



# WORK FOR ALL

The World of Work In 2005-2006

## THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!

A GUIDE TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR CONSUMERS OF REGIONAL CENTER SERVICES

### SPECIAL STORIES



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**Note: "Consumers" is a term used in this Guide to refer to people with developmental disabilities who received services from regional centers.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Adults with disabilities are one of the largest minorities in the United States without jobs, with an unemployment rate of nearly 70 percent. This happens partly because of the way a variety of national policies, or rules, and systems for services and benefits for people with disabilities have been created. They assume that people with disabilities will always be dependent on others. Thanks to the work of the President's Task Force of the Employment with Disabilities, the unusually high unemployment rate of people with disabilities is a national concern. Barriers to employment have been identified, and historic laws have been passed removing barriers and providing many more opportunities for people with disabilities to work.

There is much to learn about these extraordinary changes for work for people with disabilities indicating work will soon be a typical, rather than an uncommon, experience. **This Guide provides a starting place to understand the current work services available to people with disabilities, where service funding comes from, and how consumers access the service.**

Regardless of the type of service that is considered to help a person with a developmental disability find work, it is good to create an employment plan and research the effectiveness of any services. Below are a list of service qualities and outcomes that can serve as a planning guide to selecting a service that will be successful at helping someone get a job and keep it:

- Career opportunity exploration is available based on consumer's interests, abilities, needs and experiences. This can include vocational education classes, job shadowing, job try-outs, and employment.
- Employment is secured according to the consumer's desires, including the type of work environments, activities, hours, pay, supports, etc.
- Consumers participate in interviews and choose training and support procedures typical to workplaces.
- Consumers have necessary and appropriate accommodations, assistive technology, and individualized supports within and outside of their job.
- Consumers pursue career advancement opportunities in order to develop skills, increase pay and responsibilities, or other desired outcomes.

#### Notes:

*When the Self-Directed Services Program option is available in California, it will provide eligible consumers the means to experience more control over their daily lives and determine how best to utilize available resources. Consumers will have more flexibility in using regional center funding for employment services under this program.*

- Consumers develop satisfying relationships within and outside of their job, as desired.
- Consumers are supported in social activities within and outside of their job, as desired.
- Consumers are compensated commensurate with others in their position.
- Consumers have access to reliable transportation.
- Consumers receive assistance in managing their public benefits as needed and desired.
- Consumers of retirement age are supported in pursuing a variety of employment and/or post-employment option.

*From the "Employment Quality Indicators," Association of Persons in Supported Employment, Richmond, Virginia.*

## PUBLIC BENEFITS PLANNING



### **Maria Marquez's Story**

Maria is a single mother with two children, ages 10 and 15. She survived for many years with family help and on public benefits. She started volunteering 10 years ago with plans for a professional job in human services, after pursuing a medical assistant's education. She worked part-time for a Family Resource Center and a consulting company, receiving both income and public benefits: Section 8, SSI, Medi-Cal, and local food and household support services. Last year she started her first full-time job with health benefits for a case management agency, using Ticket to Work for job coaching. She soon no longer received her Social Security check as her pay had reached the income threshold, but her daughters remained on Medi-Cal. All the public benefits Maria and her family received

equaled her income. She is just starting a new job with an advocacy agency, and will be moving to take the job. She and her daughters will receive company medical benefits. She will continue to use her Ticket and agency for job coaching, but with a different job coach in the new location. She is using the Section 8 portability program, and has filed the paperwork for her certificate to transfer with her. She is exploring how to buy a home in the future.

**Understanding** the public benefits work incentives, mostly with Social Security, is confusing, and can become frightening, for people with disabilities and those that care about them. This is in part because many consumers are benefiting from other income based programs, like Section 8 housing, Medi-Cal health insurance, In-Home Supportive Services, food programs, etc. Making money affects these programs, and could cause them to end. Losing valued public benefits knowing that work is not always stable is a valid concern for people with disabilities. Good planning will help consumers and their families make good choices about going to work, to decide how much money they need to make, and to start saving money to make sure they can live well without public benefits or with less public benefits.

