

WILLING and ABLE



A Job Hunting Guide for Idahoans with Disabilities

IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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**WILLING and ABLE:
A Job Hunting Guide for
Idahoans with Disabilities**



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Permission to reprint any part of this document is granted.

Credit will be appreciated where appropriate.

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The Job Search Process

Section 1:

This booklet will help people with disabilities look for and find employment in Idaho.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates there are 23.8 million working age Americans with disabilities. But only 37.2 percent of them are working compared to 75.1 percent of the nondisabled population (2006 American Community Survey).



This booklet is a guide and does not address every issue regarding disability and work. The information in this booklet is not legal advice about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or state laws about work. It is information intended to help you get started and understand how to deal with your disability in the workplace. There is no guarantee that knowing the information in this book will remove all barriers to finding work.

This book can help Idahoans with disabilities:

- Understand their strengths and knowledge concerning work.
- Organize their job search.
- Identify potential work areas.
- Prepare for job interview questions.
- Understand their rights and protection under the ADA.
- Locate agencies and governmental programs to assist them.

This book can help Idaho employers:

- Ensure equality of opportunity for individuals with disabilities.
- Understand the rights and protections granted to individuals with disabilities under the ADA.
- Understand and be reassured that individuals with disabilities are capable workers.

Myths and Realities Concerning Disabilities and Employment

Some individuals are born with a disability. Some people acquire a disability through injury or medical problems. In any of these cases, a change in work may be necessary.

Realities about employment for individuals with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities are:

- Attending high schools, colleges and trade schools.
- Working in the majority of existing work fields.
- Taking part in the community and economy and raising families.

Realities about employers and employment.

Some employers:

- Go out of their way to hire disabled individuals.
- Do not want to hire individuals with disabilities.

Myths and misperceptions about individuals with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities are:

- Not whole people.
- Unable to do quality work.
- Unable to perform jobs without assistance.
- High risk or accident prone.
- Unreliable.



- Are not in compliance with the ADA.
- Ask illegal questions during interviews.

Realities about individuals with disabilities seeking employment.

- Individuals with disabilities can perform their work tasks as well or better than nondisabled persons.
- There continues to be “hidden” prejudice among certain employers about hiring an individual with a disability.
- Individuals with disabilities need to know and be able to tell an employer how they can perform the essential functions of a job and what reasonable accommodations could be provided to help them.

Realities about working and Social Security.

If you are receiving benefits:

- You CAN work and still maintain your financial and/or medical insurance!
- There are excellent resources available and experts who can work one-on-one to assist you in understanding work incentives.
- It is extremely important to know about all of your available work incentives so that you can make informed decisions about work.
- See more information on page 35.

Attitude is Everything!

Q: What attitudes does an individual with a disability need to have in order to move forward toward employment?



A willingness to:

- Accept the disability and move forward.
- Identify and use your vocational strengths and abilities in relation to new types of work.
- “Start over” in a new work area, if necessary, to return to work.
- Learn new skills, be retrained or attend school.
- Work with reasonable accommodations in the workplace.
- Succeed in a new vocation.

Remember, attitude is everything.

The ADA requires “reasonable accommodation” to help individuals access the workplace and assistive devices to help with specific job tasks, making most careers possible.

The search for employment is a full-time job and should be treated as such. A successful job hunter someone who is persistent!

Transferable Skills

Q: What is a transferable skill?

These are skills that have been learned and used in the past in one or more jobs and can be substituted or interchanged into another job. A transferable skill has been learned by doing.

A transferable skills analysis is one of the first things that should be done when looking for work in a new field following an injury that results in a disability. A Department of Labor workforce consultant or a vocational rehabilitation counselor can help you determine your transferable skills.

Remember, different types of work use similar job skills.



Corey—pursuing a new dream of becoming a farrier following traumatic brain injury

Getting Started — Agencies That Can Help

The key to finding a job is getting started. Looking for work is not an easy task, but there are a lot of people who can help you become successful.

One of the goals of the Idaho Department of Labor, the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to help you find a job. Your first step will be to contact one of these agencies for assistance.

There is no wrong door or wrong place to start as you prepare for and get into employment. For the most part individuals with disabilities use the same resources as other job seekers. If you have a disability but have transferable work skills and believe you are ready to apply for and enter employment, then an Idaho Department of Labor office may be the place to start. If you require rehabilitative services to prepare for or get a job, then an Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation office or the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired may be a good starting point. Any of these agencies can help you understand community or other programs which may be able to help you.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

There are two vocational rehabilitation programs in the State of Idaho, one through the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and one through the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The mission of the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is "Preparing individuals with disabilities for employment and community enrichment." Employment contributes to a person's ability to live independently, and the division believes that every person has the right to work.

What are the eligibility requirements for vocational rehabilitation services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation?

Individuals with disabilities that prevent them from working may apply. A vocational rehabilitation counselor will assess your situation and determine whether you are eligible for services.



Vocational Rehabilitation – You may be eligible if you:

- Have a physical or mental impairment (disability) which constitutes or results in a substantial barrier to employment; and
- Require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment; and
- Can benefit in terms of an employment outcome; OR
- Are a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipient who intends to achieve an employment outcome.



The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program is personalized in its approach—counselors provide you with individualized services required for you to gain employment.

To determine whether you are eligible for services, your counselor will ask you to provide information from a qualified professional—for example, a licensed doctor or a certified psychologist—that shows you have a disability.

If you have been determined eligible for Social Security because of a disability and have proof of that, and you intend to go to work, you are presumed to be eligible for services.

If you don't have the required information that shows you have a disability, you will need to tell your counselor how to get such information and be willing to sign a release to authorize the counselor to obtain the information. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation can also purchase the evaluations necessary to determine your eligibility.

If I am eligible, then what?

Once you are determined eligible for vocational services, you will be asked to meet with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to:

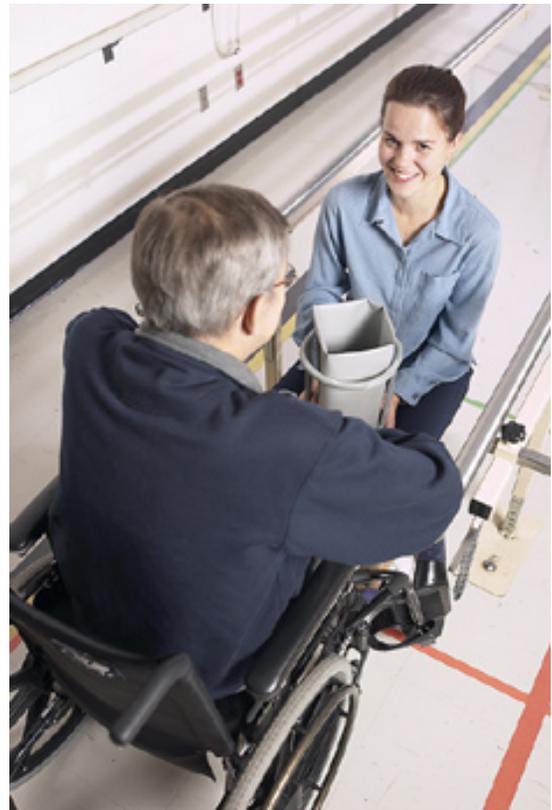
- Discuss your abilities, limitations, interests, needs, transferable and other special work skills and employment alternatives.
- Secure any aptitude or other tests, if necessary.
- Choose an employment goal and develop an individualized plan for employment to meet your goal.
- Make a commitment to a plan of action for going to work.
- Complete the plan and **go to work**.

The following services may be provided to assist you in getting or keeping a job:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's goal is to place Idahoans with disabilities in the work force by securing and maintaining productive employment. The division can provide the services required to assist you to go to work and can assist you in locating suitable employment. Only services that you need to reach employment will be provided. Services may include:

- **Vocational guidance and counseling** for adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, and planning for entry or re-entry into the world of work.
- **Assessment** to determine vocational strengths and weaknesses to plan for services required to reach the employment outcome.
- **Training** for those who need a career change because of disability. This can involve higher education, on-the-job training and vocational-technical training.
- **Tools and licenses**, if needed, to enter a specific trade or profession.
- **Medical assistance**, if needed, to secure or maintain employment, and it is part of a comprehensive rehabilitation plan.
- **Job development and placement** involving you and your counselor working together to secure employment.
- **Rehabilitation technology** to assist you in preparing for or placement on the job site.
- **Follow-along** to ensure that your job is successful. This follow-along can assist in resolving any job problems that occur.

