EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE GUIDE:

Successfully Preparing Students with Disabilities for Competitive Integrated Employment

MINNESOTA

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INTRODUCTION

This Employment Resource Guide is designed for high school students with disabilities. The guide outlines a series of exercises to prepare students for graduation and the choice to move into competitive integrated employment. Some may ask: “what is competitive integrated employment”? Competitive Integrated Employment occurs when: the student/employee is working full or part-time at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with coworkers without disabilities.[1]

This guide is designed so that students and their teams have information and structured opportunities to prepare for employment. The activities are designed to encourage collaboration with the student, educators, their families and community members. It is essential that the student’s future employment goal is based on their unique strengths, interests, and capacities. Using an Informed Choice process, students can make important career exploration and preparation decisions. Providing opportunities for students to engage in a wide variety of career exploration and career preparation activities, while in high school, will lead students into the labor market and competitive integrated employment.

As students begin their high school careers, it is important to add activities to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) that provide a blend of academic and experiential learning opportunities such as: job shadowing, workplace tours, informational interviews, online career area of interest research, participation in work experiences and/or internships, and learning about needed accommodations and assistive technology needs.

The resources and activities in this guide cover topics related to moving from school to the world of work. Included is a detailed chart that describes activities students should address in each year of their high school career to better prepare themselves for post-high school life. There are resources that address life skills such as creating a personal budget, managing health needs, and determining living arrangements. In the back of this guide, there are employment tools and activities to guide students in developing the skills needed to enter into the world of work. By utilizing these tools, students should have a more concrete understanding of career pathways and jobs that are of interest to them.

The author Steven Covey says to "begin with the end in mind." This idea is at the heart of assisting students to plan for their future. The Employment Resource Guide sets the education course for secondary students with disabilities to the world of work. Students have a minimum of four years during their high school career to practice and use the foundational skills they learn such as problem solving, leadership, critical thinking, decision making, teamwork, communication and more in a multitude of different learning environments. For youth with disabilities, receiving a job offer is an important step in completing the transition to adulthood, a milestone towards independence and self-reliance.

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1 **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:** www.wintac.org

Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan:
www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=opc_home

PLANNING FOR COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL

9th-12th Grade Planning Steps

The transition from high school to the working world can be a smooth one if you and your family plan strategically and consistently throughout your high school career. The following checklists can assist with planning for your transition from high school to employment, and serve as a useful tool to you and your family as you progress through high school. It is recommended that you follow and reflect on the checklists throughout each school year to ensure that you are ready for the changes you will experience when you enter the workforce. If you are beginning this process in a later year of high school, review the checklists from previous years and incorporate as many of those preparations into your transition plan as possible. No matter what year in high school you are in, thinking about and planning for the future will help you immensely.

FRESHMEN YEAR	SOPHOMORE YEAR	JUNIOR YEAR	SENIOR YEAR
Use a career planning platform available at your school such as Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS), GPS LifePlan, Naviance, or another platform to start a graduation file to organize information related to school activities, work, and future plans so that necessary records and notes are in a centralized location.	*Review freshman year checklist. Prepare a checklist for sophomore year.*	*Review your freshman and sophomore checklists to be sure you are staying on track with your goals. Create a checklist of tasks you need to complete your junior year.*	*Review freshman, sophomore, and junior year checklists. Draft your final checklist for your senior year.*
Learn about your disability.	*Continue to build your graduation file. Contents may include high school activities such as awards or recognitions, a list of hobbies or leisure activities, medical and immunization records.*	*Continue to build your graduation file. New items may include: career assessments, contact information for job references, recommendation letters, job skill certificates, and an updated résumé, among other things.*	*Continue to build your graduation file. New items may include: high school transcripts, disability documentation such as your last IEP/504 plan and most recent evaluation, and any employment related materials such as a cover letter, etc.*
Practice explaining what assistance or support you need.	***Actively plan your IEP meetings with your family and case manager. Also, plan to advocate on your own behalf.***	***Assist your case manager and family in planning and running your IEP meeting and writing your IEP goals.***	*Lead your IEP meetings and lay out your well thought out transition to employment plan.*

FRESHMEN YEAR	SOPHOMORE YEAR	JUNIOR YEAR	SENIOR YEAR
Review and adjust your future goals in all of your Individualized Education Program transition areas.	*Set academic and transition goals that are achievable*	*Learn if, when, and how to discuss the needs related to your disability when looking for careers.*	*Use your senior year to prepare yourself for employment. Steps you can take include: taking classes that are career focused, practicing your interview skills, and refining your résumé and cover letter.*
Participate in your IEP meetings.	*Practice requesting your own accommodations at school in order to gain confidence when you get into the work world.*	*Invite outside service providers to your IEP meetings such as Vocational Rehabilitation, social workers, Social Security, mental health counselors, Center for Independent Living, etc.*	*Understand the differences between high school and the workplace.*
Discuss your graduation plans, graduation status, and transition goals.	*Use your career planning tool to set goals and future career plans.*	*Continue to improve organizational, stress, and time management skills*	*Complete applications for jobs that are appealing and interesting to you.*
Understand your strengths and areas for improvement. Utilize your strengths and develop strategies to improve your strengths and weaknesses.	*Research other service providers with your family and case manager who can offer assistance after graduation such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security, mental health counselors, or a school or county social worker.*	*Narrow career choices and match them to classes you can take in high school to prepare yourself for those careers.*	*Discuss transition options for employment.*
Learn what your accommodations are, and use them when needed to discover what helps you be successful in and out of the classroom.	*Explore summer employment options that may be of interest to you.*	*Attend job fairs and hiring events so you can explore career options that are interesting and available to you.*	*Discuss your living arrangements after high school. This may mean you: live at home, live with friends, or live on your own.*
Enroll in high school classes that meet your postsecondary goals. These may include more rigorous classes that are considered college prep courses, or they could be career and technical classes where you learn employability skills for future opportunities.	*Discuss career options and choices with your counselor. Start to prepare yourself for those careers.*	*Utilize your professional network (IEP team, coworkers, etc.) to find individuals who are willing to do job shadows. Shadowing someone will help you decide if you are interested in that career or field of work.*	*Obtain certifications that are needed in order ensure you are prepared for employment in your desired field, if applicable.*

FRESHMEN YEAR	SOPHOMORE YEAR	JUNIOR YEAR	SENIOR YEAR
Learn and use organizational, stress, and time management strategies.	*Utilize career exploration activities such as skill inventories, career aptitude, and career investigation.*	*Look for summer employment options. Having a summer job looks great on a résumé and can help you land your dream job in the future.*	*Work with your IEP team, your family, and outside service providers to understand the Americans with Disabilities Act and how you can leverage the laws to help you perform your best in the workplace. Additionally, learn about benefits typically offered through employers.*
Begin career exploration that may include career aptitude surveys and interest inventories.	*Build a résumé through school activities and volunteer experiences. Your involvement at school and in the community will benefit you when you apply for jobs.*	*Practice self-advocacy skills.*	*Know what accommodations help you succeed and be prepared to articulate those needs when you enter the workforce.*
Create a checklist of the items above to complete during the school year.	*Join a club, organization, or team at your high school. This could be an organization that helps prepare you for employment or a sport that you enjoy. Extracurricular activities look great on your résumé.*	*Explore assistive technologies that may benefit you now and in a future workplace.*	*Explore online job boards (e.g. Minnesotaworks.net) and job fairs for businesses and organizations that are hiring high quality individuals like yourself.*
	If you are planning on working or already have a job for the summer, learn about what accommodations you may need in the work place to ensure that you are prepared to do your best.	*Take the armed forces ASVAB test, if applicable.*	

Career Exploration

Being prepared in high school, starts with exploring careers that interest you. If you find a career that you want to explore further, work with your IEP team to set up a job shadow so you can see for yourself what it would be like to work in that field. Job shadows are a great way for you to explore a field that is of interest to you. A job shadow is a short-term experience intended to help an individual identify career objectives, fields, and pathways. You may find that a certain career is not for you, but don't get discouraged – keep participating in job shadows to narrow your career goals. All youth need information on career fields, clusters and pathways available in Minnesota. Within those experiences students can participate in career assessments to identify their post school options in employment. Activities can include: industry-focused speakers, workplace tours, job shadowing and informational interview experiences.

