VEP) on Student Career Success | Nelly E. Ofoegbu and Reza Azarmsa                                         | 2010 | • The Vocational Education Program (VEP) was established by the special education department in the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) in an effort to assist students with disabilities to graduate from high school and be gainfully employed. This study investigated the impact of VEP on students’ careers success after graduation.  
• The Special Education Vocational Education Program provides designated instruction and services (DIS) to students with disabilities. These services are provided so that students can make progress in their vocational education program.  
• The Special Day Class (SDC) teacher and/or the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher are the case coordinator for students receiving the services.  
• There are currently 7 career transition specialists in LBUSD. |
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Summary</th>
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| Microenterprise Options for People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: An Outcome Evaluation Microenterprise | James W. Conroy, Charles S. Ferris and Ron Irvine | 2010 | - This article reports on twenty-seven people with intellectual and developmental disability who chose to engage in microenterprise.  
- Participants reported overall enhanced quality of life (as compared to their previous unemployment) and enhanced quality of work life.  
- Microenterprise offers an alternative that promises to be satisfying, meaningful, enjoyable, and may cost significantly less to implement than traditional sheltered workshops and adult day activity centers. |
| Special education teachers' perceptions of benefits, barriers, and components of community-based vocational instruction | Rah Kyung Kim and Stacy K. Dymond | 2010 | - Teachers rated the following components of community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) within the top 10 they used most frequently and believed are most important: (a) offering opportunities for students to perform a variety of job tasks, (b) providing students with CBVI more than 2 times a week, (c) providing students with opportunities to interact with employees without disabilities, (d) developing IEP goals for CBVI collaboratively with a team, (e) providing classroom-based instruction prior to community placement, (f) providing CBVI based on the needs of students, (g) providing experiences that reflect the specific job demands of the local business, and (h) providing instruction and/or supervision during CBVI at all times.  
- In small sized schools (i.e., 500 students), it appears that greater emphasis needs to be placed on providing students with input into the types of CBVI experiences in which they participate and increasing the variety of jobs available to sample.  
- Preservice and inservice training on CBVI is essential to ensuring that teachers are successful in developing and implementing effective programs and possess the knowledgeable to overcome obstacles that may arise. |
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<tr>
<th>Tips for Transition</th>
<th>Ryan O. Kellems and Mary E. Morningstar</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<td>• All Transition Tips were uploaded into a searchable database on the Transition Coalition web site (<a href="http://www.transitioncoalition.org">www.transitioncoalition.org</a>).</td>
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<td>• Examples of tips: 1) Organize a transition group that meets once a month; 2) Start the transition process early by having realistic transition goals in place by the ninth and 10th grade; 3) Use a transition interview with students beginning at age 13; 4) Student-led IEP with a focus on transition goals; 5) Recruit students with disabilities who are currently in college; 6) Organize a peer-mentoring group in your high school for students with disabilities; 6) Use a variety of strategies to gather information; 7) Use video modeling to teach social skills and work-related skills; 8) Use picture technology with students who are nonreaders; 9) Use a checklist at the IEP of students ages 18 to 21 to assist the student and parents; 10) Develop transition brochures and tip sheets; 11) Get parents involved before the student’s 16th birthday; 12) Hold a transition fair each year; 13) Organize a district transition team made up of teachers, administrators, and a parent mentor; 14) Implement community-based instruction; 15) Develop job shadowing work programs.</td>
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<th>Community integration: Current issues in cognitive and vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ABI</th>
<th>Paul Wehman, Tony Gentry, Michael West and Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<td>• Vocational rehabilitation and supported employment providers need access to education and resources that will prepare them to offer supported employment to individuals with acquired brain injury (ABI).</td>
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<td>• To improve access, information about possible return to work (RTW) services should be provided to individuals with ABI and family members early in the postacute recovery stage.</td>
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<td>• Vocational rehabilitation professionals must embrace the basic principle of RTW services: everyone is employable when provided with the right type, level, and intensity of support and when efforts are made to help them locate workplaces and positions in which they will be valued and accommodated. Those charged with overseeing RTW efforts must view employment as a process rather than an event.</td>
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<td>• Self-employment, telework, temporary staffing, and independent contracting work arrangements be developed and that models be applied that go beyond traditional employment.</td>