To apply for vocational rehabilitation services or for additional information, you can visit <http://www.vr.idaho.gov/> or contact the office nearest you to schedule an appointment. The local vocational rehabilitation offices are listed on page 42, or you may call (208) 327-7411.



Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

It is the mission of the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to promote choices and empowerment for people who are legally blind, functionally blind or in danger of legal blindness and to help them achieve gainful employment, independence, personal growth and integration into the community.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The primary goal of the commission's vocational rehabilitation services is to help you as a person with visual impairment prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment. Services are individualized. The program is designed to assist you in making informed career choices so that you can become successfully employed.



Students in the Summer Work Experience Program with their first pay checks

Am I eligible for vocational rehabilitation services through the commission?

To be eligible, you must:

- Have a visual impairment involving both eyes, which causes you to have a problem with employment.
- Require commission services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.
- Want to be employed.

How do I apply?

Call the commission office nearest you. A counselor will explain the program in further detail and assist you in completing an application.

What is the planning process?

Most individuals who are experiencing visual impairments are uncertain of their vocational future. Once you are found eligible, the first step in the process is to meet with the counselor. At this point you and the counselor, in partnership, will identify the steps needed to achieve or maintain employment.

What services are included in a vocational rehabilitation plan?

No two visually-impaired individuals face the same challenges. Each plan is designed to meet your unique needs. The goal is to provide essential tools for you to be successful.

Examples of services are:

- Vocational counseling and guidance.
- Low vision assessment.
- Tools and licenses.
- Adaptive technology, training and equipment.
- Ongoing support after employment.
- Other training, such as higher education, on-the-job training or vocational-technical training.
- Vocational skills assessment.
- Training in blindness skills.
- Medical assistance.
- Job search assistance.

For more information about Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired services, visit its Web site at <http://www.icbvi.state.id.us/> or call (800) 542-8688.

Idaho Department of Labor



Upon your arrival at the Idaho Department of Labor office, check in at the information desk. If needed, you may be scheduled to see a work force consultant. This person will explain the services, assess how they may be able to help and coordinate assistance for your career search. These services could include job search assistance, testing to determine your skills and aptitudes, counseling referrals and job training. You can find listings for jobs with private or government employers at the Idaho Department of Labor as well as additional information about how to apply.

Remember the work force consultants are there to help you, but you have to help them by providing information about yourself and your employment history. The consultants will interview you to determine what types of jobs you qualify for. Based on your interview and qualifications, the work force consultant may determine whether the employer will see you or consider your application or résumé. Depending on the availability of positions, you may be sent on a job interview directly from the Idaho Department of Labor office. Dress appropriately for the jobs you are seeking. If you're applying for an office job, dress for office work. If you are applying for a fast-food restaurant job, casual attire is fine. All Idaho Department of Labor offices are listed on page 44.

Visit your local Idaho Department of Labor Office for Assistance

We help people with disabilities navigate the complex programs that affect their ability to obtain or retain employment.

We serve as a resource for Social Security work incentive programs and employment support programs, providing referrals and information about services available.

We connect job seekers with services that support them in meeting their employment goals.

We ensure access to the full range of services through the Idaho Department of Labor local offices that serve as one-stop centers coordinating an array of employment and training programs.

We Can Help You

- Register for work.
- Search for a job.
- Access job listings.
- Access the Internet.
- Create an employment plan.
- Find community resources.
- Get information about training and education in Idaho.
- Fill out applications, write résumés and prepare for interviews.
- With workshops and interest testing.
- Access phones, faxes and copiers.
- Get résumé paper and PC discs.
- Find labor market information.
- Apply for unemployment insurance benefits. Under certain circumstances, you may qualify for a total temporary disability claim for unemployment insurance.



Résumé Writing

Q: What is the purpose of a résumé?

A résumé is designed to do one thing, GET YOU AN INTERVIEW!

A résumé tells potential employers about you. In the past, résumés provided only a chronological history of work and stated the duties performed. In today's challenging labor market, you will have to sell yourself to a company by the way you present information in person and on your résumé.

A custom-designed résumé that includes past employers, skills, abilities and accomplishments in relation to job duties stated in the job announcement is recommended. You might even send a different résumé for each job and employer you are applying to.

There are many different styles of résumés, however, the styles mentioned below are the most useful.

Chronological

This most common type of résumé highlights your work experience beginning with the most recent position. It includes a listing of jobs, duties, employers and dates of employment. This résumé is useful for people who are changing jobs and do not have major employment gaps or numerous job changes.

Functional

This résumé highlights skills and potential, rather than work experience and education. It is particularly useful when you are changing careers, have good skills but limited work experience, or there are gaps in your work history.

Targeted

This résumé combines all your professional accomplishments and skills into a one-page document with your work history listed at the bottom of the document. This type of résumé eliminates duplication of job duties for each prior employer. This résumé is best for someone with extensive background in the field they are applying in.

Combination

This résumé emphasizes the best parts of the three résumés listed above. It is the preferred type of résumé for an individual with a disability making a career change.

Résumé writing assistance and instruction can be found in the résumé program in the portfolio function of IdahoWorks available at all Idaho Department of Labor offices and on the Web site: www.labor.idaho.gov or on the Idaho Career Information System (eCIS) Web site located at www.idahocis.org.

A work force consultant or vocational rehabilitation counselor can help you with writing an effective résumé that will get attention.

Cover Letter

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is where you “sell” yourself to the potential employer who learns how you represent yourself and provides a sample of your writing skills. It is included with your résumé.

Your cover letter must be unique and specific to you—not one that any applicant could have written. A successful cover letter is written in an interesting and dynamic style. Use action verbs. The following is a formula that can be followed to create your cover letter.

Date:

Person’s Name or HR Director
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear (Person’s Name):

Introduction Paragraph: Tell the employer your reason for writing and the name of the position you are applying for. Capture the employer’s attention. Mention how you heard about the company or the job opening. Name someone you and the employer know in common or someone in the company who knows you, if applicable. Show you have done some research on the company by mentioning projects they are involved with, their management philosophy or something that you have read about them.

Body: In this section you want to build a connection between your background and the company’s needs. If you have any directly-related experience or education, summarize it here so the reader can look for it in your résumé. Tell the employer what you can do for them, not what they can do for you. If you have skills or accomplishments that relate to the job, mention them here. Be sure to write this in a confident manner.

Concluding Information: Indicate your interest in working for the company and hearing from the reader. You can also write that you will make follow-up contact within a specific period of time, such as a week, 10 days or two weeks. Then make sure to follow up! Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sample cover letters and books on writing cover letters are available at your local Idaho Department of Labor office. Or make an appointment with a workforce consultant for assistance in writing your cover letter. A listing of Idaho Department of Labor offices is available on page 44.

Preparing for Your Job Search

How should you prepare for your job search?

Review your past jobs, experiences, training and hobbies. A work force consultant can help you assess your transferable skills and identify your interests, what you are good at and what you enjoy. You can also use the Idaho Career Information System's online skills assessment tool to match transferable skills to occupations. In addition, you can research those types of jobs online. Find it at www.idahocis.org.

Determine the essential functions of the positions you are considering and determine how you can handle them with reasonable accommodation and work with your work force consultant to find out what type of accommodation is possible. Most employers will appreciate that you can provide a reasonable accommodation solution for you to perform essential functions of the job.

Study potential employers who have employees in the field you are interested in. This exploration will help you discover which employers and/or industries can use your skills. The more you can learn about an employer, the better you can match your skills and abilities to their needs.

Friends and families can give you valuable information about potential employers. Often, good jobs remain in the hidden job market and are not advertised. Networking may reveal opportunities for you that are not readily available or known in the labor market. It is possible to be hired without having to compete for jobs. Employers generally hire people they know, like and who have the matching skills and abilities for the job.

Where do I search for job openings?

There are many sources of information you can use to search for employment.

The following list includes not only Idaho Department of Labor offices—see page 44—but also print media and national databases. The more thorough your research, the more job opportunities you can expect to find. Many jobs are only listed in one advertisement and if you only search a single source you may miss other opportunities available.

Idaho Department of Labor local offices list current job openings on their Web site at www.labor.idaho.gov under Job Seekers, and each office offers computers with Internet access for you in their lobbies. Work force consultants can assist you with job search planning and job opening searches.