Visit sites such as **www.careeronestop.org/getmyfuture/index.aspx** and **mncis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html** (Minnesota Career Information System) to search for jobs that interest you. Your school should be able to provide you with access to the MCIS website and tools located there. Other types of experiential learning options you could participate in are: service learning, internships, entrepreneurship and youth apprenticeships. Service learning allows students to address community needs by applying knowledge learned through a class at school. Internships are typically short term work experiences, both paid and unpaid. These can be full-time or part-time experiences depending on what you are looking for in an internship opportunity. Lastly, a cooperative education setting provides students with work experiences that are related to their career field or pathway goal. These kinds of programs can be paid or unpaid, and may even be tied to academic credits. **See page 33** for a more detailed representation of those options.

Another option that many students are able to take advantage of is work-based learning programs. State approved work-based learning (WBL) programs consist of instruction that connects or links classroom learning with work experiences at a worksite. For example, you could take an auto mechanics class and work at an auto shop for part of your school day. WBL programs, including both internships and youth apprenticeships, can help you figure out what careers are interesting to you. Depending on the career cluster/field, you may also have the opportunity to obtain an industry-recognized credential or certification in your chosen career pathway.

Money Management

Once you obtain a job, it is important that you save, spend, and manage your money wisely. Many employers pay bi-weekly, so you can plan accordingly. Additionally, the money that you earn at work could potentially affect your Supplemental Security Income (SSI). There is a misconception that if you receive SSI or SSDI benefits you cannot work – that is simply not true. In fact, employment is encouraged for individuals who receive SSI benefits. In many cases, individuals receive

more money from working than solely relying on their SSI benefits. Regardless of your SSI benefit status, you should utilize the tools available at **db101.org** to help you estimate your income. This estimate can and should include your SSI benefits, if you receive them.

Another resource that may be useful for you is Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest. Their website can be found at: **www.jaum.org**. They provide programs that can help you learn about personal finance, economics, and entrepreneurship. Ask your teachers about how you can get involved with Junior Achievement activities. Activities to complete:

- Complete a School and Work Estimator Session
- View the SSI/SSDI Videos
- Research the Informed Choice Toolkit
- Use the Get a Smart Start with Youth Section

Transportation Considerations

Having reliable transportation is essential to maintaining any job. When considering possible employers, think about how you would commute to work. Public transportation is a great, affordable way to ensure you have reliable transportation. If you plan to live independently, with friends, or at home after graduating high school, think about living on or near a bus line to allow for easier access to transportation. All public transit agencies will have accessible vehicles and buses for you, should you need them.

If public transit is not an option, consider alternative transportation services such as Uber and Lyft. Both services have accessible vehicles in their fleet, which typically must be reserved a day in advance.

Job Training Requirements

In order to be qualified for certain career fields, specific certifications may be required in order to work in that field. Some certifications that may be required include: first aid, CPR, and other trade-specific certificates. Obtaining certifications will help open more career fields and will increase your chances of gaining employment in your desired field. Visit **www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-certifications.aspx** to explore what certifications are required in various industries and occupations.

Employability Skills

No matter what field of work you choose, there are certain skills called 'soft skills' that you will need to have to be successful. You probably use many of these soft skills daily without even realizing it. Some of these soft skills include:

- Teamwork
- Interpersonal communication
- Problem-solving
- Time management
- Computer skills
- Leadership

These skills can be practiced in various settings in your life. Consider establishing transition goals in your IEP that address how you are going to practice using and crafting soft skills. These goals could be achieved by enrolling in communication classes or being involved in a student club at your high school. These soft skills are areas of growth for everyone – young, old, and everyone in-between. Try not to get frustrated if you are having a difficult time with these skills; just remember that they improve with practice.

Every paid job that you apply for will require you to have a résumé. A résumés describes your education, skills, volunteer and work experiences and demonstrates to potential employers your qualifications. Writing a résumé takes time and careful thought. Many people seek out assistance in writing a résumé and meet with career counselors. Before you begin writing a résumé, check out résumé templates found on the internet. Those templates will give you a better idea of how to write and structure your résumé. In addition, many word processing programs like Microsoft Word have premade résumé and cover letter templates, too. It may also be useful for you to include writing a résumé into your IEP goals. Find out if your high school has services that can assist you in writing a résumé. It helps to have multiple people read through your résumé and offer feedback and industry perspective. Continuous improvement of soft skills (also called employability skills) will benefit you greatly as you enter the world of work. Find helpful resources regarding soft skills at: **www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/infobrief_issue28_0.pdf** and **www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/EmployabilitySkills_Handouts.pdf**.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way for you to gain résumé building experience and improve on your soft skills. Employers typically view volunteering as important. By demonstrating that you have volunteer experience, you show that you are dedicated to your community, which reflects positively on your character. There are endless opportunities to volunteer in your community, including those organized by your school. Common volunteer experiences include helping at a local nursing home or cleaning up your local park.

If you are looking to help people and organizations on a global scale, explore the website: **helpfromhome.org**. This website allows organizations from around the world to post requests for volunteers on various projects. A majority of the volunteer projects listed on the website can be done when you have spare time and they typically take less than 30 minutes to complete. Many of these projects help individuals and organizations in Nicaragua, Ghana, and even entities like the New York Public Library system. Some of the projects include translating current news stories from English into other languages, transcribing letters, and getting people to sign petitions for various causes. You may want to consider participating in the "Skills 4 You" curriculum found on the 'Help From Home' website. "Skills 4 You" has tools to help you set goals and keep track of the skills you would like to improve through volunteering projects.

SELF-ADVOCACY STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

A necessary skill for success after high school is the ability to advocate for yourself. Self-advocacy includes being able to act on your own behalf, asking for help when it is needed, making informed decisions, and taking responsibility for these decisions. Being a self-advocate means understanding yourself and knowing your own disability, knowing your personal strengths and weaknesses, and being aware of your needs. It also involves being able to express this information to others when necessary. Practice your self-advocacy skills. Set a goal of leading your annual IEP meetings. This will ensure that your voice is at the center of planning. The planning of your life regarding employment and other interests should begin with you at the center. This will ultimately allow you to make informed choices about your life, your career, and your future.

While in high school, many life decisions may have been made for you by family members, teachers, counselors, and other professionals. Once you have entered the workforce, you will be the one to determine when assistance is needed, provide the relevant information, and make the final decision of what is best. However, it is helpful to have a support network of individuals, like friends, family members, former teachers, counselors and other professionals, who can help you decide what actions you should take in the workplace. Remember, though, you are always your strongest advocate!

Understand Why You Have Received Special Education Services

Do you know your own disability and why you received additional assistance while in high school? Can you adequately explain your personal needs and the accommodations you have used without assistance from others? While in high school, review your Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan and your three-year evaluation or medical documentation with your family, case manager, and/or counselor so you fully understand this aspect of yourself. (*See Documentation and Disclosure Tips section*). Take some time to practice and get feedback on expressing your disability challenges and assistance needs.