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| Conversations that Matter: Engaging Communities to Expand Employment | Erik W. Carter, Laura Owens and Beth Swedeen                             | 2009 | - Common barriers to promoting youth employment, including the perceived inexperience of the student, the unwillingness of local employers to hire youth with disabilities, limited awareness by teachers and families of the array of work-related opportunities and resources that might exist in their communities, weak linkages between schools and community employers, and difficulty finding transportation and on-the-job supports.  
- The broader community needs to be more meaningfully and effectively engaged to substantively improve outcomes for youth with significant disabilities.  
- This article discusses a research project, which focused on developing effective, practical strategies ("community conversations") that schools and communities can use to expand employment opportunities and outcomes for transition-age youth with significant disabilities.  
- Community conversations were designed to: (1) foster dialogue centered on ways that schools, businesses, agencies, organizations, families, youth, and others could work together to broaden the job opportunities in their local community; and (2) identify new partners willing to collaborate with participating high schools in addressing youth employment.  
- When community conversations were followed by individualized planning and intentional connections to potential work and volunteer opportunities by school staff and families, youth with severe disabilities were significantly more likely to obtain summer jobs. |
| Exploring School-Employer Partnerships to Expand Career Development   | Erik W. Carter, Audrey A. Trainor, Orhan Cakiroglu, Odessa Cole, Beth   | 2009 | - The article reports the results of a survey of 135 chambers of commerce and other employer networks to examine (a) whether and how these networks have partnered previously with local high schools on 18 youth-focused career development activities, (b) the extent to which they would consider such involvement to be feasible, and (c) the influence of disability status of youth on their responses.  
- Chambers of commerce may constitute potential partners in youth-focused career development endeavors.  
- Chambers generally considered a number of youth-focused support activities to be fairly feasible.  
- When activities focused on youth with disabilities, respondents consistently considered the activities to be less feasible. This finding has implications for how schools approach employer networks or design career development programming.  
- Chambers of commerce represent just one of the many other informal or formal networks that exist in most communities (e.g., Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, and Rotary clubs).  
- Schools should consider how they might develop or strengthen partnerships with service and fraternal organizations, volunteer and non-profit networks, faith communities, and other networks whose members represent a cross-section of the community and who may consider youth development efforts to be aligned with their mission and work. |
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| Minimizing the effect of TBI-related physical sequelae on vocational return | Shane McNamee, William Walker, David X. Cifu and Paul H. Wehman         | 2009 | • The employment limitations faced by many patients with traumatic brain injury (TBI) can best be overcome through clever job search, job redesign, and community linkages with business and industry that are willing to partner in helping the patient with TBI regain employment.  
• Physicians must focus on employment outcomes in real jobs and not settle for volunteer work, sheltered work, or assessment and planning. |
| Quality Indicators for Competitive Employment Outcomes: What Special Education Teachers Need to Know in Transition Planning | Valerie Ann Brooke, Grant Revell and Paul Wehman                       | 2009 | • Special education teachers, youth with disabilities, families, community rehabilitation program (CRP) staff providing employment services, and others involved in assisting transitioning youth can benefit from a set of research-referenced quality indicators for measuring the effectiveness of employment services. This article describes a program review instrument that includes seven quality indicators for competitive employment services, as well as probe questions for assessing each indicator and program improvement strategies.  
• Seven Core Indicators of Quality Competitive Employment Services: 1. Use of benefits planning; 2. Individualization of job goal; 3. Quality of competitive job; 4. Consistency of job status with that of co-workers; 5. Employment in an integrated job setting; 6. Quality of job-site supports and fading; 7. Presence of ongoing support services for job retention and career development. |
| Step by Step: Creating a Community-Based Transition Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities | Melissa A. Hartman                                                     | 2009 | • Community-based transition programs (CBTPs) aim to meet the needs of the growing number of postgraduates who are entitled to special education services until age 22. The critical elements of a CBTP include student-centered planning, functional community-referenced skill development, connections with adult service providers, participation in employment before graduation, school-business partnerships, training in self-determination and advocacy, and training or college opportunities.  
• The transition program was created by the county’s interagency transition council. The team consisted of representatives from the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Community Services Board, the local ARC, and other local postsecondary service providers.  
• Using natural environments and teachable moments, the teachers and job coaches were able to address students’ needs and reinforce appropriate work and community behaviors. |
### Survey results from a national survey of community rehabilitation providers holding special wage certificates