The first step for most consumers looking for work is to plan carefully for any public benefits they may have. The Social Security Administration is providing contracts to 13 agencies in California to help people with disabilities with benefits counseling. Nine of those contracts are with Independent Living Centers. The locations of the agencies can be found at the *Virginia Commonwealth University Benefits Assistance Resource Center website: [www.vcu-barc.org](http://www.vcu-barc.org).*

*However, the Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAOs) contractors will not have the capacity to meet the needs of all regional center consumers who work. Consumers, their families, regional center Service Coordinators, and work services provider(s) will all need to be informed and help with the public benefits planning and management.*

In general, there are three public benefits helpful to know about for regional center consumers wanting to work:

- **Social Security Work Incentives**
- **California 250% Medicaid Program**
- **Workplace Personal Assistance (AB925)**

The general information on these work incentives is taken from the Disability Benefits 101 website:

*[www.disabilitybenefits101.com](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.com) and the Social Security Red Book, [www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work). (2005)*

*These resources offer more detail on the work incentives.*

### **Social Security Work Incentives**

When a recipient receives income from another source (a job, or an SSDI benefit, for example), the monthly benefit rate is reduced, but not by the entire amount of income. Deductions are made from the gross income to find out how much of the income is counted. To determine the monthly SSI benefit amount, subtract the total countable income from the SSI benefit. SSI benefits will not be received if countable income is over the SSI monthly benefit amount.

#### • **Medi-Cal Continued Coverage**

If an individual has earnings that reduce a monthly SSI cash benefit to zero, he or she may be eligible to continue Medi-Cal at no cost if he or she received Supplemental Security Income in the past twelve months, continues to meet medical disability requirements, continues to meet non-disability requirements (assets), needs Medicaid health coverage to continue to work; and has income (wages) below the 1619(b) threshold amount of \$30,754 annually (as of 2005 in California).

#### • **Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)**

IRWEs are documented expenses for services or items related to one's impairment which the beneficiary paid for in order to support work activity. Some examples of IRWE expenses are wheelchair repairs, out of pocket payments for prescription drugs or medical expenses, or a computer screen reader.

## PUBLIC BENEFITS

*Continued from page 2*

### • **Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) Program**

The Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) program allows certain individuals with disabilities to set aside earned or unearned income. Social Security will exempt this income when placed into an approved PASS plan and used towards a vocational goal, such as college or a training school. PASS is a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. A recipient must meet SSI financial rules to use the program. A detailed application is required. PASS can be a valuable tool for competitive and self-employment.

### • **Student Earned Income Exclusion**

If an SSI recipient is under age 22, not considered head of the household, not married, and attending school regularly, he or she is allowed to exclude up to \$1,410 of earned income per month. The maximum annual student earned income exclusion is \$5,670 (for 2005).

### **Medi-Cal 250% California Working Disabled Program**

250% California Working Disabled Medi-Cal provides full scope Medi-Cal to workers with disabilities, who earn up to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. For example, to qualify for Medi-Cal's 250% program an individual's (family size of one) monthly income at 250% of the federal poverty level is \$1,995 and \$2,675 for a couple (family size of two). Enrollees pay a monthly premium for this health coverage. The 2005 *Premium Table* below shows the range of monthly premiums from \$20 to \$175 for an individual, and from \$30 to \$375 for a couple.

### **AB925 Workplace Personal Assistance**

California provides In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) to eligible aged, blind, and disabled individuals to allow them to live in their own homes. These services are now

allowed in the individual's place of employment, under specific conditions.

AB 925 authorizes workplace personal assistance that is "relevant and necessary in supporting and maintaining employment." This includes any activity that helps an individual land a job such as interviewing or training. IHSS hours **cannot** be used for assistance with college courses or vocational training. Some of the services that can be used in the workplace include preparation of meals, personal care services, and paramedical services. IHSS service hours that **cannot** be transferred include yard clean-up, laundry and cleaning. Travel *accompaniment* to work is **not** allowed. Hours already approved for these services will **not** be allowed to be transferred to the workplace.