Check out the help wanted ads in the newspaper. Sunday and Wednesday papers usually have the most listings.

Internet sites

There are hundreds of Internet employment/recruitment sites such as:

- Idaho Department of Labor: <http://www.labor.idaho.gov>
- Monster.com: www.monster.com

- US Government Jobs: <http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov>
- Yahoo Hot Jobs: www.yahoo.com
- Idaho State Job Openings: <http://dhr.idaho.gov>
- Idaho Career Information System (eCIS) allows you to choose occupations and then search for current job openings in Idaho: www.idahocis.org

Idaho Career Information System (eCIS) is available at all Idaho Department of Labor offices and can be used in many ways:

- Take one of the assessments regarding your skills and interests, and the results will give you a list of occupations to explore suited specifically for you.
- Find a list of schools and training providers in your state offering particular training.
- Use the school sort function to develop a list of two- and four-year colleges that offer training in the program of study you want.
- Use the financial aid sort to find out about financial aid sources.
- Use the occupation sort to find a list of occupations that match your preferred work setting and needs.



Use eCIS software to develop a job search plan, collect information, write résumés and cover letters, practice for interviews and keep records about your employment search.

The U.S. Department of Labor produces an excellent resource page for job seekers with disabilities. It includes sections such as “Writing and Formatting a Scannable Résumé,” “Essential Elements of an Effective Job Search” and “Career Development for Persons with Disabilities.” Access this page at: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/publicat.htm>

Use every option you have. Only apply for jobs that you are qualified for. The more positions you apply for the quicker you will find employment. Be aggressive. The most effective method for finding a job is to apply directly to the employer you wish to work for. Try to arrange an interview with the decision maker who could hire you. Plan your presentation carefully. Thank you letters are an important follow-up for each interview.

Using Labor Market Information

Useful Labor Market Information is available at no cost from the Idaho Department of Labor via the Web site, lmi.idaho.gov. Get wage, employment, occupational projections and much more. Regional Economist contact information is also available. If needed, the Regional Economist can answer your personal labor market questions.

County Labor Market Information

Labor force trend flyers are available for all 44 counties and provide information on population, employment and wages by industry, employment and unemployment statistics, largest private employers and other subjects.

Job Projections

Projections provide information on where jobs are and where they will likely be in the future, both short-term and long-term. This is based partly on past employment trends and the likelihood those trends will continue.

Idaho Career Information System

Available at all Idaho Department of Labor offices, you can explore more than 500 occupations, 3,000 scholarship sources and 3,500 postsecondary schools. The site contains extensive job search information including creating résumés online.

More information is available on the Internet at www.idahocis.org or at www.lmi.idaho.gov.

Job Application Forms

Most employers want you to complete an application form, which is often used to choose people for interviews. Employers often complain that applicants do not properly complete application forms. If you bring a résumé, you will still need to fill out an application form completely. Don't write "see résumé" on any part of the application.

Fill out the sample application and/or job data sheet on the following pages and refer to them when you fill out an employer's application form. Keep this information with you, and keep it up to date during your career search. It will save you time and show good organizational skills.

Most applications require your signature indicating that the information you have provided is accurate. Applications are frequently verified and **lying on a job application form is usually grounds for dismissal.**

Bring the following information with you:

- Address and phone number where you can be contacted or a message can be left for you.
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers for previous employers.
- At least three references. Ask each person for permission to use them as a reference.
- List of school subjects that may help you qualify for the position.
- Driver's license number, social security card, union cards, copies of transcripts, military discharge papers and other relevant information.

Tips for Completing Application Forms:

- Read the whole form carefully before you start and follow all directions.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something on the form.
- Neatly print the information requested in black or blue ink, or if given the opportunity to return the form, type the information.
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- Do not leave any blank spaces. If an item does not apply to you indicate "none," "not applicable," or "N/A."
- Be honest. Don't stretch your qualifications.

Sample Job Application

This pocket application will help you keep track of key information requested on most applications. Take it with you when you are looking for work.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

Alternate Phone _____

E-mail _____

Memorize or bring your Social Security number and driver's license number.

EDUCATION

School _____

City/State _____

Dates _____

Highest Grade Completed _____

Date Graduated _____

School _____

City/State _____

Dates _____

Highest Grade Completed _____

Date Graduated _____

REFERENCES

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

Sample Personal Data Form

SKILLS

WORK HISTORY

Employer _____
Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____
Phone _____
Position _____
Pay Rate _____
Start Date _____
End Date _____
Duties _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Employer _____
Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____
Phone _____
Position _____
Pay Rate _____
Start Date _____
End Date _____
Duties _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Employer _____
Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____
Phone _____
Position _____
Pay Rate _____
Start Date _____
End Date _____
Duties _____

Reason for Leaving _____

The Interview

The interview process is designed to:

- Give you an opportunity to sell yourself.
- Give the employer an opportunity to talk to you about your qualifications and skills. It also helps the employer understand how you think about things and where you might fit in with the company.

The interview is your opportunity to personally convince the employer that you are the best person for the job.

How should I prepare for the interview?



- Research the company and find out everything you can about the business. Use the Internet, library publications, local chamber of commerce offices, and personal contacts.
- When setting the appointment get the date and time, the names of the interviewers, the type of interview and how long the interview will last.
- Make sure you know where the interview is taking place and how much time you need to get there. Travel a few days early if necessary.
- Anticipate possible questions and practice your responses. If applying for a position that requires samples of your work, gather portfolio items ahead of time. Make sure you know what is in the portfolio and how you want to present it.
- Bring extra copies of your résumé and cover letter with you.
- Take documents to the interview that establish your identity and employment eligibility. A list is located on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services Web site at: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf> (i.e. drivers license, social security card, alien authorization card).

Ask for the job! Be polite. Let the interviewer know that you want the job! Send the interviewer a short thank you note immediately after the interview.

After each interview, analyze what you did right and wrong so you can improve in the future. The more you interview, the more comfortable you will be with each following interview. Be prepared to be turned down many times before receiving an offer. Even when you are not chosen, remain polite and ask that they keep you in mind for any future openings. It's possible the person they chose will turn the position down or after a short time just won't work out.

Remember that persistence pays. If you would really like to work for a particular employer, check back with them occasionally.

Keep trying! If you thought your interview went really well and you did not get the job, consider contacting the interviewer to ask about areas where you could improve.

Interview Questions

Try to anticipate questions the interviewer might ask you and think about your answers. Be prepared for the interview and practice answers to questions before the interview.

Sample Interview Questions Include:

- **Tell me about yourself.** This is an opportunity to let the interview team know more about you, your work style and other interests like hobbies, volunteer work and involvement in civic and community organizations. Make sure your answers relate to the position you're applying for. For example, your hobbies may have creative or research aspects which will aid you in the new job. Don't ramble on about things that are not relevant to the job.
- **Why did you leave your previous job?** Were you looking for more challenges, a pay increase, a chance to learn new skills? Let the interviewers know.
- **What do you consider your most significant strengths/weaknesses?** Play up your strengths, but don't say you don't have any weaknesses. Turn any weakness into a positive. Let them know you're working on any weakness or how you turned a weakness into a strength.
- **What do you know about our company?** Go to the company's Web site and read up before the interview. If you know someone who currently works there, get some information from them.
- **What kind of work are you looking for?** Be specific so you'll know if the job is right for you and if you're a good fit for the company.
- **Why should I hire you instead of someone else with equal qualifications?** This is your opportunity to reinforce to the interviewers your desire to work for this company and reiterate why you'd be their best choice for the position.
- **What did your last supervisor think of you?** Keep your comments positive, even if your experience wasn't. There's always something positive to focus on from every work experience you'll have with a supervisor.

Additional sample interview questions and answers can be found in the eCIS program at your local Idaho Department of Labor office or at www.idahocis.org. See Idaho Department of Labor office locations on page 44 of this publication.

Failing to Prepare is Preparing to Fail!

Preparation is the key. If you are prepared, you'll be relaxed. Don't be afraid to laugh and be yourself during the interview. Employers hire people they like, not only those whom they think can do a good job for them. Let your personality and positive attitude show.

Disclosing Disability Information

Should I disclose my disability to potential employers?