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<tr>
<td>Katherine J. Inge, Paul Wehman, Grant Revell, Doug Erickson, John Butterworth and Dana Gilmore</td>
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- The purpose of this paper is to present the findings from a national survey of a random sample of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that hold Special Wage Certificates established under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. 214(c). The intent of the survey was to identify the types of services provided, the trends in the employment services, and the factors that were perceived as inhibiting and facilitating integrated employment outcomes.
- The majority of individuals with significant disabilities continue to be served in segregated employment or non-work services provided by community rehabilitation programs and participation in these services is growing faster than participation in integrated employment.
- Many federal programs critical to persons with disabilities being successful in integrated employment do not in fact place an emphasis on funding integrated employment outcomes.
- There have been 29 customized employment projects that were conceived as a way for the generic One-Stop System to welcome and serve individuals with disabilities.

### The need for employment supports for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in North Carolina

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<td>Michael Maybee and Jim H. Swain</td>
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- North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS) has been funding long-term support services since the inception of supported employment within NC.
- Typically these services have been funded through a variety of sources, including but not limited to the Community Alternatives Program for Persons with Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (CAP-MR/DD) waiver and ADVP state funds. Funds are administered by Local Management Entities (LMEs) and their provider network. LMEs are county-led governing agencies charged with the oversight of human services provided at the local community level. They administer funds allocated from DMHDDSAS and subsequently contract for service provision through private providers.
- Providers of supported employment services in NC have long complained of inconsistency in funding LTS, and, in some cases, no funding at all.
- Nationally and in NC, a significant barrier to the seamless delivery of supported employment has long been its multiple funding sources and a service delivery model which is responsible to separate divisions of government.
- There must be a statewide, seamless, designated, and protected funding stream for the long-term support services that are essential to the success of supported employment.
### The Other Three Months

**Erik W. Carter, Beth Swedeen and Audrey A. Trainor**

2009

- Summer provides valuable but often untapped opportunities for youth to explore or deepen their interests, preferences, and strengths; accrue valuable work-related skills and experiences; and establish connections to their communities. At the same time, it is clear that summer opportunities do not happen automatically for many youth with disabilities.

- Includes the Summer Activities Planning Tool—which contains a structured set of questions and considerations.

- For intentional planning to lead to actual summer experiences, key people can be invited to contribute to the conversation including the youth his/herself, family members, teachers, and community members.

- Intentionally link summer employment to big picture career desires.

- The final step of this intentional planning process involves designating responsibilities for each team member, including—and especially—the youth.

### The Time to Begin Looking for Community Rehabilitation Programs Offering Vocational Services Is... Now!

**Jennifer Curran**

2009

- Community Rehabilitation service providers are organizations designed specifically to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for work and finding and maintaining jobs in their communities. Often, they are the links between employers in the community and individuals with disabilities seeking employment. A good Community Rehabilitation Program offering vocational services provides an all-inclusive approach to the job seeker. When seeking a program for transitioning students, it is important to identify programs that strive to provide individualized services.

- Recommendations when looking for a community rehabilitation service provider: 1) Start early; 2) Contact state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and local community rehabilitation programs; and 3) Check out state, national and international rehabilitation organizations like the state vocational rehabilitation agency, state Departments of Education, and online resources to find providers in the area.
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<th>Title</th>
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| Seamless Transition and Long-Term Support for Individuals With Severe Intellectual Disabilities | Nicholas J. Certo, Lou Brown, Susan Courey, Denise Belanger, Richard G. Luecking and Sara Murphy | 2008 | - The service delivery model for transition must shift from the public school as sole provider to one based on service integration across multiple systems. School districts must integrate their staff and resources with those of a community rehabilitation agency, the state rehabilitation system, and the state developmental disabilities system before graduation to jointly produce meaningful work outcomes and to secure authorization for continued support after graduation.  
- The locus of services must shift to a total community immersion approach with students accessing preferred work and off-work activities on a full-time basis in natural functional community environments.  
- IDEIA needs to be strengthened to explicitly encourage school districts to subcontract with private nonprofit agencies at the point of transition to produce direct-hire, individualized employment and adult living outcomes and to add emphasis to the need to secure authorization for long-term support for individuals with severe intellectual disabilities as they exit public school. |
| Trends in Outcomes of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Adults With Developmental Disabilities: 1995-2005 | Alberto Migliore and John Butterworth                                    | 2008 | - This article describes national trends in outcomes of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, with a focus on adults with developmental disabilities during the period of 1995 to 2005. Findings show that the VR program has made substantial progress in excluding extended employment from the array of possible employment closures. Efforts are needed, however, to increase the number of people placed in integrated employment and the earnings at closure while reducing the time frame from application to closure.  
- The Rehabilitation Act should be rigorously interpreted to prioritize self-sufficiency of VR recipients  
- Recommendations: 1) Identify state VR agencies that produce greater outcomes, and investigate whether these practices can be disseminated; 2) Enhance leadership and values of VR personnel; 3) Aggressively reach out to people with disabilities in facility-based programs; 4) Enhance collaboration with the MR/DD system; 5) Improve monitoring outcomes; and, 6) Increase efforts during negative socioeconomic trends.  
- A possible avenue for improving VR outcomes is to focus on leadership and values of the VR personnel. Clear goals and a clear priority for integrated employment were found to be crucial components in enhancing outcomes of state MR/DD agencies, another nationwide program designed to assist people with DD. |
Appendix C: Preference Assessment