To transfer IHSS hours to the workplace, an individual must first contact their IHSS eligibility worker. At this time, the individual must specify the number of hours that will be used in the workplace and what services those hours will be used for. The county must then authorize the use of IHSS hours in the workplace before individual use. The IHSS eligibility worker will notify the individual of approval or denial of the request for transferring hours.

### **An excellent website was created a few years ago to help Californians with disabilities go to work: [www.disabilitybenefits101.com](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.com).**

This website will keep updated information about all the national and state work service programs and public benefits referenced in this Guide.

*Note: This website does not include regional center vendored services.*

## IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO KNOW

### **Integrated work settings**

Are job sites where, either:

- most employees are not disabled; and
- an individual with a severe disability interacts on a regular basis, in the performance of job duties, with employees who are not disabled.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

1. Modification or adjustment to a job application process that enables a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position the qualified applicant desires; or
2. Modification or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed, that enables qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of that position; or

3. Modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment that are enjoyed by its other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

**Substantial Gainful Activity** - "Substantial" work activity means the performance of significant physical and/or mental duties that are productive. "Gainful" activity is work for pay or profit or intended for profit. This is a term used by Social Security as part of eligibility to receive services.

(From Mindy Oppenheim, *The SEED, Instructional Design, Training & Staff Development for a Diversified Workforce*, [www.staffdevelopment.net](http://www.staffdevelopment.net), San Francisco, CA, (415) 345-1780)

## CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CENTER SERVICE CATEGORIES

There are many community service providers that offer services, personalized to consumers, to assist them with employment goals. These service providers assist consumers in choosing and developing work careers. Services lead to personal satisfaction, community inclusion, and economic self-sufficiency. Services are provided by the following service categories:

- Supported Employment,
- Work Activity Programs,
- Day Programs, and
- Supported Living.

Referral to these services is through the regional center to the provider. Many agencies provide a variety of employment services listed in this Guide.

### SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

#### *Funding:*

*Referral to Department of Rehabilitation for initial intensive job development and job coaching services;*

*Regional Center funds ongoing, maintenance job coaching.*

Supported employment services are designed to assist consumers in choosing, obtaining, and retaining integrated community employment. Consumers receive personalized services leading to: identifying employment and resources in the local labor market, development of realistic employment goals, and establishment of individualized plans and coordination of employment related services. Services and supports include: vocational assessment, job preparation, job development and placement, job coaching, advocacy and follow-up support. Services are directed at assisting consumers to maximize their participation in typical integrated employment settings, and to develop skills in relating to employers and co-workers.

Supported employment offers individual and group placement. Group placements receive full-time, long-term supervision, provided by a job coach through a service provider. The size of the group can range from three to eight consumers per job coach. Job coaching for individuals is one on one and intensive at the start and gradually fades depending on the individual's need for support. While the employer provides day-to-day supervision, the job coach stays involved and may increase or decrease support based on individual need, due to changes in job duties, or management. Examples of supported employment positions include: a group working in a retail setting, a janitorial work crew, cashiers, office workers, and animal handlers and groomers.

### WORK ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

*Funded by Regional Centers through Habilitation Services.*

Work activity programs provide a variety of paid jobs to assist consumers in achieving identified employment outcomes. Services are provided in a variety of settings, including work centers, off-site employment environments, and businesses operated by the organization. The consumers are assisted in developing work skills, as well as vocationally related personal, social and academic skills through a personalized plan. Services include: development of work habits and behaviors, vocational skill training, work practices training, job preparation, opportunities to experience a variety of jobs, vocational exploration, and social skills training. Supervision is provided during the time of work.

