



**Lancaster County Office of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services**  
Basic Information Series: Volume ID-3  
**For Information Call:**  
Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Supports Coordination: 717-399-7355  
Early Intervention Supports Coordination: 717-399-7323  
BH/DS Administration Unit: 717-299-8021

## Employment for Individuals with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability

# Basic Information Series

### Let's Get to Work

If there's one value that all people agree with, it's the value of work. People feel valued and good about themselves when they take a step towards independence through work. This is particularly true in Lancaster County where there is a strong work ethic culture.

In the past, individuals with disabilities were often excluded from work, either because employers didn't think they were able to work, or because the individual did not have the training available to get or keep a job.

A range of vocational services are available in Lancaster County. Individuals can

contact OVR directly or their BH/DS Supports Coordinator can assist with any needed referrals. All the programs have the same goal: to give individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability the dignity of being contributing members of society through employment.

As of 2016, Pennsylvania is an Employment First state, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) is in place to expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and to ensure individuals are paid competitive wages for their work.

### Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation serves people residing in Pennsylvania who have a disability that presents as a barrier to employment.

Individuals interested in working should complete a referral with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR will review documentation, schedule a meeting, and then assess the skill level of the individual and make recommendations for work and/or training.

OVR has an Early Reach Initiative starting at age 14, to assist youth with a disability to better prepare for their transition into the world of work and independence. Early Reach provides informational presentations and consultation, education on the benefits of early career planning, assistance for youth with disabilities in planning and applying to OVR, and consultation and links to resources.

*\*Contact information for the nearest OVR is located on the reverse side of this fact sheet.*

## What kinds of work opportunities are there?

### Competitive Integrated

#### Employment

An individual is considered to be competitively employed when he or she is receiving wages at minimum wage or above and is no longer receiving supports (including follow-up) from a vocational provider, for a period of at least 90 consecutive days. An integrated work environment is one in which people with and without intellectual or developmental disabilities work together.

#### Supported Employment

Supported Employment can include Customized Employment, Job Finding, and Job Support. Supported Employment provides one-on-one, on-the-job training and support by a job coach to an individual who is an employee of a private sector company. The individual is being paid at or above minimum wage in a competitive, integrated environment.

As an individual's skills increase, the paid supports by the job coach are reduced and there is increased use of natural supports in the workplace. This can be a long-term arrangement.

The Supported Employment provider matches the potential employee to the right job, based on the employee's abilities, interests, physical capabilities, work habits and work pace.

#### Small Group Employment

Usually called a mobile work crew, this service provides vocational training to a small group of individuals who are trainees of a vocational program. The trainees work in a community work setting under the direction of a vocational program supervisor and are paid at minimum wage or less by the vocational program.

#### Community Participation Support

Individuals who have been assessed by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and require training before becoming workplace ready can attend pre-vocational programs. These programs focus on work readiness activities such as social skills, work place etiquette, ability to focus, and specific work skills to support the person to seek competitive employment in the future.

(Note: there are other Community Participation Support Programs whose focus is not work related at all, but focus on activities and community integration.)

**The nearest OVR district office is located in York:**

**York BVRS**

2550 Kingston Road Suite 101

York, PA 17402

Phone: 717-771-4407

Toll Free Number: 800-762-6306

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