



## Preparing For Work

Preparing for work is an ongoing process and begins when you are young. This may involve starting with chores, doing small jobs for neighbors, or volunteering.

- Volunteer opportunities are a great way to gain experience. Volunteering will help you develop skills, and learn what you want to do in the future. It will also allow you to explore different interest areas.

It is important to know about your medical condition and understand how it may affect your work. For example, if you have a condition that makes it difficult to lift heavy objects, there are certain jobs that may not be a good fit.

- Talk with your medical team to get a better understanding of what may be the best options for you.
- You will need to learn to advocate for any accommodations you may need in the work place. This is why it is so important to understand your medical condition completely.
- If you are in high school, speak with your school counselor to discuss preparing for a job or finding a local vocation program. Ask about volunteer opportunities and work study programs during high school.
- Some students may be eligible for The STEP- Secondary Transition Experience Program that offers job training and skill building for high school students 14-21 years old.
- If you plan to go to college, contact the high school career center to help you with your job search. Through financial aid, you may be eligible for a work-study program.
- Each state has a Department of Vocation Rehabilitation through the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). This department assists people with disabilities to prepare for employment and career goals.

Any person with a disability can apply. Eligibility will depend on whether your disability is an obstacle to employment.

- Some young adults may want extra career counseling support to help assist in building a resume, practicing interview skills, and searching for a job.



## Employment Resources

### **Ability Links**

Wheaton, IL  
630-909-7440  
[www.abilitylinks.org](http://www.abilitylinks.org)

### **Anixter Center: Employment Services**

North/Northwest suburbs:  
847-472-9355  
Chicago: 773-973-7900  
<https://anixter.org/>

### **Community Support Services Bridges Volunteer Program**

Brookfield, IL  
708-354-4547  
[www.communitysupportservices.org](http://www.communitysupportservices.org)  
\*Youth with developmental disabilities

### **Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation**

Locate your local office  
800-843-6154  
<http://www.dhs.state.il.us>

### **Donka, Inc.**

Wheaton, IL  
630-665-8169  
[www.donkainc.org](http://www.donkainc.org)  
Free for DuPage county residents

### **Illinois WorkNet Center**

<http://www.illinoisworknet.com>

### **Illinois Department of Employment Security**

<http://www.ides.illinois.gov>

### **Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)**

847-412-4300  
<https://www.jcfs.org/jvs>  
855-INFO.JVS

### **One Summer Chicago**

<https://www.onesummerchicago.org/>  
Summer jobs for Chicago teens 14-21 years old



**Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities: Employment Services**

Chicago, IL  
312-744-7050  
[www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org)

**Shirley Ryan Ability Lab: Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Chicago, IL  
312-238-6800  
<https://www.sralab.org/services/vocational-rehabilitation>

**Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program**

800-807-6962  
<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29983>  
Help make decisions about going to work if you receive SSI/SSDI

**Youth Job Center of Illinois**

Evanston, IL  
847-864-5627  
<http://www.youthjobcenter.org/>

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