It is always a personal decision, but it is recommended you disclose when:

- Applying with a state or federal agency with affirmative action responsibilities.
- The job relates to your experiences as a person with a disability.
- Having a disability is a requirement.
- Job-related limitations require you to request a reasonable accommodation. See the section on ADA on page 25 for that definition.

How should I prepare to disclose information about my disability?

- Script your disclosure—plan what you are going to say ahead of time.
- Rehearse your disclosure script—practice makes PERFECT!

When you write your script, minimize medical terms and words like unpredictable, chronic condition or permanently debilitated. Briefly describe the disability. Do not give a history of your surgeries and hospitalizations.

The best way to handle difficult questions during the interview is to be prepared for them. Make a list of the questions you know you are going to have trouble with and formulate answers. Practice your delivery of these answers so you will be ready. For example, "I see that there is a two-year gap in your work history. What have you been doing during this time?"

This is an opportunity to talk about what you have been doing, not what you have not been doing. Think about valuable life experiences that you have gained during this time. Have you been taking care of children or a parent, going to school, taking art classes or volunteering? This question may prompt you to disclose your disability if you have not already done so. Be sure to do it in a way that shows how you have dealt with a difficult situation in a positive manner. Remember to keep the past in the past, stating that you are ready to move forward and are qualified and able to do the job you want.

REMEMBER your script. Talk about your abilities, not your disabilities. Employers need qualified, capable individuals to fill positions. Find a way to show that you are that person. Sell them on what you can do, not on what you cannot do and the interview will go better than you expect. Be positive about yourself and be honest.

Try not to open doors to doubts. The more you discuss your disability the more important it becomes in an interviewer's mind, and the more you will begin to raise questions.

How should I approach the issue of disclosure about my disability for the interview?

If you know that your disability will require a reasonable accommodation when you go into the interview, consider this—for most job seekers, the interview is the "make it or break it" point. Remember that you have about a minute to make a good first impression, and first impressions mean everything during this stage of the employment

From the Job Accommodation Network
Consultant's Corner,
Volume 01, Issue 13

process. Disclosure of your disability is critical at this point if accommodations, such as access to the building, are necessary to do the job. Do your homework! If you know the location for the interview is not accessible to you, contact the person who will be interviewing you and request an alternative location. It is a good idea to have a location in mind, just in case the interviewer needs some suggestions.

If you do not know if the location is accessible, call and ask whether there are accessible parking spaces available or whether the building has an elevator. It is better to deal with these issues ahead of time than 15 minutes before your interview. This also shows your prospective employer that you are able to deal with these situations effectively. ***However, it may be to your advantage to schedule the interview before you disclose.***



Dealing with the visible disability:

If you have a visible disability, realize that even if you do not require an accommodation, you may want to disclose. If the average employer would have doubts or concerns about how you will perform your major job duties, you should bring up the subject and explain how you are able to perform them with or without accommodation. This can be accomplished by explaining how you have performed the duties at past jobs or during education for the job.

Focus on presenting the information in a glass half full versus a glass half empty approach. Which do you think an employer would rather hear, “I can stand for one hour” or “I cannot stand for more than an hour.” Focus on what you can do versus what you can’t do. Positive presentation is the key.

Dealing with an invisible or hidden disability:

This may be a difficult decision because your disability is not readily noticeable. You must weigh the pros and cons of disclosure. If you are not certain if your disability will affect your work performance now or in the future, you may want to wait and see if you will need to ask for an accommodation until you begin working there.

This is a very personal decision and one that is ultimately yours. However, if you decide not to disclose your disability during the hiring process, you still have the option to disclose and request an accommodation at a later date. If you need to request an accommodation, be sure to do this in a positive manner. If your disability is noticeable to a potential employer, then it will probably be a factor in your hiring. Talk about it in relationship to your work performance potential to put the employer at ease.

How much detail should I give the interviewer about my disability?

Remember the tips on how to disclose your disability and how much to tell. Make your explanation short and concise and turn your mastery of it into a positive one. Emphasize your strengths not your weaknesses. Emphasize relevant facts such as you drive your own car, are on time and do not miss work.

The interviewer really wants to know only three things!

- 1. Will you be there?*
- 2. Can you do the job as well or better than anyone else?*
- 3. Will you be of value to the company?*

When do I disclose?

Disclosure is a strategic decision similar to discussing pay with an employer. The best time to disclose in an interview depends on each individual situation. It may be:

- During the interview.
- After the job offer.
- After having started a job and then seeing what type of accommodation is needed or if any is needed at all.

You may believe that if you do not disclose you are only temporarily avoiding the issue. In general, it is not recommended that you share other non-job related details about yourself, so do not feel compelled to share this personal detail. Of course, exceptions exist, as noted in the beginning of this section, when disclosure is in your best interest.

Who else do you need to tell?

You may decide to tell your supervisor for the same reasons as you told the person who decided to hire you. Telling co-workers of your disability is your personal decision and should not be required for you to take advantage of accommodations. Starting a new job and learning to interact with a group of strangers can be stressful in itself. Information about your disability is something you may choose to withhold for a long time or you may feel it is necessary to be up front with your co-workers.

Should I disclose my disability on my résumé, application or cover letter?

No. If an application includes a question about disabilities, leave that section blank. You are not required to disclose your disability on an application, and it is normally illegal for an employer to ask you to do so. Remember, the exception to this is if you are applying with a state or federal agency with affirmative action responsibilities or if having a disability is a job requirement.

SOME FINAL WORDS TO REMEMBER!

BE YOURSELF

Your own attitude will have a great deal to do with the interviewer's attitude. A smile and a pleasant demeanor will go a long way toward relaxing the interviewer. Be prepared to explain if you have physical problems that make common interview etiquette difficult such as shaking hands, maintaining eye contact or good posture. If you have scripted and rehearsed the situation, you can avoid potential embarrassment. Be open, honest and reassuring. Focus on your abilities and skills, not the disability. Ultimately, disclosure is your prerogative.

Section 2

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The following information is a guide to the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). This information is not complete and does not cover all aspects of the ADA nor is it intended to offer legal advice about ADA-related employment issues. If you have questions regarding ADA issues or any ADA-related information contained in this booklet, you can call the Idaho Human Rights Commission directly at the following telephone numbers:



Idaho Human Rights Commission
(888) 249-7025
(208) 334-2873 (TDD/voice)
(208) 334-4751 (TTY)

Additional ADA resources are listed in the Resources section starting on page 39.

ADA Definitions

The following definitions are required learning for you to understand the basics of the ADA. These terms are standard definitions used to discuss ADA information.

Disability — A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual.

Essential functions — Fundamental job duties of the employment position.

Nonessential functions — Job process that may be marginal, modified, eliminated, transferred or reassigned.

Qualified individual — A person who satisfies the experience, education and other job-related requirements of the employment position and can perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable accommodation — Any modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice or the work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.

Examples of reasonable accommodation include:

- Making existing facilities accessible and usable by employees with disabilities.
- Restructuring a job or modifying work schedules.
- Acquiring or modifying equipment.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Overview

This section will help you understand the basics of the Americans with Disabilities Act, commonly referred to as ADA.

What is the ADA?

A law which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices including job application procedures, hiring, firing and other employment issues. It also guarantees equal opportunity in transportation, public accommodations, telecommunications and activities of state and local government.

Which employers are covered by the ADA?

The following types of employers with 15 or more employees are required to follow ADA rules:



- Private employers
- State and local governments
- Employment agencies
- Labor organizations
- Labor-management committees

In Idaho, employers with five or more employees are required to follow state antidiscrimination laws.

Are you protected by the ADA?

If you have a disability and are qualified to do a job, the ADA can protect you from employment discrimination based on your disability. A person is considered as having a disability under the ADA if he or she:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity,
- Has a record of such a physical or mental impairment; OR
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

What is a major life activity?

Major life activities are viewed as things that an average person can do with little or no effort. Here are some examples:

A person must be unable to do or be significantly limited in the ability to do an activity

<i>Walking</i>	<i>Standing</i>	<i>Working</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Breathing</i>
<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Seeing</i>	<i>Sitting</i>	<i>Lifting</i>	<i>Learning</i>
<i>Reading</i>	<i>Caring for oneself</i>	<i>Performing manual tasks</i>		

compared to an average person. The ADA considers three factors in deciding whether a person's impairment, or disability, substantially limits a major life activity.

What are three things to consider when deciding if a person’s disability limits a major life activity?

These factors are considered on a case-by-case basis.