Consumers are paid based on productivity standards regulated by the Department of Labor. Consumers work in an industrial work environment or a setting modeled after industrial operations, including the use of standard tools, equipment, and machinery. Adaptive devices (jigs) may be used to facilitate increased productivity or to reduce functional limitations. Consumers work on a range of work contracts, such as, assembly and packaging, mailing services, food packaging and promotional material assembly.

Work activity programs may provide additional evaluation training and support through VR-WAP (vocational rehabilitation/work activity programming), Situational Assessment (SA), Personal/Vocational/Social/Adjustment (PVSA) services, and NISH and CARI contracts. VR-WAP is a time-limited program to help consumers transition out of the work activity program. NISH and CARI contracts are high paying government contracts (see the Competitive Employment section of this Guide for more information.)

### DAY PROGRAMS

*Funded by Regional Centers.*

A number of day programs offer community integrated activities allowing consumers with disabilities to become fully included members of their community. The program accomplishes this by navigating and creating networks of support with community members and agencies in order to facilitate equal access to community resources for participating consumers. Individuals in this service participate in a variety of activities that may include paid work, volunteer work, recreation/leisure, junior college classes and independent living skills.

## CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CENTER SERVICE CATEGORIES

*Continued from page 4*

One of the goals of community-based programs is to provide some paid or volunteer work for each participant. Many of the individuals may only work two to four hours a week, in groups of two or three participants, with the support of staff from the service provider. Each job is individually carved to match the skills and the support level consumers need. Some of the paid jobs include pricing items at retail chain stores, grounds keeping at an amusement park, gardening at a working ranch, janitorial services and operating a small vending machine business.

### SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

*Funded by Regional Centers.*

This service option offers a coordinated system of supports designed to assist individuals with disabilities to become self-directed in making choices about where they live, work, and engage in typical activities in their community. Supported Living aims to promote independence while building interdependence among the consumer, the family, friends, and neighbors. When one of the choices a consumer selects includes vocational training or integrated community employment, the support needs are directed around achieving those employment objectives. A support plan is developed to ensure the consumer meets the employer's expectation, or achieves the objectives in a business plan if self-employment is the selected employment option. Some examples of vocational support may include developing and following a work schedule, visiting a local employment office, and attending classes on developing a business. Examples of employment include: entertainer, recycler of materials, and personal assistant.



Tom at the Kid's Café at the Children's Discovery Museum.

### BEST PRACTICES OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employment services are typically provided through job development and coaching. Planning, as described on page 1, is critical. While services are provided according to guidelines and regulations, they can vary considerably between vendors.

A job developer helps the consumer find/develop a job. Great job developers are constantly developing relationships with employers so that they have a variety of companies with a variety of jobs to meet the employment needs of the consumers they are serving.

A job coach provides on or off the job training and support to help the consumer become successful in their job. The job coach assists the consumer and sometimes teaches the employer or other employees to provide training and support, so the consumer learns the job and fits into the company culture. The intent of job coaching, whenever possible, is to develop natural supports so coaching gradually fades until the consumer is able to work with minimal (usually 20% or less) assistance.



Lindsay, microfilm document storage and retrieval, City Hall, City Clerk's office.

## MICROENTERPRISE/SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT



### **Matthew Medina's *Taking Care of Business* Personal Assistant Services**

Matthew lives in Santa Barbara, and has been working part-time successfully at a print shop since he graduated from high school. Matthew provides excellent services at the print shop like recycling, organizing material, and cleaning, and decided to take those services to the small businesses in the Santa Barbara area. Matthew's family obtained consultation from a business development expert to create a plan of action to get the business started. With the help of friends, family, an Advisory Committee of local small business owners and staff from his family owned supported living agency, Matthew conducted market research on possible clients, created an initial budget, marketing plan, flyer and brochure with some of his savings, picked a business name (inspired by Elvis Presley's

entourage), and filed his fictitious name statement. His first client is a local physical therapy clinic. Matthew will be finishing their monthly billing mailing, a task they have struggled to get out on time.

