

Being Disabled AND Employed

Version 2.0 by Nico Meyering

The Basics

Many people with disabilities work, but being a job-seeker with a disability carries both challenges and opportunities. In these slides, I will discuss:

- Jobseeking tips and hints
- Resources for disabled jobseekers
- The basics of SSI/SSDI
- Links

Jobseeking Hints and Tips

It's up to you to show employers that you're the best fit for a job. Remember:

- Research the company you apply to, Check with disability advocacy groups to see if this employer has a reputation for hiring and keeping disabled employees. Being familiar with an employer shows them you are excited and interested in working there.
- Bring samples of your work (if applicable) and extra resume copies.
- Dress formally (blue or black clothes and dress shoes) unless told otherwise.

Jobseeking Hints and Tips

- Rehearse! Practice interview questions with friends or family. Explain how the company will benefit from hiring you and how you will accomplish job tasks.
- Search online for jobs, attend career fairs, use personal connections, and research job placement programs for disabled candidates in your area.
- Decide when and if you disclose your disability to your employer. Remember, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employers from discriminating against job candidates with disabilities.

Network, Network, NETWORK!

- Get to know people and businesses in your professional field: get peoples' business cards, create and update a [LinkedIn profile](#), and consider starting a blog about your professional interests.
- If you can't find a job in your field right away, consider volunteering in order to build a resume and to hone your work skills.
- Attend professional conferences and give out your own business cards.
- “At least fifty percent of gaining employment is networking.”-Alec Frazier, director at [Autistic Reality](#)

Resources for Disabled Job-Seekers

- Schedule A
 - This is an option that allows the US government to hire people with disabilities more quickly.
 - You will need to state that you want to be considered for a job under Schedule A in your resume or cover letter,
 - You will also need to provide proof of disability. A doctor, a medical professional, or a vocational rehab specialist can provide this letter.
 - More information at USAJOBS:
<https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/individuals-with-disabilities/>

Resources for Disabled Job-Seekers

- Selective Placement Program Coordinators
 - These people help federal agencies recruit and hire people with disabilities.
 - They can answer your questions about the job application process.
 - Most federal agencies have a SPPC or a similar role.
 - More information:
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/selective-placement-program-coordinator/>
 - SPPC Directory:
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/selective-placement-program-coordinator-directory/>

Resources for Disabled Job-Seekers

- [AbilityJOBS](#)
 - An online employment search engine for people with disabilities. Employers can also search through resumes and contact you directly.
- [AbilityLinks](#)
 - AN online employment search engine which also provides career fairs and networking opportunities between inclusive employers and candidates.
- [Career One Stop](#)
 - An online employment search engine that helps candidates with disabilities connect to employers and job training.

Resources for Disabled Job Seekers

- [Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - COSD is an online job board for college students with disabilities.
- [Hire Disability Solutions](#)
 - Candidates can post their resumes, search for jobs, and get help starting their own business.
- [Learn How to Become](#)
 - Helpful articles and resources about job hunting and how to determine how inclusive a potential employer is.

Resources for Disabled Job Seekers

- Vocational Rehabilitation
 - VR programs help people with disabilities prepare for employment and gain or regain employment.
 - People receiving disability income like SSI and SSDI are considered eligible for VR services.
 - VR counselors can help you through the VR process from determining eligibility to accepting job offers.
 - [Here is a list of VR agencies by US state](#)

The Basics of SSI and SSDI

- **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** is for people who have worked enough hours and who are between the ages of 18 and 65. How much you get depends on how much you have earned over your lifetime. SSDI has a five-month waiting period, but approval rates are higher for SSDI than for SSI.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** is for people who have low income and who have generally not worked. SSI is need-based according to your income and assets. You must have less than \$2,000 in assets (cash and major possessions) in order to be eligible.

The Basics of SSI and SSDI

- Usually, people who receive SSI and SSDI are also eligible for Medicare and for food stamps.
- Sometimes you can receive both SSI and SSDI. This is usually when you receive very little assistance through SSDI and still meet the eligibility for SSI.
- SSI and SSDI are both managed by the Social Security Administration. [Get started here.](#)

The Basics of SSI and SSDI

You may feel unworthy or ashamed about receiving public assistance like SSI, SSDI, and food stamps. Everyone needs help sometimes and there is no shame in using resources available to you. Famous people who have received public assistance include:

- Bruce Springsteen
- Scarlett Johansson
- Viola Davis
- Kelly Clarkson

Resources

- [Monster article on job hunting with a disability](#)
- [The Campaign for Disability Employment](#)
- [Five tips for job hunting with a disability](#)
- [Virtual career fair for people with disabilities](#) (from Bender Consulting)
- [Ability Job Fair](#)

Disclaimers

- The information in these slides is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge; you should always confirm information and do further research yourself.
- This guide is not exhaustive and was assembled independently of my own volition.
- This guide does not constitute legal, medical, or advocacy advice.

Questions?

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