Preference Assessment Outline

In 2009, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Autism Services (BAS), Department of Public Welfare, commissioned the statewide Autism Services, Education, Resources and Training (ASERT) Collaborative to complete a needs assessment of individuals and families living with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Pennsylvania. With more than 3,500 responses, this is the largest and most comprehensive survey of individuals with ASD and their caregivers to date in the nation. The results of this survey have been compiled into several reports that are available at http://www.PAautism.org.

One of the reports specifically focuses on the un- and under-employment of adults with ASD and the challenges they face in the workforce. Finding and maintaining employment is a critical component of improving quality of life. It contributes to meaningful community participation, independent living, and less reliance upon taxpayer-funded programs. There are very limited employment support services that address the unique needs of adults with ASD, if they are available at all. The overwhelming majority of adults with ASD in Pennsylvania shared their struggles to find and maintain employment. They also described barriers to finding and keeping employment.

In response to the expressed needs of adults with ASD across Pennsylvania, the Eastern Region ASERT has been developing trainings for employers and employees on how to hire and work with individuals with ASD and the benefits of doing so. The Eastern ASERT completed a preference assessment of statewide companies and businesses on the types of trainings that would be most beneficial and convenient for them. The preference assessment included several questions to ascertain how to develop a training for employers and employees that would be most beneficial to them and their business. Below are the results from this preference assessment.
Business Profile

A total of 22 businesses were selected to contact to complete the preference assessment. These businesses represented a variety of domains and areas of expertise and were comprised of both national corporations with businesses across the state of Pennsylvania as well as small local businesses with community ties. Out of 22 businesses contacted, only 7 businesses answered preference assessment questions, returned phone calls, or arranged better times to set up phone calls. Of those 7 businesses, 3 were small and/or privately owned businesses and 4 were individual sites of larger corporations. After several attempts to contact individual sites of national businesses and being referred to corporate offices, it was determined that it would be best to begin with small local businesses with community ties. Below is an overview of the businesses contacted.

Overall, a vast majority of individual business sites that are part of larger business corporations (e.g. CVS, RiteAid, PetSmart, hotels, national supermarkets, etc.) would not answer any questions and referred to their corporate offices, despite the fact that the questions asked were directed towards individual store managers or hiring managers. Due to legal reasons, managers and contact people at these businesses rarely answered questions, with the exception of Giant Eagle, Ten Thousand Villages, and Holiday Inn. The representative contacted at Walgreen’s was from their corporate office and suggested that some of her answers might not be representative of individual store managers’ opinions. Of the individual sites of national businesses who responded, the representative at Ten Thousand Villages and the Holiday Inn had community connections or knew someone with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The Goodwill thrift store, Delaware County Health Department, and Green Earth Beverage System also had community connections or knew someone with ASD. The corporate office of Walgreen’s was the only corporate office to return or reschedule a phone call.

Total businesses contacted: 22
Types of businesses
6 supermarkets
Giant Eagle
Genuardi’s
ACME
Trader Joe’s
Whole Foods
Wegman’s
3 pharmacies
CVS
RiteAid
Walgreens
3 hotels
Holiday Inn
Radisson
Best Western
3 specialty stores/businesses
Ten Thousand Villages
GameStop
Green Earth Beverage System
2 convenience stores
Wawa
Sheetz
2 Goodwill thrift stores
Goodwill – Thorndale, PA
Good Samaritan Thrift Store
1 clothing store – Boscov’s
1 pet store – PetSmart
1 county health department – Delaware County Health Department
Individual sites of national businesses selected randomly by county in the ASERT Eastern Region

Total businesses spoken with: 7
2 specialty stores/businesses
Ten Thousand Villages
Green Earth Beverage System
1 Goodwill thrift store
1 hotel – Holiday Inn
1 county health department – Delaware County
1 supermarket – Giant Eagle
1 pharmacy – Walgreen’s