- The nature and severity of the disability.
- How long the disability will last or is expected to last.
- What permanent or long-term impact or expected impact the disability will have.

What employment practices are covered?

<i>Recruitment (advertising)</i>	<i>Job Layoffs</i>	<i>Hiring</i>
<i>Pay</i>	<i>Firing</i>	<i>Training</i>
<i>Promotions</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Leave</i>
<i>And all other employment related activities</i>		

Specific Exclusions: Things to think about!

Can the employer not hire me because I have a disability?

To be covered by the ADA, a person must not only be a person with a disability, but must be qualified to do the job. An employer is not required to hire or keep a person who is not qualified to do a job.

Does an employer have to give preference to a qualified applicant with a disability over other applicants?

An employer can select the best person available and an employer does not have to give a preference based on disability.

Can an employer be required to reallocate an essential function of a job to another employee as a reasonable accommodation?

No. See the next page for the section on essential job functions.

Can an employer demand the existing production/performance standards for an employee with a disability?

Yes. An employer can hold employees with disabilities to the same standards of production/performance as other similarly situated employees without disabilities for performing essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Does the ADA override federal and state health and safety laws?

No. The ADA does not override health and safety requirements established under other federal laws even if a standard adversely affects the employment of an individual with a disability.

Is there financial assistance available to employers to help them make reasonable accommodations?

A special tax credit is available to help smaller employers make accommodations required by the ADA. The credit, up to \$15,000 per year, is available to eligible small

businesses for costs related to complying with applicable requirements of the ADA. For additional information on the Disabled Access Credit, contact a local Internal Revenue Service office: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses> or call (800) 829-4933—voice, or (800) 829-4059—TTY.

Essential Job Functions

Essential functions are the primary duties of a job that a person must be able to do with or without a reasonable accommodation.

Marginal functions are those that can be changed, reassigned or omitted.

An employer must identify what functions of a job are essential as opposed to marginal. The individual’s ability to perform these functions must be decided when the hiring decision is being made. Employers should identify all essential functions in an accurate job description of the position. Focus should be on the purpose of the function and what is to be accomplished by it instead of how the function is currently performed.

What are reasons a job function may be considered essential?

- The job exists to perform that specific function.
- If the function is removed, it fundamentally changes the job.
- There are a limited number of workers who can perform that function.
- The function is very specialized and the person has been hired to perform the specialized function. For example, an aircraft pilot must be able to control an airplane by using arms, hands, feet and legs. Also, the pilot must have the appropriate education, training and license to do the job.

How will I know if I am qualified to do the job?

There are two steps in deciding whether a person is “qualified” under the ADA:

- (1) Determine if the person meets the requirements for the job based on criteria such as:
 - Education
 - Work experience
 - Training
 - Skills
 - Licenses
 - Certificates
 - Other job-related requirements, such as good judgment or the ability to work with other people
- (2) Determine if the person can do the essential functions of the job, with or without a reasonable accommodation.



Reasonable Accommodation

What is a reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation is a change or adjustment to a job. Changes or adjustments may be needed in the work setting, in the way the job is usually done or in company policies. This allows a qualified person with a disability to experience the same employment as someone without a disability. The employer could make adjustments in the work setting or change a work schedule—really anything that makes it possible for a person with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity. Reasonable accommodations are required to assist those with disabilities who are otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the job.



The ADA requires reasonable accommodation:

- In the application process.
- In allowing a qualified person with a disability to do the essential functions of the job.
- In allowing an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

An employer must offer a reasonable accommodation for the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified person with a disability, unless the employer can show that the accommodation would put an undue hardship on the business. In the case of a hidden disability, this means that a person would be required to disclose the disability when requesting an accommodation.

What are examples of reasonable accommodations?

- Providing physical access.
- Providing or modifying equipment or devices.
- Restructuring a job.
- Changing a work schedule or altering the functions of a job.
- Adjusting or modifying training materials or company policies.
- Providing a reader or interpreter.
- Making the workplace readily accessible to people with disabilities.

Important points to remember about reasonable accommodation:

- The requirement to make a reasonable accommodation applies to all aspects of employment. This responsibility is ongoing and may come up any time a person's disability or job changes.
- An employer does not have to make an accommodation for a person who is not qualified for the job.
- Generally, it is the responsibility of a person with a disability to ask for a reasonable accommodation.

- A qualified person with a disability has the right to say no to an accommodation.
- An employer may not have to make an accommodation if they can show an undue hardship.

Undue hardship

Undue hardship means an accommodation that the employer makes that would be:

- Significantly difficult or expensive.
- Extensive.
- Substantially disruptive.
- Would fundamentally alter the nature of employment.

What factors are considered in determining undue hardship?

- The cost and nature of the accommodation.
- The employer's overall financial resources.
- The employer's type of operation.
- The impact the accommodation would have on the operation of the business.

Employment Process under ADA

Recruitment

The ADA is a nondiscrimination law, meaning the law does not allow employers to establish job qualifications that screen out disabled applicants or workers unless the standards are consistent with business necessity and are job related.

The law does not require employers to make special efforts to hire people with disabilities, but encourages employers to reach out and consider hiring individuals with disabilities who are qualified.

Job Advertisements and Vacancy Announcements

It is in the best interest of the employer to outline the essential functions in the job advertisement. This helps the employer attract qualified people with the right skills and education. A common statement to see is *"We are an Equal Opportunity Employer."*

Application

Reasonable accommodations must be provided in the job application process so a qualified applicant has an equal opportunity to be considered for a job.

Equal Benefits

Reasonable accommodations must be provided so an employee with a disability has access to the same benefits and rights of employment equal to those of similarly placed nondisabled employees.

Direct Threat

An employer is not required to accommodate an individual who poses a direct threat to the health and safety of themselves or others.

Pre-Employment Testing

The application process may require that the applicant complete tests to provide the employer with information about aptitudes, interests and personality or general

technical knowledge or proficiency in a particular area such as typing or math. Test results are usually one of the numerous qualifying factors in the evaluation of your job application.

What should you do if an employer requires that you complete a test and you need assistance to do so?

- Inform the employer about your need for an accommodation. In order to receive the accommodation, you may be required to disclose your disability and provide proof of a hidden disability.
- If the accommodation is not possible at that time, request that the employer reschedule your testing to a later date when a reasonable accommodation can be available for you.

Some examples of reasonable accommodations for testing include:

- Alternative keyboards.
- Voice recognition software.
- Mobility and ergonomic assistive devices.

Pre-employment Questions (Illegal and Legal)

The ADA **does not** allow any pre-employment inquiries about a disability to ensure that qualified people are not screened out because of their disability before their ability is considered, which is especially important for people with invisible or hidden disabilities. These people are often excluded because of information in an application form, job interview or pre-employment medical exam. The employer can get information about your qualifications and medical information if it is necessary for safety and health on the job.

What types of questions cannot be asked during the interview process whether you have a disability or not?

- Have you ever had a work-related injury?
- Have you ever received workers' compensation or disability benefits?
- How many days did you miss from work last year due to sickness?
- Do you currently have any health problems?
- How much exercise do you do on a daily basis?
- Are you currently taking drugs or are you on medication?
- Have you ever been hospitalized or had a surgery?
- Have you ever seen a psychiatrist?
- Have you been treated for any mental condition?
- How much alcohol do you drink on a daily basis?
- Will you require time off from work for medical appointments?

What questions are permissible to ask a job applicant who has an obvious disability?

The ADA allows employers to ask questions about specific job functions.

- Can you operate a computer?
- Can you drive a company truck?



- Can you arrive at and begin work at 6 a.m.?
- Can you work a typical 40-hour work week?

What type of questions cannot be asked by an employer when checking job references whether you have a disability or not?

- Did the applicant file any workers' compensation claims?
- Did the applicant miss time from work due to illness?

Pre-employment Medical Examinations

When can an employer request a pre-employment medical examination?

After a conditional job offer has been made to the applicant.

What are conditions concerning a pre-employment medical examination?

- All employees must be subjected to the same examination regardless of disability.
- The basic exam given will be the same but may vary somewhat depending on the results of specific tests.
- Information concerning the applicant's medical history and condition is kept on separate forms and in separate medical files.
- This information must be kept confidential. A manager or supervisor may not be given actual tests results or conditions. They may be informed about accommodations and necessary restrictions because of those results or conditions.
- If an individual is not hired because a post-offer medical examination or inquiry reveals a disability, the reasons for not hiring the individual must be job-related and business necessary. The employer must also show that no reasonable accommodation was available that would enable the individual to perform the essential functions of the job.