Understand Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Develop a realistic understanding of your strengths, weaknesses, needs, and preferences. Determine the skills you do well right now. Also, determine what skills need improvement. Most counseling offices, like the one at your high school, offer various interest and career inventories to help you learn more about yourself. The results from these assessments can match strengths and weaknesses to career fields and also tell you the skills necessary for that field and others.

Time Management

Learning how to manage your time effectively is integral to your success in life. An effective time management plan in the workplace can include: prioritizing tasks, implementing due dates, breaking down assignments, and attending meetings or appointments.

You should find a time management system that works for you, and use it daily. This could be in the form of a weekly or monthly planner, a calendar in paper format, a phone app, or a computer program. Using a phone or computer application (app) may be useful as you can set it to give you reminders of tasks you need to complete.

- Prioritize the tasks that are a top priority to you or your work supervisor and address those first.
- It is common to underestimate how long a work project will take to complete, so it is best to start projects well before the due date. By doing so, you will be in a better position to complete the project on time or even ahead of schedule! Completing tasks on time will reflect well on you and will certainly be appreciated by your supervisor.
- Check your planner or calendar daily. Make sure you update it each day as you complete tasks and projects. This will help you track your progress with your assignments so you can make adjustments as needed. Don't forget to reward yourself for working hard and completing your projects.
- Managing your time also includes making sure you give yourself adequate time to get ready for work. It also means planning how long it will take you to commute from home to work so you arrive on time.

For a list of apps you can use for time management, see the Job Accommodation Network's list here: **soar.askjan.org/Solution/710**

Living Arrangements

When you have found a place to work, it is important to identify your living arrangement. This might mean living with family, moving into a house or apartment with friends, or living on your own.

No matter what you decide, make sure it is the best fit, not only for your emotional and mental well-being, but also your fiscal health. You can save money by living at home, and it may even be a rewarding experience for you if you want to, or are able to contribute to your family's household. Living on your own can be expensive depending on where you find housing. No matter what your living arrangements are, it would be beneficial to live on or near a bus or rail line if you plan on taking public transit to and from work.

THE FAMILY'S ROLE IN COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

Conversation Starters for Parents to Have with their Child

The role of parents and guardians changes when their child transitions from high school to employment. As a parent or guardian, you may no longer be involved in every decision concerning your child's future. The transition to employment means your child will have an opportunity to experience greater independence, meet new people, explore their interests, and increase their understanding of the world. Your continued support and encouragement will benefit your child in succeeding during the transition from high school to employment.

Family discussions should include topics that will assist your child during the transition process. Many of these topics are particularly relevant if your child is planning to live independently. Additionally, your family should determine what skills your child will need to develop more fully before seeking employment. These skills could be: reading, writing, interpersonal skills, communication skills, problem solving, self-advocacy, critical thinking, teamwork, and more.

Conversation topics designed for families to address in detail with their child are listed in the next few pages to assist you in determining the needs of your child. There are guiding questions in italics under each topic that you should consider asking your child to ensure they are prepared for transition from high school.

For more information see: PACER Center (**www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c107.pdf**), Info Brief 1 and Info Brief 2 (**www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/infobrief_issue27_0.pdf** and **www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/Infobrief%20Career%20Development%20-%20Family%20Role.pdf**)

Organization and Time Management

Employees are responsible for being at work each day, meeting deadlines, and organizing and prioritizing tasks. Your child will also have to learn how to manage their work-life balance. Balancing work, sleep, doing laundry, grocery shopping, keeping medical appointments, and socializing, can be overwhelming at times, but there are many organizational tools that your child can use for support. These tools include a planner, calendar, or even a phone app. Consider asking your child the following questions:

Do you wake up in the morning and get started on your own? Do you have a method for organizing and keeping track of your work and life commitments? How do you prioritize tasks that need to be accomplished? How can I help you better manage your work-life balance?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), and Mental Health Services

If your child receives Social Security benefits/Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Vocational Rehabilitation services, or Mental Health services, it is important that they understand how to access and manage those aspects of their life. Understanding how earning an income can affect one's SSI benefits is important and something you should discuss with your child. That will be particularly relevant when your child is establishing a budget. More information can be found under the "Documentation and Disclosure" section of this guide. Consider asking your child the following questions:

Do you know how to access mental health services? Have you learned about how SSI benefits are affected by earned income?

Resources from the Social Security Administration (SSA) can be found at **www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi**

In addition to SSA, Disability Benefits 101 gives you tools and information on health coverage, benefits, and employment. Resources on DB101 can be found at **mn.db101.org/howto.htm**

Medical Needs

Your child may have specific medical needs that require them to advocate for themselves in certain situations. Your child should feel confident that they understand their medical needs and know how to ask for assistance related to those medical needs, if applicable. Additionally, you should discuss making appointments with doctors and what to do in terms of health and dental insurance. If your child plans on attending doctors' appointments alone, be sure they have their proper insurance documentation. Consider asking your child the following questions:

If on medication, can you self-administer? Can you self-advocate for special dietary or environmental concerns? Do you know who to contact for medical or dental emergencies? Do you have health/dental insurance, if not, do you know how to receive insurance? Do you understand copays?

Personal Care Attendant Arrangements

If your child currently has or is considering hiring a personal care attendant (PCA) or nurse to assist your child in their daily lives, they should understand how to effectively work with the PCA. Personal Care Attendants can sometimes be necessary for youth who are deciding to live independently. If your child decides they want to hire a PCA, be sure they screen or interview the PCA candidates first in order to find the best fit for your child. Consider asking your child the following questions:

Do you have medical needs that require assistance with life tasks such as grooming and dressing, signing documents, opening doors and elevators, toileting, or walking/feeding a support dog?

Promoting Healthy Living

If your child is planning on living independently, it is important to promote healthy living. You should make sure your child understands the difference between making healthy eating choices and unhealthy ones. Poor eating habits and lack of exercise can lead to lower productivity and even overall poor health. Additionally, if your child has dietary restrictions, it is important that they know what they can and cannot eat based on their personal restrictions. It may be beneficial to teach your child how to cook for themselves. For example, you could teach them how to make their favorite home cooked meal!

Healthy living also includes getting proper and adequate exercise. Be sure your child knows and understands any limitations they may have regarding exercising. If your child is planning on enrolling in a gym and getting a membership, be sure to inquire about any discounts the gym may have for people with disabilities. Also consider programming and facilities the gym has that will accommodate your child's needs. This expense should also be reflected in their budget and be realistic based on their income.

Lastly, getting enough sleep is important for your child. Making sure they know how much an adequate amount of sleep each night is for them will help them be awake and ready for their work day. Establishing a nighttime routine may be beneficial to encouraging good sleep habits. Consider asking your child the following questions:

Do you understand healthy foods and the need for regular exercise? If you plan on living on your own, do you know how to plan meals on a tight budget or how to prepare some easy, healthy meals?

Independent Living

If your child is planning on living independently, you should make sure they have the basic skills and understanding on how to care for themselves and their residence. Encourage your child to learn and use home living skills while still in high school so that they can thrive on their own. Home living skills could include: washing clothes, grooming, washing dishes, taking

out garbage, cleaning, etc. It may be beneficial to let your child spend some time at home alone so they can learn what limitations they might have when living alone. Consider asking your child the following questions:

Can you manage all the tasks of daily living such as cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping, and paying bills?

Technical and Computer Skills

Increasingly, individuals are expected to have some degree of technical and computer skills. If your child needs to improve their computer skills, encourage them to take classes in high school and include improving their technical and computer skills as part of their IEP transition goals. Make sure your child knows what assistive technology they may need to ensure they have adequate technical and computer skills. Knowing what assistive technology works best for them will be integral when they enter the workforce. (See Assistive Technology section). Consider asking your child the following questions:

Do you feel comfortable using a computer for typing or web searches? Are you able to perform technical functions on your own? Are you able to type 30-40 words per minute?