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A Micro-Enterprise is a sole ownership, partnership or family business that has fewer than five employees. It is small enough to benefit from loans under \$25,000 and generally too small to access commercial banking services. Similar to micro-enterprise, a Very Small Business has five to nine employees and is small enough to benefit from loans of under \$50,000; a very small business has limited access to commercial banking services. (*Silicon Valley Economic Development Center*)

Consumers with developmental disabilities can start their own micro-enterprise. With general business and technical assistance, self-employment has become a viable employment option. Consumers may utilize generic resources, family support and services through a service provider. The typical generic resource accessed for these services is the Small Business Administration. Many traditional disability service providers are starting to offer these supports as well. Consumers are able to maximize their social and economic independence by identifying, developing, and maintaining their own business.

Assistance is typically needed in:

- identifying potential businesses,
- development of business plans,
- marketing, and
- financial support and management.

Ongoing support is needed for the consumer to be successful and to reduce some of the usual pitfalls of new businesses. Starting a small business may take up to a year to get started, especially to follow some of the legal requirements for businesses. Some consumers may have several businesses to achieve their desired income.

Owning a small business provides a sense of self-worth,

dignity, independence, and an opportunity to relate to a wide variety of people in the community. Mentorship may be developed with other business owners. While there are risks in developing any new business, self-employment allows some of the flexibility not afforded in working for others and consumers gain increased control over a major life activity. Self-employment also offers employment to people with disabilities who have had difficulty being selected for jobs by employers. Some examples of micro enterprise include; personal assistants, arts and crafts, entertainer, vending machine ownership and servicing, and coffee kiosk operation.

Social Security offers a number of work incentives to support small business owners. The most important of these is PESS, Property Essential to Self-Support. As currently stated on the Social Security website: "We do not count some resources that you need to be self-supporting when we decide if you are eligible for SSI. For example, we don't count property such as tools or equipment that you use for work. Or, if you have a trade or business, we don't count property such as inventory." As well, a PASS plan can be used for small business start-up funding.

At this time, supports for consumers to develop a business is a developing service category. For example, funding for these services can come from private pay, generic services, special grant funding or through a variety of regional center funded services, like supported living, day programs and self-directed services.

## MICROENTERPRISE/SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

### GENERAL AND DISABILITY SPECIFIC RESOURCES ON MICRO-ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT:

#### *California Association of Micro-Enterprise Organizations (CAMEO)*

655 13th Street, Suite 201, Oakland CA 94612  
website: [www.microbiz.org](http://www.microbiz.org)  
Phone: 510-238-8360 Fax: 510-238-8361  
Email: [cameo@microbiz.org](mailto:cameo@microbiz.org)

A great organization that lists all member agencies, and whether they serve people with disabilities.

#### *Griffin Hammis Associates, Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis, [www.griffinhammis.com](http://www.griffinhammis.com)*

GHA specializes in community rehabilitation improvement, job creation and job site training, employer development, Social Security benefits analysis and work incentives, self employment feasibility and refinement, management-leadership mentoring, and civic entrepreneurship.

#### *United States Small Business Administration [www.SBA.gov](http://www.SBA.gov)*

The website provides locations of all small business development centers in the United States. No or low cost services are available to all.

#### *Association of Enterprise Opportunity 1601 N. Kent St. Suite 101, Arlington, VA 22204 (703) 841-7160 [www.microenterpriseworks.org](http://www.microenterpriseworks.org)*

National association of micro-enterprise organizations. Excellent on-line bookstore and national conferences.

#### *The Abilities Fund, [www.abilitiesfund.org](http://www.abilitiesfund.org) 4177 Alyssa Court SW #1, Iowa City, IA 52240 Toll Free: 866-720-3863*

Links people with disabilities to the resources they need to start or expand microbusinesses. Serves rehabilitation and microenterprise professionals through training and technical assistance which helps create successful self employment outcomes for their clients with disabilities.

