

“ Individuals with developmental disabilities want to work in integrated settings along with their non-disabled colleagues. They want to be afforded the same wages, benefits and opportunities to advance in their careers, to contribute to society, and to move out of poverty.”

*Alliance for Participation
2009 Statement on Employment*

It's important to remember that funds you receive from DDS are portable. This means that if you are not satisfied with the employment supports and services you are receiving, you can move your funds and purchase services from another provider, or you can hire your own employment direct hire support. The amount of DDS funds you make portable will support your present Level of Need. **You have the authority to take charge of your employment support services!**

Contact Us:

DDS

Department of Developmental Services

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A Connect-Ability Partner
www.connect-ability.com

connect-ability

Connect-Ability is managed by Connecticut Department of Social Services, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. Funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

DDS

Department of Developmental Services

**Employment
Supports and
Services**



Department of Developmental Services

A Connect-Ability Partner

Connecticut has adopted an **Employment First** approach for all people supported by DDS.

- Employment First is about expecting, encouraging, providing, creating and rewarding integrated employment in the workforce.
- It is about employment at minimum (or above) wages, with benefits.
- And, it's about asking the person, **“What do you want to do for work?”** instead of asking, “Do you want to work?” and then working with him or her to attain career goals by making sure that their Individual Plan contains an employment action plan.

What employment supports and services are available to you?

DDS case managers can assist you in accessing the following supports and services:

Competitive Job Supports

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and other generic employment services such as One-Stop-Centers can assist with employment assessments, help with job development activities, or provide time-limited job coaching supports. *Community Work Incentive Coordinators (better known as Benefits Specialists)* are also available to review the federal and state benefits you receive and help you understand how you can maximize your independence.

Time Limited Customized Individual Employment Supports

Time limited job development supports can be used to help you find and explore community-based jobs that pay at least minimum wage; to help you learn new employment

skills by attending employment-related educational classes, apprenticeship programs or other training programs, or to help you start up your own business. Individualized day supports may be available when you need limited follow-up support at your place of employment.

Group Supported Employment

Community-based group employment supports are available to help you to learn new work skills and to help prepare you for participation in individualized employment opportunities. In group-supported employment situations you work with a small group of peers at a job in the community with the support of a job coach. In some situations you are paid by the provider agency and in some situations you are paid by the employer.

How can I get employment supports from DDS?

- **Work Ethic and Career Exploration:** Developing a strong work ethic is the foundation for being able to find, get and keep a job.

Being held responsible for chores as a young child, participating in career exploration activities in the middle school years, and doing volunteer and part-time work as a young adult create a strong foundation, ensuring a successful transition to DDS adult services and future employment.
- **Network:** With the help of people close to you, think about what type of work you would like to do, what skills you have, and what kind of support you will need at work. Consider all of your options. Visit businesses in your area. What businesses do you see that do work that is of interest to you? Get to know the people in your community and learn about what work is available near where you live. Visit different types of support services to see what is offered and to talk to people

who have purchased services that you are interested in receiving. Talk with people who have hired their own staff and learn about how this option could work for you. You can use the questions found in the guidebook, *“Making Good Choice About Your DDS Supports,”* to help make sure you are asking the right questions.

To obtain funding for employment supports you will need to work with DDS staff to:

- Become eligible for DDS Services (See the DDS website for eligibility information: www.ct.gov/dds.)
- Complete a Level of Need (LON) Assessment Tool so that the right level of funding for you can be determined based on your support needs.
- Become eligible for Medicaid Waiver Services by applying for and obtaining Medicaid Title XIX and then saying that you want to live in the community and not in an Intermediate Care Facility.
- Identify the supports that will best meet your needs in your Individual Plan.
- Develop a budget for how to spend funds allocated to you based upon your LON.

Please remember that **Employment Supports are not an entitlement.**

- **You will receive funding only if you are determined an Emergency or**
- **Priority level of need and money is available in the department’s budget.**

More detailed information about DDS eligibility, Level of Need, Waiver Services and funding allocations can be found on the DDS website at www.ct.gov/dds.