Alcohol and Drugs

Are alcoholics covered by the ADA?

Yes, alcoholism is considered a disability and is protected by the ADA if the person is qualified to perform the essential functions of the job. An employer may be required to provide an accommodation to an alcoholic. However, an employer can discipline, discharge or deny employment to an alcoholic whose use of alcohol adversely affects job performance or conduct.

What can an employer prohibit about alcohol use in the workplace?

The employer can prohibit the use of alcohol and require that employees not be under the influence of alcohol at the workplace.

Is a person using illegal drugs protected by the ADA?

A person currently using illegal drugs is NOT protected by the ADA. However, the ADA indicates that *the exclusion of illegal drug use from ADA protection does not apply to:*

- An individual who has successfully completed or who is participating in a supervised drug program and is no longer using illegal drugs.
- An individual who is mistakenly regarded as engaging in illegal drug use.

Is testing for the illegal use of drugs permissible under the ADA?

Yes, employers can maintain drug testing programs to test for the illegal use of drugs without violating the ADA act. Testing for illegal drug use is not considered a medical examination under the ADA. Many employers are concerned about the effects of illicit drug use on safety, productivity and related issues. As a matter of policy, some companies test job applicants and current employees for drug use. Some application forms will include statements, information or questions about alcohol and drug use. Applicants are often advised during the interview process that drug screening is required, but some employers offer no information about drug testing in advance. Refusal to submit to a drug test may be used by the employer as grounds to reject your application. You may be asked to pay for your drug testing.

Issues Concerning Workers' Compensation

How does the ADA affect workers' compensation programs?

Only injured workers who meet the ADA's definition of an "individual with a disability" will be considered disabled under the ADA, regardless of whether they satisfy criteria for receiving benefits under workers' compensation or other disability laws. Important points to remember include:

- A worker must be qualified, with or without reasonable accommodation, to be protected by the ADA.
- Work-related injuries do not always cause physical or mental impairments severe enough to substantially limit a major life activity.
- Many on-the-job injuries cause temporary impairments which heal within a short period of time with little or no long-term or permanent impact. Therefore, many injured workers who qualify for benefits under workers' compensation or other disability benefits laws may not be protected by the ADA.
- An employer must consider work-related injuries on a case-by-case basis to know if a worker is protected by the ADA.
- An employer may not inquire into an applicant's workers' compensation history before making a conditional offer of employment.
- After making a conditional job offer, an employer may inquire about a person's workers' compensation history in a medical inquiry that is required of all applicants in the same job category. However, even after a conditional offer has been made, an employer cannot require a potential employee to have a medical examination because

a response to a medical inquiry shows a previous on-the-job injury unless all applicants in the same job category are required to have an examination.

- An employer may not base an employment decision on the speculation that an applicant may cause increased workers' compensation costs in the future.
- An employer can refuse to hire or discharge an individual who is not currently able to perform a job without posing a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others, if the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation.
- An employer can refuse to hire or can fire a person who knowingly provides a false answer to a lawful post-offer inquiry about his/her condition or workers' compensation history.

What actions can you take if you believe you are being discriminated against in employment?

- Suggest reasonable accommodations that will allow you to perform the essential functions of the job or provide equal access.
- If the situation is not resolved satisfactorily, you can file a discrimination complaint against the employer, but it must be filed within 180 days of the incident. You can file a complaint against the employer at a local Idaho Department of Labor office near you (see pages 44 and 45 for a list). The department will immediately forward the complaint to the Idaho Human Rights Commission, which investigates complaints concerning employment discrimination. Discrimination complaints must be filed with the Idaho Human Rights Commission before you can bring a suit in state court. The Human Rights Commission will investigate on behalf of the State of Idaho and under certain circumstances, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Idaho Human Rights Commission

1109 Main St., Fourth Floor (888) 249-7025
P.O. Box 83720 (208) 334-2873 (TDD/Voice)
Boise, ID 83720-0040 (208) 334-4751 (TTY)
Fax: (208) 334-2664

- Contact the Client Assistance Program of Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc. (Co-Ad), which is designated as the Protection and Advocacy System for Idaho, if you feel you need advocacy support.

Co-Ad, Inc.

1-866-262-3462 (TDD/Voice)
Website: <http://users.moscow.com/co-ad>

Boise Office

4477 Emerald St., Ste. B-100
Boise, ID 83706-2066
E-Mail: coadinc@cablone.net
(208) 336-5353 (TDD/Voice)

Pocatello Office

845 W. Center St., C-107
Pocatello, ID 83204-4237
E-Mail: coinc-tdd@awest.net
(208) 232-0922 (TDD/Voice)

Moscow Office

428 W. 3rd St., Ste. 2
Moscow, ID 83843-2284
E-Mail: co-ad@moscow.com
(208) 882-0962 (TDD/Voice)

Section 3

Appendix A: Working While on Social Security Benefits

The Social Security Administration (SSA) encourages individuals with disabilities to begin or return to work through work incentives, which allow people to keep their cash resources and medical benefits as they work to become self supporting. The SSA has two major programs that provide support to people with disabilities:

- **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** with Medicare coverage; and
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** with Medicaid coverage.

The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance — WIPA — program is a no cost service to help beneficiaries of SSI and SSDI make informed choices about going back to work or entering the work force for the first time. There are also ways to fund vocational training, education or starting a business. If you are an SSI and/or SSDI beneficiary, there are ways to test your ability to work without losing your benefits such as Medicaid and Medicare. The WIPA program links you with an individual who will:

- Provide accurate, up-to-date information about federal work incentive programs.
- Provide work incentives planning and assistance to help reach your employment goals.
- Provide benefits analysis and planning to help you keep your cash resources and medical benefits as you work to become self supporting.
- Assist in writing a Plan for Achieving Self Support (see next page) free of charge.
- Give information about the protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities.

The WIPA project in Idaho is administered by Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc. You can contact them at (866) 262-3462 or at <http://users.moscow.com/co-ad>.

Each SSA program has its own work incentives and each work incentive helps people become self supporting. Brief explanations of common work incentives and how they work are listed below.

Common Incentives If You Receive SSDI:

- **Trial Work Period** – This is a time period when, while still receiving SSDI, you can test your ability to work without losing SSDI cash payments and Medicare coverage. During this time you can earn any amount of money as long as you report the work activity while you continue to have a disabling impairment. The trial work period continues until you accumulate nine months, not necessarily consecutive, in which you perform what the SSA calls “services” within a rolling 60-month period. The SSA considers your work to be services if you earn more than a certain amount in a month. For example, after **nine service months** the trial work period is complete, and SSA will evaluate you to determine if you continue to have a disability and are eligible for SSDI benefits. If SSA determines you are no longer eligible, you will receive an additional three-month grace period of SSDI payments before benefits stop.
- **Extended Period of Eligibility** – For 36 consecutive months, after the trial work period is completed and you continue to be medically disabled, you can receive an SSDI check for each month you earn below a certain amount. This automatic reintroduction of SSDI benefits does not require a new application.

- **Medicare Continuation** – Medicare can continue for seven years and nine months – sometimes longer – after a successful trial work period if you continue to be medically disabled.
- **Impairment-Related Work Expense** – This is a documented disability-related expense that is absolutely necessary for you to perform a job. SSA deducts the cost of these expenses from gross earnings before determining if you are SSDI eligible. Examples of these types of expenses may include wheelchairs, assistive technology or other specialized work-related equipment and certain special transportation costs.
- **Medical Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation** – Your SSDI eligibility may continue if you have medically recovered from your impairment but are actively participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that will likely lead to self support.
- **Ticket to Work** – While you are actively participating in the Ticket to Work program, you can get the help you need to find the job that is right for you and you can safely explore your work options without losing your SSDI benefits.
 - You can easily return to benefits if you have to stop working, known as “expedited reinstatement of benefits.”
 - You can continue to receive healthcare benefits.
 - You will not receive a continuing disability review while using your Ticket.
 - In addition, you will still be able to use other SSA programs and work incentives to help you transition into work.