### MICRO-ENTERPRISE GLOSSARY

**Assets:** What a business owns or is legally due, such as equipment and property, including all cash the business has currently.

**Break-even Analysis:** A determination of how many sales must be made before the costs of the business are paid. This relationship can also be reported in terms of how long (in months or years) a business must operate before paying off its debts, and thereby showing a profit.

**Business Design Team:** A working collection of friends, colleagues, and experienced business people assembled to assist the prospective business owner in formulating an enterprise idea, launching the business and supporting the venture's growth.

**Business Feasibility Study:** An assessment, through the use of research tools such as surveys or statistical analyses, regarding the likelihood of a business succeeding.

**Business Structure:** Business organization for tax and management purposes, taking the form of sole proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations.

**Fixed Costs:** Business expenses that generally do not change, regardless of sales volume. Rent, insurance, and vehicle payments are typical fixed costs.

**Gross Revenue:** The sum of all income from sales.

**Liabilities:** Business debts or what a business legally owes, such as the balance due on a small business loan or the equity in a business due to the owner.

**Marketing:** The act of creating or revealing a need for a product/service in the customer's mind.

**Marketing Mix:** The process of matching a product/service to specific customers by identifying the proper advertising, pricing, and availability.

**Net Revenue:** The remaining income after paying all expenses related to making a product/delivering a service.

**Owner's Draw:** Net earnings from self-employment due to the owner, generated from any non-incorporated business after all business expenses are deducted from total sales revenue but before income taxes are paid.

**Person-Centered Business Planning:** A suggested format for business planning that seeks a fit between a person's talents and preferences and a viable business idea.

**Profit and Loss Statements/Projections:** The detailed monthly and yearly income projections for a business derived from the sales and expense assumptions and goals outlined in the earlier research, business idea/niche, pricing, sales and marketing sections of the business plan.

**Sales:** Providing the means and the opportunity for a customer to purchase a product/service.

**Variable Costs:** Business expenses that vary with sales.

*Above taken from "Making Self-Employment Work for People with Disabilities", by Cary Griffin and David Hammis, published by Paul H. Brookes, 2003*

## COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS: NISH/CARI, Department Of Rehabilitation, Ticket To Work, One Stop Centers, U.s. Department Of Labor



### Linda Thompson's Story

Linda has often been told she is unemployable by government agencies identified to provide her with employment support. Despite this message, Linda earned a Bachelors degree in journalism from Kent State University, and a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling at San Diego State University. She has a solid 28 year work history and only two short periods of time when she was unemployed and started receiving Social Security benefits. In 2004, Linda was hired as the first full-time staff for People First of California. She is also an instructor for Seeds Educational Services, a program dedicated to preventing abuse of people with developmental disabilities. Linda is also a participant of a new national consulting group offering services to improve programs for people with disabilities.

Many regional center consumers are interested in working with few or no job coaching supports and/or a career. They will most likely earn enough income that they will not receive a Social Security check for a period of time, and may move off public benefits temporarily or completely. Government contracts (NISH/CARI), Department of Rehabilitation, Ticket to Work, One Stop Centers and the U.S. Department of Labor tools may be good options for these consumers. These career services are provided at no cost through a variety of government programs.

### NISH and CARI (or Government Set-Asides)

NISH is a non-profit organization that acts for the US Government and Community Rehabilitation Programs (Service providers) to secure federal contracts that can be done by people with severe disabilities. NISH provides technical assistance to service providers interested in obtaining federal contracts under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) program. When NISH identifies a government need and a local nonprofit agency that can produce the goods or services required, the contract is sent to the President's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities. After the President's Committee approves the contract it is put on the Procurement List and set- aside from bid from other entities.

With the NISH partnership, service providers are awarded federal contracts, which provide high quality job opportunities for people with disabilities. The positions offer competitive salaries and benefits; the consumers gain long-term work experience and marketable job skills while decreasing their reliance on entitlements. Examples of federal contracts include: commissary services, grounds keeping and janitorial services, mail service, duplicating and shredding documents, sewing and assembling military products and supplies, and office support services. Refer to the website [www.nish.org](http://www.nish.org) for more information.