Business Responses
Businesses were asked 7 questions relating to their preferences for a training.
Length of Training:

Of the businesses who responded to the preference assessment, most requested a 60-minute training for employers for hiring individuals with ASD. However, national businesses also indicated that there are a variety of trainings offered or mandated within companies depending on department and that it would be best to go through particular departments to complete trainings. Trainings may come from different departments (i.e. a training for cleaning staff or front desk clerks in a hotel) or may be applied to certain positions (i.e. pharmacists or cashiers in a pharmacy). Different departments within a corporation may have different trainings to attend. For situations where employers and employees would be completing the training during work hours (as opposed to as a new employee training), businesses indicated that a shorter training (30 minutes) would be preferable. Businesses also suggested integrating training into new employee training programs.

Training Content:

In terms of training content, businesses would like information on what ASD looks like and how it manifests in adults, what types of jobs would be good for adults with ASD, how adults with ASD would adapt to changing work situations (and how to adapt the work environment to individuals), how adults with ASD would interact with coworkers and customers, and how to best support employees with ASD. Businesses also indicated that it would be helpful to have some sort of pre- and post-assessment of employees’ knowledge about ASD. Businesses were also interested in an opportunity for a question and answer session, whether that be as part of an onsite training in person or as a forum to accompany an online training.

Capacity for Training:

Most businesses are interested in online trainings that employees can complete at their own pace. Online trainings could also be transferred to videos for large corporations to use. Even the businesses who requested onsite trainings suggested that not all businesses would have the capacity for that. It’s recommended that the training be primarily online with an option of an in-person onsite training that businesses can request.
Follow-up Visits and PBS Call Line:

Most businesses felt that follow-up visits after the training would not be necessary, but it might be nice to have someone to check in now and then. All businesses were interested in the availability of a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Call Line that they could utilize should the need arise. Some businesses indicated this might not be necessary if an individual employee with ASD has a job coach, but all acknowledged that an available phone line would be beneficial and very helpful.

Incentives for Hiring Individuals with ASD:

Generally, the businesses did not differentiate between incentives for hiring employees generally and hiring employees with ASD. All the businesses felt that knowing that there was a place in their company for an individual with ASD would be an incentive for hiring them. Businesses seemed most concerned with knowing that there would be appropriate work for individuals with ASD to do and room for individuals to grow within the businesses. Most businesses were vaguely aware of tax benefits and incentives and would be interesting in learning about them, but they did not list them when asked about incentives for hiring individuals with ASD.

Important Findings

The preference assessment yielded important information that would be helpful in thinking about implementing employer trainings across the state of Pennsylvania.

Engage Small Local Businesses

Given the difficulty trying to connect with managers at individual sites of national corporations, results from the preference assessment suggest that implementing employer training programs would be best started with small local businesses. These businesses tended to have an investment in the communities around them and were the most eager to meet the needs of their employees, including supporting them and helping them to grow within the business. This finding is supported by information learned from collaborating with Virginia Commonwealth University as well. Smaller businesses also afford individuals with ASD the opportunity to work in a smaller, more
personalized environment that may be preferable to a large corporation with little individualized attention. All national businesses indicated that it would be necessary to coordinate trainings through their corporate offices.

Provide Online Training with the Potential to Transfer to Video

Most businesses requested online trainings that employees could complete at their convenience. These online trainings could also be incorporated into videos to be disseminated to businesses. Some businesses did prefer onsite in-person trainings, so it would be advantageous to offer these to businesses who request it.

Provide Forum for Questions and Answers

It is difficult for business managers to anticipate the questions their employees will have surrounding ASD. It would be extremely helpful to have a forum, whether a question and answer session as part of an in-person onsite training or as a question and answer forum on the ASERT website, where managers and employees can present questions either pre- or post-training.

Establish PBS Call Line

All businesses indicated that it would be valuable to have a PBS Call Line for consultative support that they could utilize when/if necessary. Clinicians or staff who would answer calls would not necessarily need to make site visits, however having this as an option would be helpful.

Inform Businesses on Potential Jobs and Tasks for Individuals with ASD and How to Best Support Individuals in the Workplace

Both in terms of content and incentives, businesses are eager to learn what types of jobs they have available for individuals with ASD and how to best support individuals with ASD in the workplace. Providing employers with this type of information is crucial for employers to best meet the needs of employees with ASD and provide them with the appropriate job opportunity, ultimately helping to ensure success within the workplace.