Career Goal

Discuss career paths and goals with your child. These conversations should occur informally at home, and formally throughout your child's IEP meetings. The more your child knows and understands the field they want to work in, the better. Encourage your child to do a job shadow in the field that interests them. This will help them narrow down what they want to do as a living. Be sure to work with your child to see what industry certifications or educational attainment they may need to reach before they enter a certain career field.

If your child is uncertain about a career path, you may advise them to explore additional options through career explorations like the one found at **mynextmove.org**. In the resources section of this booklet, there is the Minnesota Career Fields, Cluster and Pathways chart that will help your child identify the jobs based on various industries. Consider asking your child the following questions:

Do your personal and academic strengths align with the career you are considering? Do others who know you best agree with your career goals? Do you understand the preparation you will need to enter and succeed in your desired career path?

For more information see: **www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-17.pdf**

Foundation Skills for Employment

Employers not only look for individuals who can demonstrate their ability in terms of 'hard skills' (or technical skills) such as math and reading, but also their soft skills (sometimes referred to as employability skills). Soft skills include: interpersonal, communication, decision-making, and lifelong learning skills. Families can play a significant role in helping their child develop and master soft skills. Soft skills can be developed in various ways at home with your child by doing simple, fun activities that will help him or her to master skills that will get them employment ready. Additionally, setting goals in your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), that are aimed at developing and demonstrating competency of soft skills, is another way you can support your child's growth. Consider asking your child the following questions:

What skills do you feel you could improve on? Are there any classes you can take that will help you develop soft skills? Are there any specific soft skills recommended for your desired career field?

For more information, see: Info Brief (**www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/infobrief_issue34.pdf**)

Documents and Information to Keep

To ease the transition stage of your child's life, it is important that you keep certain documents and information, including birth certificate, medication list, immunizations records, past Individualized Education Program (IEP), samples of academic work, and diploma. Other information that you should keep track of includes anything that would be important to know for future employment opportunities, like volunteer experience and vocational assessments. For a more complete list of what documents and information should be kept, check out the following link: **www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-33.pdf**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND EMPLOYMENT

The following charts will provide you with insight on the differences between a school setting and a workplace setting. There are some similarities, but there are some significant differences. By understanding the differences, you will be better prepared when you enter the world of work.

CLASSROOM HOURS PLUS HOMEWORK	WORK HOURS WITHOUT HOMEWORK
In the school setting that you are probably used to, your teachers frequently give you work that you are expected to complete outside of the classroom on top of your time in class.	*Typically, when you enter the workforce, it is expected that you will not have homework outside of your normal work hours. Your employer will expect you to complete projects during your normal work hours.*
CLASSMATES	**CO-WORKERS/COLLEAGUES**
Your classmates are similar to having colleagues in the workplace. Oftentimes, your teachers ask you to work together with your classmates on projects and assignments. Doing so helps you develop skills that allow you to work with others better.	*Much like classmates, coworkers/colleagues are people who you will likely have to work with on projects related to your job. These projects can range from very simple tasks to more complex assignments. Be prepared to work with others when you enter the workforce.*
TESTS AND GRADES	**PERFORMANCE REVIEW**
In your school career, you have likely been tested and graded on various subjects. The A-F grading scale is typically what teachers use to set a common standard for an assignment. Be prepared to not receive grades once you graduate from high school.	*In the workforce, your boss/supervisor does not necessarily give you a grade like your teachers did. You will likely receive feedback throughout a project rather than getting a grade. You will also likely participate in an annual performance review which is a standard way of determining an employee's quality of work throughout the year.*

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED	PROVIDING YOUR OWN TRANSPORTATION
Depending on how close you lived to school, you may have had to ride the bus to school. Your school district pays for that transportation, so you don't have to.	*Employers typically do not pay for you to get to work. However, many employers do offer public transit discounts. Regardless, it is up to you to find reliable transportation to and from your place of employment.*
UNPAID WORK EXPERIENCES	**PAID WORK EXPERIENCES**
You do not get paid to attend school, but a job will give you a paycheck!	*When an employer hires you, they provide you with a wage at which they feel is equal to the amount of time and effort you would be putting into the job on a daily basis.*
NO BENEFITS PACKAGE	**BENEFITS PACKAGE PROVIDED**
Benefits typically refer to things such as: medical insurance and retirement plans (401K). Schools do not provide their students with benefits packages. Currently, you may be receiving insurance benefits through your parent/guardian, or the government.	*Many full-time jobs provide their employees with benefits such as health insurance, dental insurance, and the option to start a 401K. These are important factors to consider now and in the years to come.*
SUMMER VACATION	**VACATION TIME AND HOLIDAYS**
Typically from the beginning of June through early September, high schools are not in session and they are on summer break. This is a great time for you to obtain a summer job!	*Employees typically earn vacation time. By earning vacation time, you are able to take days off when you need to or want to travel the world. Most employers also recognize federal holidays, and thus, you would not have to work on those days.*

DOCUMENTATION AND DISCLOSURE TIPS

Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Plans End When Students Graduate from High School

Throughout your educational career, you may have been receiving services that assist you with various aspects of your life. Many of these services have been provided because of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Due to this law, you may have had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan. These plans are developed every year. Your teachers and other special education professionals use these plans to address your educational needs. One of the most important things to understand regarding IEPs and 504 plans is that they end once you graduate from high school; the education services and supports you received through your IEP will end, as well. It is important for you to decide whether or not to disclose your disability once you're employed. You may realize that the some of the services or accommodations you utilized in school may not be needed once you are in the workplace. Revisit your needs with your IEP team members and others, prior to graduation, so that you know what accommodations you will need to be successful in the workplace.

Disclosing a Disability

Disclosure means to share your personal information about your disability with others so you can receive accommodations from your employer. In the workplace, you're faced with a couple of options when it comes to disclosing your disability. This section has information on your options.

This section also briefly addresses the rights you have regarding workplace discrimination due to your disability. Although there are laws to prohibit workplace discrimination, you should know your rights if you believe you are facing discrimination.

The following section provides you with information and resources that can assist you in learning about the disclosure process. In addition, you may want to consider utilizing the disclosure workbook found here: **www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf**

This workbook can help you learn and think about disclosing in the workplace. Completing sections of this guide could be included into your IEP goals.

If and When to Disclose

To put it simply, there is no one "perfect" time to disclose your disability to your employer. When you have a job, you will have to weigh your options and decide in which situations, if any, disclosure makes sense to you.

You do not have to disclose your disability to an employer if you do not want to. If you think or know that the job will require you to have accommodations made in order to perform essential functions, you may want to disclose your disability. Not disclosing could mean your employer may not be required to provide you with any accommodations relating to your disability.

If you have decided to disclose your disability, you are able to receive reasonable accommodations that allow you to complete essential functions of your job. There may be certain times in which disclosing your disability may be more appropriate than others. For example, you may disclose in a cover letter, on your résumé, on the job application, during the interview, after the job has been offered, or even once you are on the job. You will have to do your best to decide when or if you want to, or need to disclose your disability. For more information, see the Accommodations in the Workplace section of this guide.

The decision to disclose your disability to your employer is one that you will have to make. Understanding your

disability and knowing what needs stem from your disability will help you decide if you should disclose. Think about how your family and IEP team may be able to help you during the decision-making process. The workbook located in the back of this guide can assist you as well.