The California Alliance of Rehabilitation Industries (CARI) provides Californians with disabilities employment by procuring state and local contracts for service providers serving people with disabilities. As a resource to service providers and state and local government agencies, CARI assists service providers to develop competitive service or product proposals. Consumers working in CARI contracts are offered a wide diversity of employment, such as: grounds maintenance, mail services, food service, urban forestry, and assembling personal care products, security products, and specialty advertising items. Refer to the website [www.calrehab.org/cari](http://www.calrehab.org/cari) for more information.

Government contracts may take place at the integrated, government location or contracts may be completed at a location owned or leased by the service provider. Contracts brought in-house are examples of **reverse integration**. Persons without developmental disabilities are hired to work alongside consumers in completing the product or providing the service. Consumers and non-disabled workers are supervised and paid by the service provider. Non-disabled workers serve as role models for the consumers and assist them in achieving the high level of quality and quantity standards required of government contracts.

### Department of Rehabilitation

The Department of Rehabilitation (DR) assists Californians with disabilities to obtain and retain employment and maximize their ability to live independently in their communities. Working with individuals of every type and category of disability, DR provides vocational rehabilitation services to eligible Californians. Vocational Rehabilitation services are designed to get Californians with disabilities prepared for employment and can include training, education, transportation and job placement. The Department develops, purchases, provides, and advocates for programs and services in vocational rehabilitation, habilitation and independent living with a priority on service for persons with the most significant disabilities.

## COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Most persons between 18 and 65 who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) are eligible to use a "Ticket to Work". The "Ticket to Work" is in reality a



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program, not an actual ticket. In effect, the program enables persons receiving benefits to directly "hire" an agency of their choice to provide employment services. The agencies approved by the Social Security Administration for this program are called *Employment Networks*, or "EN"s.

The person who assigns his or her ticket to an EN then works with the chosen EN to prepare an Individual Work Plan (IWP) and receives the services outlined in the plan. Using a ticket is *voluntary*, and the ticket is meant only to aid those persons who want to earn over Substantial Gainful Activity (\$ 830 per month in 2005). The chosen agency receives reimbursement for services when the person

served achieves SGA. All SSI recipients in California have been sent a Ticket, or can request one.

The person who chooses to use his or her Ticket receives several advantages, including expedited reinstatement to benefits if the job is lost due to the disability, continued medical benefits for a time, and exclusion from Medical Continuing Disability Review during the period of service under the Ticket To Work. The limitations to the Ticket program are that payments to ENs are low, thus covering only limited service, and are delayed until after SGA is reached and/or benefits drop to \$ 0. In California, the Department of Rehabilitation tends to request that any clients they serve assign their tickets to the Department.

**The contact for Ticket to Work is 1-866-968-7842  
Toll-Free TDD Line:1-866-833-2967.**

**A listing of Employment Networks can be found at  
[www.yourtickettowork.org](http://www.yourtickettowork.org).**

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## ONE STOP CAREER CENTERS

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which replaced the Job Training Partnership Act, offers a comprehensive range of workforce development activities through statewide and local organizations. Available workforce development activities provided in local communities can benefit job seekers, laid off workers, youth, incumbent workers, new entrants to the workforce, veterans, persons with disabilities, and employers.

One-Stop Centers use varied strategies in providing the appropriate services to meet the needs of their customers:

**Core Services** are available and include, in part, labor market information, initial assessment of skill levels, and job search and placement assistance.

**Intensive Services** are available to eligible unemployed individuals who have completed at least one core service, but have not been able to obtain employment, or employed individuals needing additional services to obtain or keep employment that will lead to personal self-sufficiency.

**Training Services** are available to eligible individuals who have met the requirements for intensive services and have not been able to obtain or keep employment. Individual Training Accounts are established to finance training based upon the individual's choice of selected training programs.

