# The Benefits of Working and Finding Work

## Definitions

There are many benefits to working as a teenager and adult. One of the best ways that you can prepare yourself for a successful career as an adult is to gain some paid work experience while you are in high school, even if it is just during the summer or for a few hours a week.

Some benefits to working a paid job during high school include:

* Making money so that you can buy things you would want or to save for the future.
* Gaining new skills that will help you in your career or adult life.
* Meeting new people outside of your family or school friends.
* Getting to know some employers who can serve as resume references or helpful contacts after high school.
* Learn more about what you would like or would not like in a future career.
* Contribute to your community.
* Have fun!

## Guiding Questions

* What do you see as the greatest benefits to getting a job now?
* Do you have any paid or unpaid work experience? Have you ever participated in a job shadow, internship, or interview with a professional?
* How could you communicate to an adult in your life that you would like to work?
* What do you think would be a good time for you to work a job? After school? On the weekends? In the summer?
* What kind of transportation may you use to get to work?
* What accommodations do you think you will need for a job?
* What kind of work environment do you think you’d enjoy: quiet and independent, or fast-paced and social?

If looking for a job, consider:

* What adults in your life (e.g., family, teachers, school counselor, siblings, faith community members) could help you find a job.
* The types of jobs other teenagers that you know have in your community.
* Start small and build your skills. Your first job is not necessarily going to be your dream job, and that is okay!
* Think about where you like to eat, shop, or hang out in your community? Are there work opportunities at any of these places?
* Is there any work that you could do for family members, neighbors, faith community members, etc.?
* What are your preferences, interests, strengths, and needs when it comes to work?
* Where may you find job postings in your local community? Is there a Chamber of Commerce? Are there job fairs available through the local library, community center, or community college?
* What are the requirements for the jobs in which you are interested?

## Resources

[disabledPerson](https://www.disabledperson.com/) This resource is a fully accessible job board with a resume builder available.

[EMPOWER’s student course on self-advocacy and self-determination](https://empowervi.yeslms.com/courses/description/e336ce7e-71ad-490c-01d8-08dc370a4d95) This resource may help you advocate to others about your goals and needs related to working.

[EMPOWER’s archived newsletter from April 2024](https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=fd5a09f5d46220521eae91c06&id=411d86cd4f) This resource contains some helpful strategies for understanding and seeking accommodations in the workplace.

[What types of jobs can people who are blind or have low vision do?](https://www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu/businesses/what-types-of-jobs#:~:text=What%20types%20of%20jobs%20can%20people%20who%20are,...%208%20Other%20Accessibility%20Specialist%20Darren%20Burton%20) According to the National Technical Assistance Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC), “with appropriate training and equipment, people who are blind or have low vision have the same range of abilities as anyone else.”

[Employment | National Federation of the Blind (nfb.org)](https://nfb.org/programs-services/employment) This resource shares upcoming opportunities (e.g., career fairs) and career resources (e.g., the self-advocacy employment toolkit).

[Customized Employment a Path to Meaningful Work (aphconnectcenter.org)](https://aphconnectcenter.org/careerconnect/job-seekers/customized-employment-a-path-to-meaningful-work/) This resource discusses customized employment. Customized Employment helps individuals facing significant barriers due to multiple disabilities secure and sustain jobs. Customized Employment creates tailored employment solutions that address employee strengths and employer needs by emphasizing collaboration between the individual, the employer, and support staff.