



YES, YOU CAN WORK!

Interested in returning to work or trying out work for the first time, but unsure how work will impact your Social Security benefits or if work is even possible for you?

Many people receiving disability benefits, or applying for benefits, really want to work, but fear there may be consequences. This handout will give you the information you and your family need to learn more about programs, which will assist you with returning to work, or trying out work for the first time!

We can help you find success! These recommended resources provide information on where you can go for assistance to learn more about employment for people with disabilities. Quality services are available to help you better understand all of the federal work incentive programs, including Social Security work supports, for people with disabilities.

MYTHS WE'VE HEARD ON THE STREETS AND FACTS TO BUST THEM UP!

MYTH

"People with mental illness shouldn't work."

FACT

People with mental health conditions are just as productive as other employees. Employers who hire people with mental health conditions report good attendance and punctuality as well as motivation, good work, and job tenure on par with or greater than other employees.

MYTH

"I will lose my disability benefits, income and health insurance, which I have worked so hard to obtain!"

FACT

Not so fast! SSA offers comprehensive work incentives, which allows you to keep your benefits for quite a long time. Should you be unable to continue working as a result of your disability, SSA may restart your benefits. Because some SSA rules may be hard to understand, all states have benefit planning resources to help you get started. <https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/>

MYTH

"I have never worked before, so I have no skills an employer needs."

FACT

People with disabilities with little or no work history do find work that meets their strengths, preferences, abilities, and skills. Supported employment services focus on these factors to help you seek and find competitive employment in the community.

MYTH

"My family does not want me to work because they fear my symptoms will get worse."

FACT

Recent studies found that employment actually improves symptoms! Work offers less social isolation and a sense of purpose, just to name two benefits! Work is more than just a paycheck, and this brochure offers helpful resources for your family and friends to be supportive and understanding of your career goals.

MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Social Security Administration (SSA)

SSA has a free Ticket to Work Program available to all SSI/SSDI beneficiaries. Specialists connect individuals to employment supports in their area, such as career counseling, training, and job placement. Also, they can explain in detail how going back to work will impact a person's benefits. The website includes links to local employment resources and offers free training webinars for beneficiaries and service providers. <https://www.choosework.net/>

Supported Employment

The Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) helps improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services, and outcomes for persons with disabilities and has numerous resources for individuals, employers, and community organizations. <http://apse.org/>

VCU National Training and Data Center

The Virginia Commonwealth University National Training and Data Center provides comprehensive training and technical assistance to Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects, the Ticket to Work Help Line, and community partners to ensure accurate and timely support for beneficiaries on the road to employment and financial independence. <http://vcu-ntdc.org/index.cfm>

WorkforceGPS

WorkforceGPS's Disability and Employment Community, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), is an online resource library that aims to enhance the number of and the experiences of people with disabilities in the workforce. The site offers resources, events, and news for employers, employees, and other stakeholders. <https://disability.workforcegps.org/>

SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) Website

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has gathered a number of employment resources and links for your reference, including the *Brief Overview of SSI/SSDI Work Incentives* and the *SOAR Employment Conversation Guide!* <http://bit.ly/2cqafj2>

DOL's Disability Resources

DOL's Disability Resources page provides strategies to promote an inclusive workforce and to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. <https://bit.ly/2IEBXn2>

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center
<https://soarworks.prainc.com>