There are 31 Disability Program Navigators (DPN) that serve in One-Stop Career Centers throughout the State. The Disability Program Navigator serves as an expert on workforce development issues and policies impacting



individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment, skill development, job retention assistance, or career advancement through the One-Stop Career Center system (including the use of Individual Training Accounts, which are typically underutilized for individuals with disabilities). The Navigator also serves as a resource to the workforce investment community within their service area to ensure the availability of comprehensive knowledge on federal, state, local and private programs that impact the ability of individuals with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce. The Navigator facilitates universal access to the One-Stop system for individuals with disabilities.

**A listing of One Stop Centers and the Disability  
Program Navigators**

**can be found at [www.edd.ca.gov/one-stop](http://www.edd.ca.gov/one-stop)**

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**Department of Labor's Career One Stop,  
[www.CareerOneStop.org](http://www.CareerOneStop.org)**

This new website provides access to the services to connect potential workers to jobs, like O\* Net, the Occupational Information Network with descriptions and skill sets for specific occupations, America's Career InfoNet with labor market data, and America's Service Locator to connect to local One-Stop Centers. One particularly helpful feature is **America's Job Bank [www.ajb.org](http://www.ajb.org)**. This free online job bank lists over a million jobs nationwide and 400,000 resumes. Employers can electronically post job listing and search resumes. Job seekers can electronically post resumes and reach employers.

## **A Note About Customized Employment**

### **You will start to hear more about Customized Employment**

Customized Employment is a process for individualizing the employment relationship between a job seeker or an employee and an employer in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on a match between the unique strengths, needs, and interests of the job candidate with a disability, and the identified business needs of the employer or the self-employment business chosen by the candidate.

The 21st Century workplace cannot be thought of in the same terms as that of the preceding century. The emerging global economy is creating jobs that can't be accomplished under the old 9 to 5 model or don't necessarily need to be performed in the employer's workplace. Further, workers are demanding more autonomy, more freedom, more customization of the terms and conditions of their employment. The world of work is changing to merge the demands of the new workplace and the needs of the workforce. One approach that has emerged is customized employment.

Customized employment starts with the development of an employment plan based on an individualized

determination of the strengths, needs and interests of the job candidate with a disability. Once the candidate's goals are established, one or more potential employers are identified. A preliminary proposal for presentation to the employer is developed. The proposal is presented to an employer who agrees to negotiate an individualized job that meets the employment needs of the applicant and real business needs of the employer.

**Example:** An individual who is a wheelchair user enjoys people and wants to perform delivery tasks. A branch office manager of an insurance company was receiving frequent complaints that faxes were not being delivered to agents in a timely manner by the fax room clerk. Agents needed the faxes pulled from the fax machine and hand delivered promptly. The job description for the clerk in the fax room involved copying, mailroom responsibilities, and handling the fax machine. Carrying out those responsibilities did not leave time to hand deliver the faxes. The individual was able to meet this genuine employer need through a created job description for delivering the faxes.

From T-TAP: Training and Technical Assistance For Providers; Michael Callahan, Marc Gold and Associates; and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP); ODEP - (202) 693-7880; T-TAP (804) 828-1851.

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## **Department of Rehabilitation**

Some of the services DR provides consumers may included, but are not limited to:

- Counseling and guidance
- Referrals and assistance to get services from other agencies
- Job search and placement assistance
- Vocational and other training services
- Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments
- Transportation, if needed
- On-the-job or personal assistance services
- Interpreter services
- Rehabilitation and orientation/mobility services for individuals who are blind
- Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks and supplies
- Technical assistance for self-employment
- Rehabilitation assistive technology
- Supported employment services
- Services to the family

DR has over 100 field offices located throughout California, which are grouped into 16 districts.

**To locate a local office, apply for services, and/or for more information, go to [www.rehab.cahwnet.gov](http://www.rehab.cahwnet.gov).**