Cyber Disclosure

Social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram are popular ways for youth to keep up with friends and family. Social networks and/or an online presence may have unintended consequences for individuals with disabilities. For example, employers may Google search an applicant to see what information is online about that individual. Those searches could lead them to social networks or blogs that you may participate in. That could mean an unintentional disclosure of your disability. For example, a possible employer may find a picture of you in a wheelchair, or find your blog describing your learning disability. By knowing what information about you is online, you can prevent unintended disclosure to your employer. The following resource is a guide that will help you figure out and understand what your digital presence may be and how you can take steps to protect your identity. **www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/Cyber_Disclosure_for_Youth_with_Disabilities.pdf**

Documentation of Disability

To receive the benefits provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act, you may need to provide proof of your disability to your employer. The ADA defines a disability as: an impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities. Thus, you may need to provide documentation demonstrating why your disability substantially limits one or more life activities. This documentation can be in the form of a letter from your doctor. **www.disabilityrightsiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/FAQ-About-Disability-Disclosure-under-the-ADA.pdf**

Discrimination

The ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are civil rights laws. They state that employers cannot discriminate against persons due to a disability. However, these laws do not automatically entitle a person with a disability to a specific job. All potential employees have to meet the required qualifications and performance standards for the job.

If you believe you have faced discrimination while on the job, you can file a complaint with Human Resources or the Equal Opportunity Office located at your workplace. For more specific information see: **www.workplacefairness.org/disability-discrimination#1**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990 and prohibits discrimination and guarantees that individuals with a disability can participate fully in society. This law and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are both important to understand because they allow people with disabilities certain rights when it comes to education and employment. Some of the services that you may be currently receiving stem from those two pieces of federal legislation. For more specifics see: **www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ods6uOh198**

ADA Definition of a Disability

The term 'disability' means, with respect to an individual:

- a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
- a record of such an impairment; or
- regarded as having such an impairment.

If you believe yourself to qualify under any of the above criteria, you are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

CHILD LABOR LAWS

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Section 511 of WIOA limits the use of subminimum wage (wages below the federal minimum wage) as follows:

a. Neither a local nor state educational agency can enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity for the purpose of operating a program for a youth under which work is compensated at a subminimum wage.

b. Furthermore, while WIOA does not prohibit the use of subminimum wage, it does require youth with disabilities who are 24 and younger to have documentation that they completed the following actions before they can earn a subminimum wage:

- Participated in Pre-ETS and/ or special education transition services and activities while still in high school and eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and
- Applied for VRS and determined ineligible or found eligible but unsuccessful in competitive, integrated employment and their VRS case was closed, and
- Received career counseling, information, and referral to resources that could assist in securing competitive, integrated employment.

For more information, refer to the document titled "WIOA PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILTIES" at: **mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-process-students-disabilities_tcm1045-309559.pdf**

Age Requirements

The **minimum age that a person must be to work in Minnesota is 14 years old**. There are a few exceptions. These exceptions include:

- Working as a newspaper carrier, if at least 11 years of age;
- Working in agriculture if at least 12 years of age and with parent or guardian consent;
- As an actor or model; or
- As a youth athletic program referee, if at least 11 years of age and with parent or guardian consent.

There are rules that apply to you if you are under the age of 16. **These rules state minors under 16 may not work:**

- Before 7 a.m. or after 9 p.m. with the exception of a newspaper carrier;
- For more than 40 hours a week or more than eight hours per 24-hour period, except in agricultural operations; and
- During school hours on school days without an employment certificate issued by the appropriate school officials.

Some other rules apply to workers under the age of 16 if they are working for an employer with annual sales or revenue of $500,000 or more. **These rules state minors under 16 may not work:**

- Later than 7 p.m. during the school year;
- More than three hours a day during the school year; and
- More than 18 hours a week during the school year

For 16 and 17 year old individuals, the rules change slightly. **These rules state that 16- and 17-year-olds may not work:**

- Later than 11 p.m. on evenings before schooldays or before 5 a.m. on school days. With written permission from a parent or guardian, these hours may be expanded to 11:30 p.m. and 4:30 a.m.

Once you reach 18 years of age, adult labor laws then apply to you.

Proof of Age

Your employer will have to verify your age and thus will need proof of your age. Acceptable proof is one of the following:

- A copy of your birth certificate;
- A copy of your driver's license or permit;
- An age certificate issued by the school; or
- An I-9 (Form for Employment Eligibility Verification)

Prohibited Occupations for Minors

There are certain occupations in which minors are prohibited from working in. Some of these include:

- Serving liquor;
- Working with hazardous materials such as explosives (Some hazardous occupations are prohibited unless the Department of Labor and Industry (1) issues an individual exemption permit for a minor, or (2) Department of Labor and Industry approves a work-based learning program or valid state-approved youth apprenticeship program.);
- Operating power-driven machinery, including motor vehicles; and
- Working on or about in construction sites.

www.dli.mn.gov/ls/Pdf/childlbr.pdf

Minimum Wage

For the most current and up-to-date information about minimum wage or the wage you are currently receiving,

ask your employer or the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at: **www.dli.mn.gov/LS/TeenWorkers.asp**

Accommodations in the Workplace

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) there are protections in place that require employers to provide "reasonable accommodations" to qualified job applicants and employees with disabilities. The overarching goal of these protections is to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to accommodations that would allow them to perform the same job duties, and apply for jobs like anyone else. The U.S. Department of Labor notes that reasonable accommodations can include:

- Physical changes
  - Installing a ramp
  - Modifying a workspace
- Accessible and assistive technology
  - Ensuring application software is accessible, e.g. online application systems
  - Providing screen reader software
  - Utilizing videophones to facilitate communications with colleagues who are deaf
- Accessible communications
  - Providing sign language interpreters or closed captioning at meetings and events
  - Making materials available in braille or large print
- Policy enhancements
- Modifying a policy to allow a service animal in a business setting
- Adjusting work schedules to allow employees with chronic medical issues to go to medical appointments and complete work at alternate times or locations

www.dol.gov/odep/topics/accommodations.htm

Examples of Accommodations

You may be used to your school providing accommodations for you without having to ask. When you enter the world of work, deciding if accommodations are needed is something you will have to determine for yourself. If you are unsure what those accommodations may be, check out the "Searchable Online Accommodation Resource" (SOAR) webpage from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) website. This can be found here: **askjan.org/soar/index.htm**. Their searchable list of disabilities shows you the common types of accommodations individuals with various disabilities may need or want to request when they are in the workplace. Use that resource throughout high school to help you prepare for what sorts of accommodations you may need when you enter your desired career path.

What is a 'Reasonable Accommodation'

The key aspect of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and its relation to accommodations is Title I, which has to do with the words 'reasonable accommodations'. Reasonable is broadly defined as a change or modification that is not burdensome on the employer. Thus, modifying a workspace and providing an employee with an office chair that suits their disability would qualify as a physical change that does not cause a burden to the employer. Do keep in mind that employers that have less than 15 staff members are exempt under Title I of the ADA. Employers of 15 or more people, state and local governments, employment agencies, and labor unions have to comply with Title I.

Who is Eligible

To receive accommodations in the workplace, you must notify the proper individuals at your place of employment that you need modifications. These individuals are typically a supervisor, manager, or human resources personnel. For an example of how to write an accommodation request letter, see the following link: **askjan.org/media/accommrequestltr.html**.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) is equipment or systems that help people with disabilities become more efficient and independent by performing functions that may otherwise be difficult or impossible. Employers must legally provide you with assistive technology if you request a reasonable accommodation in the workplace. Use your time in high school to figure out which types of AT are best suited for you so you can perform your best in the workplace. Types of AT include: screen readers, text-to-speech software, and speech recognition programs. Alternative input devices include alternative keyboards, electronic pointing devices, sip-and-puff systems, wands and sticks, joysticks, trackballs, and touch screens. Other AT products include

screen enlargers or screen magnifiers, talking and large print processors and Braille embossers. Assistive technology can be demonstrated at locations such as the State Services for the Blind, PACER Center, the STAR Program, Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, and local Centers of Independent Living.