Common Incentives If You Receive SSI:

- **Ticket to Work** – Similar to the SSDI work incentive. See the description above.
- **1619A and 1619B** – Two different programs to help you keep Medicaid benefits while you try to become self supporting.
- **Student Earned Income Exclusion** – If you are a student up to 22 years of age who is disabled or blind and regularly enrolled in school, this allows you to earn income that is not counted for SSI income purposes.
- **Plan for Achieving Self Support** – This is a document that you write to set aside income or resources to reach a work goal. For example, you could set aside money to go to school, start a business or pay for work expenses such as transportation to and from work or attendant care. SSA does not count money set aside under this plan to determine your SSI payment amount.
- **Impairment Related Work Expense** – This is a documented disability-related expense that is absolutely necessary for you to perform a job. Examples may include wheelchairs, assistive technology or other specialized work-related equipment, and certain special transportation costs. As an SSI beneficiary, the cost of these expenses can be recovered through higher SSI payments. Additionally, this work incentive can also be used to establish eligibility for initial SSDI disability status.
- **Blind Work Expense** – If you have blindness, this is a documented expense you incur because of your disability and is absolutely necessary to perform a job. Examples may include adaptive devices or guide dogs. Like an impairment related work expense, you may be able to recover 100 percent of those expenses through increased SSI cash payments.

Appendix B: Working While on Medicaid

Legislation took effect in 2007 creating a Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities (formally known as Medicaid Buy-In) program for Idahoans with disabilities. Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities helps transition people to work by permitting them to receive Medicaid while working. For people with disabilities on Medicaid, there was no incentive to work more than part-time since if they earned even one dollar too much, they lost their Medicaid coverage. That coverage paid for the supports and services that people with disabilities needed to go to work. With the Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program, when the eligible person goes to work, they pay a premium based on a sliding scale which enables them to retain their coverage.

Many people on Medicaid want to work and recognize that employment is the way to end dependence. The Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program helps them gradually leave or lessen their reliance on Medicaid while increasing their work hours and income. The program enables people with disabilities to be contributing, tax-paying citizens.

Who is Eligible

In order to be eligible, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 16 years of age, but under 65 years of age.
- Have a disability as defined by Social Security.
- Be employed, including self-employment, and have provided the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare with satisfactory written proof of employment.
- Have countable resources of \$10,000 or less. Your home, up to two vehicles, and any retirement accounts do not count toward the resource limit.
- Have countable income that does not exceed defined limits.

What you might have to pay

You may have to pay premiums based on your income level. For additional information on resource and income limits, contact the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare:

Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities Unit
(866) 217-8510 ext. 8861
E-mail: WrkrsWithDisabilities@dhw.idaho.gov



Appendix C: Services for Veterans with Disabilities

The Idaho Department of Labor has dedicated work force consultants known as Veterans' Representatives to assist in your employment and training needs.

Idaho employers know the value of military training and service and they want to benefit from your experience as skilled enlisted personnel, noncommissioned officers and commissioned officers. Translating your military skills into skills for working in a civilian economy will help you find the job you want. At the Idaho Department of Labor, the goal is to be the nation's best when providing information and resources for job-seeking veterans and their families.

If you are a disabled veteran, the following information is available when you access the Veterans' Services page on the Internet at:

<http://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/Default.aspx?tabid=666>

Here you will find a wide variety of services:

1. Veterans' benefits
2. Veterans' representatives or disability program navigators
3. Career, education, job training and consulting services
4. Local labor market information
5. Local resources and other services



Appendix D: Resources

The following section lists contact information for agencies providing resources on employment for individuals with disabilities.

ADA Resources

Idaho ADA Task Force

The Idaho ADA Task Force offers technical assistance on the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and other ADA provisions applying to businesses, nonprofit service agencies, and state and local government programs. It also provides information on how to file ADA complaints. The U.S. Department of Justice provides similar assistance through their ADA Information Line.

Idaho ADA Task Force

816 W. Bannock St.
Boise, ID 83702
adataskforce@qwest.net
(208) 344-5590 V/TTY

U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line

(800) 514-0301 Voice
(800) 514-0383 TTY
Web site: www.ada.gov
Dept. of Justice Home Page: www.usdoj.gov

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission — EEOC

The EEOC offers technical assistance on the ADA provisions applying to employment. It also provides information on how to file ADA complaints.

Employment questions

(800) 669-4000 Voice
(800) 669-6820 TTY
<http://www.eeoc.gov>

Employment documents

(800) 669-3362 Voice
(800) 800-3302 TDD
<http://www.eeoc.gov/publications.html>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

JAN is a free consulting service designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities by:

- Providing individualized worksite accommodations solutions.
- Providing technical assistance regarding the ADA and other disability related legislation.
- Educating callers about self-employment options.

JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system is designed to let Internet users explore various accommodation options for people with disabilities in work and educational settings. <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/index.htm>

JAN is a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Job Accommodation Network:

(800) 526-7234 Voice/TDD
(877) 781-9403 TTY
Web site: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>
SOAR: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/index.htm>

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center Northwest

DBTAC Northwest was established by Congress to serve business, state and local government and people with disabilities as they work together to meet the challenges of disability and its impact on society.

(800) 949-4232 Voice
(800) 949-4232 TTY/TDD/TT
<http://www.dbtacnorthwest.org>

Additional Resources

Idaho Assistive Technology Project "Making Technology the Great Equalizer"

- Training and technical assistance
- Assistive Technology Resource Centers
- Information and assistance
- Used equipment exchange program
- Low interest loan program

Assistive Technology for All — AT4ALL

Idaho AT4ALL has a variety of used equipment available including wheelchairs & scooters, walkers, personal care items, items for vision and hearing impairments, hospital beds, computers, adapted vehicles, and more. Using Idaho AT4ALL is free!

www.idaho.at4all.com

Idaho Assistive Technology Project

Center on Disabilities and Human Development
129 W. Third St.

Moscow, ID 83843

(800) 432-8324 Toll free

(208) 885-3557 Phone

(208) 885-3628 Fax

www.idahoat.org

Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Web site is a valuable resource for issues pertaining to deafness, hearing loss, advocacy, accessibility, education, and technology. The council's goal is to provide timely information that empowers the deaf and hard-of-hearing community to make informed decisions regarding their quality of life.

Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

1720 Westgate Drive, Suite A

Boise, ID 83704

(208) 334-0879 VP/V

(208) 334-0803 TTY

(208) 334-0952 Fax

<http://www.cdhh.idaho.gov>

Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities

The mission of the council is to promote the capacity of people with developmental disabilities and their families to determine, access and direct the services and/or support they need to live the lives they choose, and to build the community's ability to support their choices.

Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities

802 West Bannock, Suite 308

Boise, ID 83720-0280

(208) 334-2178

<http://www.icdd.idaho.gov/>

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

The department offers programs that deal with complex social, economic and individual issues.

Many are designed to help families in crisis situations. The programs are integrated to provide basics of food, health care, job training and other assistance. Services can be found at

<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov>

Bureau of Developmental Disabilities

450 W. State St.

Boise, ID 83720-0036

(208) 334-5512

Bureau of Mental Health

450 W. State St.

Boise, ID 83720-0036

(208) 334-5528

Division of Family and Community Services

450 W. State St.

Boise, ID 83720-0036

(208) 334-5700

State Independent Living Council

The independent living movement stems from a philosophy which states that people with all types of disabilities should have the same civil rights and

control over choices in their own lives as people without disabilities. The council works to change societal attitudes about people with disabilities away from a patronizing, pitying medical model towards empowerment, independence, home- and community-based services, and integration as fully contributing, valued members of society.

