

Employment First: Frequently Asked Questions

Caregivers/Guardians of Job Seekers with Disabilities

[Kentucky Employment First law](#) states that “The General Assembly finds and declares that it is the policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive integrated employment shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who desire to become employed.” You can [learn what Employment First means to Kentuckians](#) in this short video.

What is Employment First, and how can it benefit Kentuckians with disabilities?

Answer: Employment First is a law that prioritizes competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. It ensures that people have access to the resources, training, and support they need to find and maintain meaningful jobs in the community.

What role, as a caregiver, do I play in helping Kentuckians with disabilities find employment?

Answer: As a caregiver, your insights are valuable in identifying strengths and interests that could lead to employment success. You can help by being involved in the planning process, advocating for the individual with disabilities’ needs, and supporting them as they explore job options. By sharing what you know about the job seeker, you can help be sure they find a job that matches their skills, interests, and support needs.

What types of jobs are available for Kentuckians with disabilities?

Answer: Just like anyone else, people with disabilities can explore job opportunities across a wide variety of industries, including retail, hospitality, office administration, healthcare, and many others. Employment First works to increase connections between job seekers and businesses to better match skills and interests with local labor needs. By sharing what you know about the job seeker, you can help be sure they find a job that matches their skills, interests, and support needs. [Learn about others who have found a variety of jobs by watching these videos](#) or [read these supported employment success stories](#).

How will Kentuckians with disabilities be supported on the job?

Answer: Services may look different for each person based on what they are eligible for and what they need. Through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, they may receive

services such as job counseling, access to technology, and/or personalized support that provides training, assists with workplace accommodations, and offers ongoing support as needed. It can look different for each person, but it should fit one's choices and abilities. Support will change over time as the employee gains independence on the job. People with a significant impact of disability may be eligible for supported employment, providing more individual support. This page shares [information that may be helpful to you as your loved one navigates supported employment services.](#)

Will Kentuckians with disabilities lose their benefits if they go to work?

Answer: Many individuals can work and still maintain their benefits during the transition to employment. Programs like [Social Security's Ticket to Work](#) offer incentives to encourage employment without immediately losing benefits. A benefits counselor can provide specific guidance. You can [find a benefits counselor on this Work Incentives Planning and Assistance \(WIPA\) flyer.](#) You can find additional information at this [Disability Benefits website.](#) It is important to remember that wages impact each benefit differently, so be sure to know what benefit(s) you receive when seeking answers to your own situation.