Knowing early on in high school what types of AT works best for you is important in planning for a career. You will know what works best for you, and how to effectively use the AT if you explore options in high school. Once you are out of high school, it may be more difficult for you to access and explore types of AT. This is something you can explore with your family and IEP team throughout your high school career.

ACTIVITIES TO PREPARE FOR EMPLOYMENT

The following section contains activities to complete by grade twelve. These activities are meant to assist you in getting the most out of your job search, and preparing you for competitive integrated employment.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that Vocational Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with local education agencies, have Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) available statewide to all students. Families and team members should consider student needs within the five Pre-Employment Transition Services activities:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education programs
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy

Setting Expectations

Begin planning for employment no later than grade nine and earlier if needed. For many students with disabilities, waiting until the end of high school years is too late.

By providing students with real-world experiences, such as workplace skills, career information and planning, job/career exploration and development and readiness throughout their high school careers, their opportunities to participate in Minnesota's workforce will increase.

Strategies for Families

- Expect your child to work.
- Provide opportunities to participate in experiential learning.
- Promote your child's participation in his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.
- At your child's ninth grade IEP meeting, set an employment goal.
- Make a list of three activities your child needs to do to reach that employment goal.
- Provide opportunities for your child to describe his/her preferred means of learning to others.
- Encourage your child to participate in a minimum of two work-linked learning experiences while in high school.

Strategies for Team Members

- Assist student in selecting an employment goal.
- Assist student in identify occupational interests, aptitudes and abilities, and learning style
- Assist student in identify expectations that employers have of employees.
- Provide asset-building orientation that builds on youth strengths rather than by their limitations.
- Involve youth in the decision-making processes of their IEP.
- Provide youth with opportunities to showcase their work and skills, use journals, and engage in self-reflection activities.
- Provide collaborative experiential learning opportunities.

MY EMPLOYMENT MAP

My Employment Goal: By the end of grade twelve I would like a job doing: _____

_____

_____

Have you shared your long-range employment goal with your IEP Team? YES NO

Based on the results of your Career Interest Inventory name two types of careers you are interested in?

1.

2.

Name two things you are good at that will assist you in getting a job in your career area of interest.

1.

2.

Based on the results of your Learning Style Inventory how do you learn best?

1.

2.

Name two skills you will need to develop to assist you in getting a job.

1.

2.

Are those skills and strategies to achieve those skills in your Individualized Education Program (IEP)? YES NO

Who are the people on your IEP team that will assist you in getting competitive integrated employment in your career area of interest?

1.

2.

Develop Self Advocacy Skills: Lead Your Student-Centered IEP Meeting, Learn About Your Rights and Responsibilities, and Foundation Skills

In order for secondary transition planning to be relevant and in turn, effective, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be based on individual student needs, interests and abilities. As a student, your IEP meeting is a way to practice self-advocacy, critical thinking, communication and social skills. Through Informed Choice decision making you can affect your employment and postsecondary outcomes. Prepare for the meeting by reviewing the IEP process with your case-manager. Ask questions about anything you do not understand. Use the following agenda to plan your IEP meeting.

Student's Name: _____

Date of the Meeting: _____

Introductions: Welcome to my IEP meeting. My name is . . . and I would like to introduce you to members of my IEP team. The purpose of today's meeting is to . . . I would like to share my IEP meeting agenda with you.

Step One: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Based on your Career Interest Profile, Employability Skills Checklists, and more, share information with your IEP team about your:

- Strengths, Interests and How You Learn Best
- Areas of Concern
- Instructional and Accommodation Needs in General Education and Special Education
- Health/Medical needs
- Share how your disability affects your ability to participate in the general education curriculum

Step Two: IEP Development: Setting My Goals

- Share your long-range employment and post-secondary goals and why are they important to you
- Share one goal (large or small) that you accomplished this past year
  - Share how you felt when you accomplished your goal
- Discuss with your IEP team the courses you should participate in this year and plan for next year.
  - Discuss with your IEP team how these courses/activities will assist you in graduating from high school and meeting your long-range goals for employment and post-secondary education

Step Three: As a team write your measurable annual instructional goals and objectives. These goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, meaning you should be able to meet them in twelve months.

Step Four: Additional Topics

- Extended School Year (ESY) discussion
- Participation in state and district-wide assessments

Step Five: Services and Supports

- What special education services and supports will assist you in making progress toward your annual goals/outcomes (time, frequency, accommodations)?
  - Who will be responsible for the services?
  - Where will the services be provided and why?
- Do you need to research Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB) and if so, who will assist you?
- Do you need to research county services and if so, who will assist you?
- Do you need to research support options at a post-secondary site and if so, who will assist you?

Step Six: Next Steps

- Additional Update Questions
- Thank everyone for attending your IEP meeting.
- Keep a copy of the IEP you helped to create for your use. The purpose of your IEP is to assist you in graduation from high school and to assist you in reaching your long long-term goals for employment and postsecondary education.

Students Rights and Responsibilities upon Reaching Age of Majority

RIGHTS

I have the right to know what my disability is and how it affects by ability to learn, live independently and be a part of a lifelong learning system.

I have the right to be provided information regarding assessments, services, and the Individual Education Planning process in a language and format I understand.

I have the right to participate in my Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

I have the right to have individuals who understand my disability on my IEP team.

I have the right to disagree with my IEP and receive help in requesting mediation, or write a complaint.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is my responsibility to ask questions, request help, seek self-advocacy training so that I can learn about my disability and advocate for my needs.

It is my responsibility to ask questions until I clearly understand information in my IEP.

It is my responsibility to invite people (i.e., parents, grandparent, coach, and teachers) who I trust and know me well to my IEP meetings.

It is my responsibility to understand that by refusing services and supports, it may affect my educational programming.

It is my responsibility to be engaged in the IEP planning process and participate in reaching my IEP goals and objectives.

Foundation Knowledge and Skills

Foundation Knowledge and Skills represent the base from which to build employment and post-secondary readiness. Refer to the **Career Fields, Clusters and Pathways Wheel on page 31** for foundation skills, and **page 32 for an explanation of the foundation knowledge and skills**.

How many of the following skills do you have?

- ❑ Employability
- ❑ Citizenship
- ❑ Ethics Problem Solving
- ❑ Critical Thinking
- ❑ Career Development
- ❑ Integrity
- ❑ Teamwork
- ❑ Technology Application
- ❑ Communications
- ❑ Legal Responsibilities
- ❑ Academic Foundations
- ❑ Safety, Health & Environment
- ❑ Leadership
- ❑ Technical Literacy
- ❑ Cultural Competence
- ❑ Lifelong Learning
- ❑ Financial Well-Being
- ❑ Organizational & Global Systems
- ❑ Creativity
- ❑ Innovation

How will you document your skills in a portfolio to share with your IEP team and others?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

A national resource to teach soft skills/foundation skills can be found at *Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success.* This program comprised of modular, hands-on, engaging activities that focus on six key skills. Those skills include communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking as well as professionalism.

Resources can be found at: **www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills**

Develop Job Exploration Skills: Job Shadowing and Networking

Job shadowing is a term used to describe a structured, informational visit to a work site that assists students learn about work, through observation and taking with current employees who are doing the work. Students can examine their career goals by reflecting on their experiences and the information they learn from the site visit. Students can compare occupations and required skills needed to perform the job. Job shadowing can have many purposes including those in the following list:

- Investigating personal interest, strengths in relation to work environments;
- Learning about skills and behaviors employers expect from their employees;
- Identifying how academic skills are used in the work place;
- Documenting examples of team work and learning why it is necessary;
- Learning about characteristics of a successful business;
- Describing the work place environment;
- Identifying the education and or training necessary to do different jobs at the business, and;
- Identifying how technology is used in the business.

Students can gather information by, observing work being performed and talking to employees about their jobs and their company.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS): Students with disabilities should receive adequate information about and applications for VRS at the beginning of their transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities. In Minnesota, this can begin in grade nine. In order to access VRS services, contact the counselor assigned to your school. You can find a directory of schools and the counselors assigned at: **mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/youth** or call 651-259-7366 to learn more.

State Services for the Blind (SSB): Services are provided to students who are Blind, DeafBlind, or Low Vision. These services are designed to help students navigate the world of high school as well as preparation for the future.

Independent Living Centers: Centers maintain information on accessible housing, transportation, employment opportunities, interpreters for hearing impaired people, among other services. Independent living centers are located around the state. You can find more information about the center nearest you at: **www.macil.org**.

County Resources: There are many resources that are provided by counties in Minnesota. To find the nearest county offices to you and identify the services they provide browse the **www.countyoffice.org/mn** website to help you find the resources you need.

Before You Go: Job Shadowing Questionnaire

1. Name of business and job site:

2. Job observed:

3. Describe the job:

4. What did you like about the job and work site?

5. What did you dislike about the job and work site?

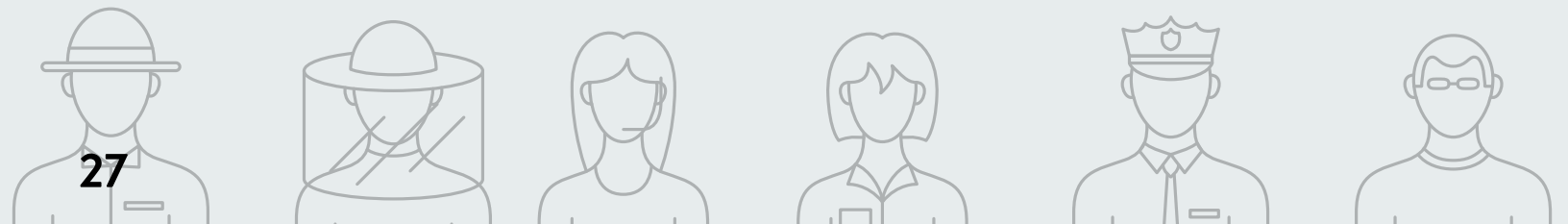
6. What are three skills you need to perform this job?

7. Would you like to explore this type of work further? YES NO

8. Where will you find more information on this type of work?

9. Name one person on your IEP team who can assist you?

10. What additional questions do you have about the job, and how will you get your questions answered?



Networking

As you begin your employment search, think about people in your life who will be resources for you. This can be a member of your family, a neighbor, a coach, a current or former employer. These individuals will become a part of your employment network. These individuals can also be used as your personal reference s as you develop your résumé.

NETWORKING CONTACT LIST:

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Develop Workplace Readiness Skills: Build Your Résumé

Your résumé is a one or two-page description of you and your skills. Some employers may want your résumé as you apply for jobs. There are a variety of sample résumés templates. Work with a member of your IEP team to find the one that works best for you. Things to include in your résumé:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Education History: Name of your high school or post-secondary institutions you've attended.

Employment History: Start with your most current employer. Strive to have two jobs by the time you graduate from high school.

Employer:

Address:

Supervisor:

Phone Number:

Employer:

Address:

Supervisor:

Phone Number:

Skills you have: Are you good at speaking, writing, identifying problems, getting information, critical thinking, data entry, numbers, organizing, etc.

Qualifications: List any accomplishments, honors, awards you have received.

Develop Workplace Readiness Skills: Practice Interviewing

Practice with sample interview questions before you go to a job interview. You will feel better prepared. Here are questions you may be asked. Write down your answers to each question.

Tell me about yourself: This is an opportunity to talk about your strengths and your interests.

Tell me why you want this job: This is an opportunity to share what interests you about the job. Show you are excited about the job and the possibility of learning new skills.

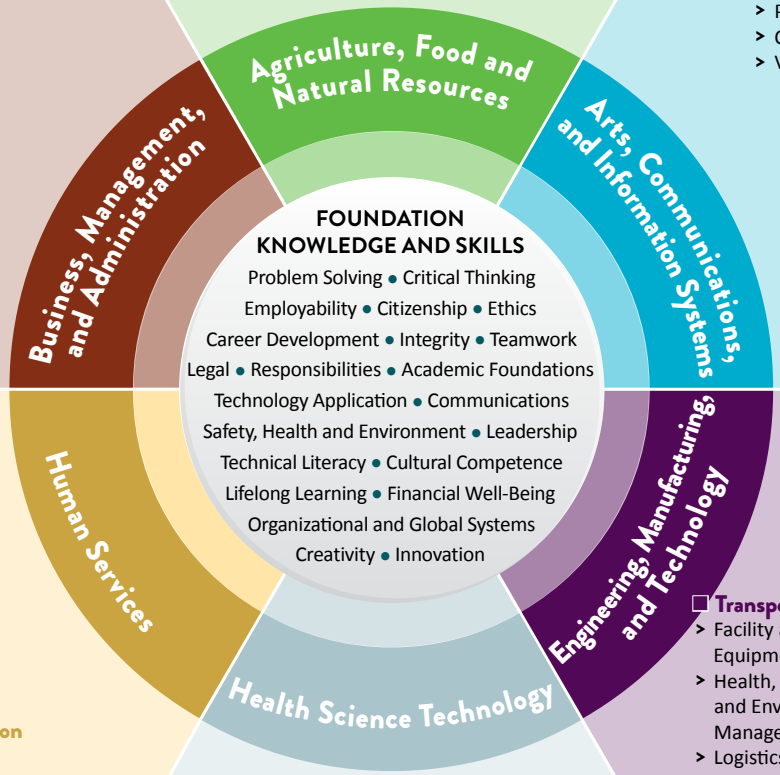
How would others describe you? This is an opportunity to talk about your skills. You want the employer to see that you are a good match.

What are your strengths? This is your opportunity to sell yourself as a good employee. Ideas can include how you are dependable and reliable. Give examples in your answer.

Give me an example of how you used your problem-solving skills.

Give me an example of how you contributed as a team member to get a task accomplished.

MINNESOTA CAREER FIELDS, CLUSTERS AND PATHWAYS



Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Animal Systems
- Agribusiness Systems
- Environmental Service Systems
- Food Products and Processing Systems
- Natural Resources Systems
- Plant Systems
- Power, Structural, and Technical Systems

Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications
- Audio/Video Technology and Film
- Journalism and Broadcasting
- Performing Arts
- Printing Technology
- Communications Technology
- Visual Arts

Information Technology
- Information Support and Services
- Network Systems
- Programming and Software Development
- Web and Digital Communications

Architecture and Construction
- Construction
- Design/Pre-construction
- Maintenance/ Operations

Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Facility and Mobile Equipment Maintenance
- Health, Safety, and Environmental Management
- Logistics Planning and Management Services
- Sales and Services
- Transportation Operations
- Transportation Systems/Infrastructure Planning, Management, and Regulation
- Warehousing and Distribution Center Operations

Manufacturing
- Production
- Manufacturing Production Process Development
- Maintenance, Installation, and Repair
- Quality Assurance
- Logistics and Inventory Control
- Health, Safety, and Environmental Assurance

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Engineering and Technology
- Science and Mathematics

Health Science
- Biotechnology Research and Development
- Diagnostic Services
- Support Services
- Health Informatics
- Therapeutic Services

Human Services
- Consumer Services
- Counseling and Mental Health Services
- Early Childhood Development and Services
- Family and Community Services
- Personal Care Services

Education and Training
- Administration and Administrative Support
- Professional Support Services
- Teaching/Training

Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Correction Services
- Emergency and Fire Management Services
- Law Enforcement Services
- Legal Services
- Security and Protective Services

Government and Public Administration
- Revenue and Taxation
- Foreign Service
- Governance
- National Security
- Planning
- Public Management and Administration
- Regulation

Marketing
- Merchandising
- Marketing Management
- Marketing Communications
- Marketing Research
- Professional Sales

Business, Management, and Administration
- Administration Support
- Operations Management
- Business Information Management
- Human Resources Management
- General Management

Hospitality and Tourism
- Lodging
- Recreation, Amusements and Attractions
- Restaurants and Food/Beverage Services
- Travel and Tourism

Finance
- Banking Services
- Business Finance
- Securities and Investment
- Accounting
- Insurance

LEGEND
- ■ Career Cluster
- > Career Pathway

Learn about Programs of Study
mnprogramsofstudy.org

iSPEAK CTE Blog
mnlearningthatworks.org

CHART EXPLANATION

FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Foundation Knowledge and Skills, located in the centermost circle of the Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters and Pathways chart, represent the base from which to build work and college readiness.

CAREER FIELDS

Career Fields, which are identified in the segmented ring around Foundation Knowledge and Skills, are the organizing structure for the 16 career clusters and 79 pathways. The fields represent the broadest aggregation of careers. Students are normally exposed to career field exploration in middle school and early high school. Career fields have been identified as:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts, Communications, and Information Systems
- Engineering, Manufacturing, and Technology
- Health Science Technology Human Services Business, Management, and Administration

CAREER CLUSTERS

Career Clusters, which are identified in the bold, colored bullets (■), represent a grouping of occupations and broad industries into a national classification of 16 clusters that are based upon common knowledge and skills. Career clusters include hundreds of occupations that may be grouped into pathways around which educational programs of study can be built.

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Architecture and Construction
- Human Services
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- Information Technology
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Education and Training
- Manufacturing
- Finance
- Marketing
- Government and Public Administration
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Health Science
- Transportation, Distribution, Logistics

CAREER PATHWAYS

Career Pathways, which are identified by the symbol (>) under each cluster heading, represent an organization of related occupational areas within a specific career cluster. Each of these pathways has identified knowledge and skills validated by industry from which programs and programs of study are developed.

Minnesota Programs of Study

The Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters and Pathways chart, on the reverse side, depicts the organizing framework of the foundation knowledge and skills, career fields, career clusters, and career pathways that Minnesota will use for developing Programs of Study (POS) in career and technical education. Once developed, learners at various levels (high school, collegiate, or workforce training level) will then be able to choose from several individual programs within a Program of Study in order to attain the specific knowledge, skills and abilities needed to pursue a career of their choice.

Programs of study are sets of aligned programs and curricula that begin at the high school level and continue through college and university certificate, diploma and degree programs. The following are some of the key elements that underlie the definition:

- Competency based curricula tied to industry expectations and skill standards;
- Sequential course offerings that provide strategic entry and exit points as needed throughout a lifetime - this leads to manageable "stepping stones" of skill building, high school graduation and postsecondary education completion;
- Flexible course and program formats convenient for learner segments;
- Course portability for seamless progression;
- Multiple entry and exit points to support continuing education, returning adults, and dislocated workers;
- Connections between high school and postsecondary education, skill progression, and career opportunities that align academic credentials with job advancement in high-skill, high-wage or high-demand occupations.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING WHEEL

Use Experiential Learning Activities to move to Competitive Integrated Employment

Complete this form after you have researched a potential Career Field of Interest. Refer to the Experiential Learning Wheel on **page 33**.

Employer's name: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Website: _____ **Position title:** _____

Size of employer: _____ **Location (city/state):** _____

Is this employment opportunity accessible by public transportation? YES NO

Does this employer provide accessible parking spaces? YES NO

Miles from home: _____ **Time to arrive at location:** _____

Education level required: High School Diploma/GED Associates' Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree or higher

Wage: _____/hour **or** **Wage:** _____/year

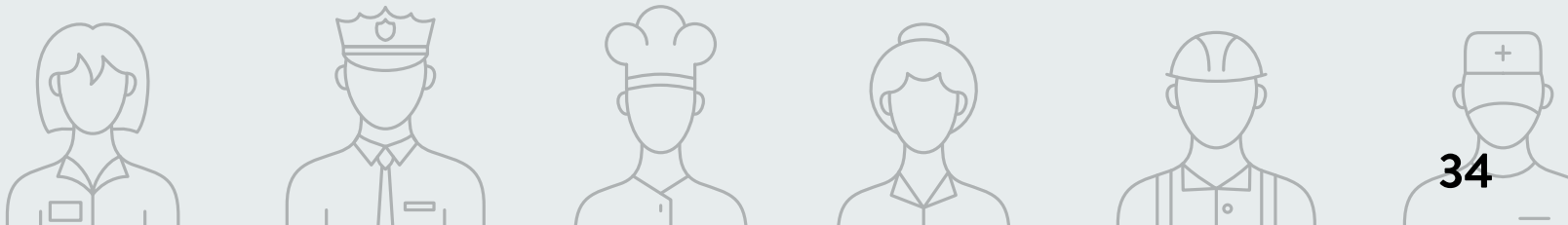
Complete the following questions with your IEP team?

1. **Have you used DB101.org to see how this position would affect SSI/SSDI?** YES NO
2. **Have you completed an Estimator Session?** YES NO
3. **What are two things you learned from that session?**

   a.

   b.

4. **Did your team talk to you about the type of employment you are looking for and provide you with needed information so that you could make an Informed Choice?** YES NO
5. **Do you need workplace accommodations with this job?** YES NO
6. **What is one accommodation you will need?** _____
7. **Does the employer provide a benefits package?** YES NO



8. **How will you get to your job?** _____

9. **What career cluster/field would this position fall under?** _____

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OR DESIRED QUALITIES OF AN APPLICANT	

What interests you about this job? _____

_____

_____

What questions do you have about this job? _____

_____

_____

What is the mission statement of the employer? _____

_____

_____

Does this job align with your career and employment goals? YES NO

Notes/Comments: _____

_____

_____

RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY:

Disability Benefits 101: offers tools that help you plan your finances including work, SSI and other incomes.
Db101.org

Get My Future: Explore this resource to find information about getting ready for employment and figuring out what you want to do in life. **www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/index.aspx**

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth: General resources for both youth and their families.
www.ncwd-youth.info

PACER Center: Resources for families and youth located in Minnesota.
www.PACER.org

State Services for the Blind (SSB): Provides services to those who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind.
mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/blind-visual-impaired/teens-student-services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS): Provides services to those who have a disability prepare for, find, and keep a job and live as independently as possible. More information can be found here:
mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/youth

INDEPENDENT LIVING

ARC Minnesota: resources for people who have developmental disabilities.
www.thearcofminnesota.org

Centers for Independent Living: Organization that advocates for the independent living needs of people with disabilities.
www.macil.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guide was created through collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

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This resource guide was made possible through funding from:
The Minnesota Department of Education

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   Unit 8 has a whole section and workbook on practicing and preparing to disclose. It gives scenarios that help youth and families decide if disclosing is the right option.
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MINNESOTA

This resource guide is available in a digital format at:
mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources

Upon request, this document can be made accessible in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities by calling 651-259-7541.

QTY: 5,000

www.mn.gov

7-2018