State Independent Living Council

816 W. Bannock St., Suite 202
P.O. Box 83720
Boise ID, 83720-9601
(208) 334-3800 V/TDD
(208) 334-3803 Fax
(800) 487-4866 — Toll free in Idaho

The local address of centers for independent living can be found at <http://www.silc.idaho.gov/cils.htm>, including:

- **Disability Action Center Northwest**
Moscow, Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston
- **Living Independence Network Corporation**
Boise, Caldwell, Twin Falls
- **Living Independently for Everyone**
Pocatello, Blackfoot, Burley,
Idaho Falls

Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind

1450 Main St.
Gooding, ID 83330
(208) 934-4457
<http://www.isdb.idaho.gov/>

Idaho Industrial Commission

700 Clearwater Lane
Boise, ID 83712
(208) 334-6000
(800) 950-2110
(208) 334-2321 Fax
<http://www.iic.idaho.gov/>

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

1010 Wayne Ave., Suite 920
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 588-8252
<http://www.aucd.org>

Brain Injury Association of Idaho

P.O. Box 414
Boise, ID 83701-0414
(208) 342-0999
(888) 374-3447 — Toll free in Idaho
<http://www.biaid.org>

Consortium for Idahoans with Disabilities

<http://cid.idahocdh.org>

Disability Determination Service

(208) 327-7333
(800) 626-2681
(208) 327-7331 Fax
(800) 377-3529 TDD
<http://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/DisabilityDetermination/tabid/650/Default.aspx>

Disability Resource Center

Helps students with disabilities achieve their higher education goals. Offers recommended links and profiles of support services.
<http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/drc/>

Other resource materials and brochures

Videos and other materials are available through the Idaho ADA Task Force:

Idaho ADA Task Force

816 W Bannock St.
Boise ID 83702
(208) 344-5590
adataskforce@qwest.net

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Offices

Northern Idaho

Coeur d'Alene Regional Office

2025 W. Park Place, #101
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814-2699
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 769-1441
Fax: (208) 769-1440

Lewiston Regional Office

1118 F St.
P.O. Box 1164
Lewiston, ID 83501-1986
Telephone: (208) 799-5070
TDD: (208) 799-5072
Fax: (208) 799-5073

Moscow

609 S. Washington, Suite 201
Moscow, ID 83843-3064
Telephone/TDD: (208) 882-8550
Fax: (208) 882-9514

Orofino

410 Johnson Ave.
Orofino, ID 83544-1178
Telephone/TDD (208) 476-5574
Fax (208) 476-3471

Sandpoint

2101 W. Pine St.
Sandpoint, ID 83864-1794
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 263-2911
Fax: (208) 263-8423

Southwestern Idaho

Boise Regional Office

10200 W. Emerald St., Suite 101
Boise, ID 83704-8780
Telephone: (208) 327-7411
TDD: (208) 327-7040
Fax: (208) 327-7417

Caldwell Regional Office

3110 E. Cleveland Boulevard, #A7
Caldwell, ID 83605-4158
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 454-7606
Fax: (208) 454-7630

Meridian

600 E. Watertower St., Suite B
Meridian, ID 83642
Telephone: (208) 888-0648
Fax: (208) 888-1257

Mountain Home

240 American Legion Boulevard.
Mountain Home, ID 83647-2653
Telephone: (208) 587-3651
Fax: (208) 587-3660

Nampa

1204 8th St. S.
Nampa, ID 83651-4659
Telephone/TDD: (208) 465-8414
Fax: (208) 465-8416

Payette

29 N. Main
Payette, ID 83661
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 642-4762 / 642-9031
Fax: (208) 642-9040

Treasure Valley Corrections Regional Office

3350 Americana Terrace, Suite 210
Boise, ID 83706-2502
Telephone: (208) 334-3650
Fax: (208) 334-3661

Treasure Valley Mental Health & School-Work Regional Office

3350 Americana Terrace, Suite 210
Boise, ID 83706-2502
Telephone: (208) 334-3650
Fax: (208) 334-3661

Central and Eastern Idaho

Blackfoot

490 N. Maple, Suite B
Blackfoot, ID 83221
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 785-6649
Fax: (208) 785-7158

Burley

1600 Parke Ave., Suite B-3
Burley, ID 83318-2412
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 678-3838
Fax: (208) 678-4124

Idaho Falls Regional Office

1825 Hoopes Ave.
Idaho Falls, ID 83404-8018
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 525-7149
Fax: (208) 525-7104

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Offices *(continued from previous page)*

Pocatello Regional Office

1070 Hilina, Ste. 200
Pocatello, ID 83201-2947
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 236-6333
Fax: (208) 236-6304

Rexburg

155 W. Main St. #3
Rexburg, ID 83440-1859
Telephone/TDD: (208) 356-4190
Fax: (208) 356-4207

Salmon

1301 Main St., Suite 3A
Salmon, ID 83467-4511
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 756-2114
Fax: (208) 756-2369

Twin Falls Regional Office

1445 Fillmore, Ste. 1102
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Telephone Voice/TDD: (208) 736-2156
Fax: (208) 736-2168

Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Offices

Northern Idaho

Coeur d'Alene

2005 Ironwood Parkway, Ste 222
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814-2647
Phone: (208) 769-1411
Fax: (208) 666-6737

Lewiston

1118 F. St.
Lewiston, ID 83501-1986
Phone: (208) 799-5009
Fax: (208) 799-512

Southwestern Idaho

Boise

341 W. Washington St.
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83702 (83720-0012)
Phone: (208) 334-3220
Fax: (208) 334-2963

Central and Eastern Idaho

Idaho Falls

550 2nd Street, Ste 293
Idaho Falls, ID 83405-2326
Phone: (208) 525-7028
Fax: (208) 525-7012

Pocatello

427 N. Main, Ste K
Pocatello, ID 83204
Phone: (208) 236-6392
Fax: (208) 236-6409

Twin Falls

1201 Falls Ave. E., Ste 21
Twin Falls, ID 83301-3465
Phone: (208) 736-2140
Fax: (208) 736-2142

Idaho Department of Labor Offices

Most major towns in Idaho have a state Department of Labor office. These service centers provide information on employment opportunities and offer a myriad of services to the public. To contact any center via the Internet, use the following website, <http://labor.idaho.gov>, and select the city or town name.

Each Idaho Department of Labor office has a staff that is trained to assist individuals with disabilities find employment. They are well versed in local agencies that assist individuals with disabilities. The Idaho Department of Labor offices are listed below:

Northern Idaho

Bonnors Ferry

6541 Main St.
Bonnors Ferry, ID 83805-8521
Phone: (208) 267-5581
Fax: (208) 267-3797
E-mail: bonnersferrymail@labor.idaho.gov

Coeur d'Alene

1221 W. Ironwood Drive, Suite 200
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814-1402
Phone: (208) 769-1558
Fax: (208) 769-1574
E-mail: cdamail@labor.idaho.gov

Grangeville

305 N. State St.
P.O. Box 550
Grangeville, ID 83530-0550
Phone: (208) 983-0440
Fax: (208) 983-0302
E-mail: grangevillemail@labor.idaho.gov

Lewiston

1158 Idaho St.
Lewiston, ID 83501-1960
Phone: (208) 799-5000
Fax: (208) 799-5007
E-mail: lewistonmail@labor.idaho.gov

Moscow

1350 Troy Road, Suite 1
Moscow, ID 83843-3995
Phone: (208) 882-7571
Fax: (208) 882-8324
E-mail: moscowmail@labor.idaho.gov

Orofino

410 Johnson Ave.
P.O. Box 391
Orofino, ID 83544-0391
Phone: (208) 476-5506
Fax: (208) 476-3471
E-mail: orofinomail@labor.idaho.gov

Sandpoint

2101 W. Pine St.
Sandpoint, ID 83864-9327
Phone: (208) 263-7544
Fax: (208) 265-0193
E-mail: sandpointmail@labor.idaho.gov

St. Maries

105 N. Eighth St.
St. Maries, ID 83861-1845
Phone: (208) 245-2518
Fax: (208) 245-2012
E-mail: stmariesmail@labor.idaho.gov

Silver Valley

35 Wildcat Way, Suite A
Kellogg, ID 83837-2253
Phone: (208) 783-1202
Fax: (208) 783-5561
E-mail: silvervalleymail@labor.idaho.gov

Southwestern Idaho

Boise

219 W. Main St.
Boise, ID 83735-0030
Phone: (208) 332-3575
Fax: (208) 334-6222
E-mail: boisemail@labor.idaho.gov

Canyon County

4514 Thomas Jefferson Street
Caldwell, ID 83605
Phone: (208) 364-7781
Fax: (208) 454-7720
E-mail: canyoncountymail@labor.idaho.gov

Emmett

2030 S. Washington St.
Emmett, ID 83617-9450
Phone: (208) 364-7780
Fax: (208) 365-6599
E-mail: emmettmail@labor.idaho.gov

Location of Idaho Department of Labor Offices *(continued from previous page)*

McCall

299 S. Third St.
P.O. Box 966
McCall, ID 83638-0966
Phone: (208) 634-7102
Fax: (208) 634-2965
E-mail: mccallmail@labor.idaho.gov

Meridian

205 E. Watertower Lane
Meridian, ID 83642-6282
Phone: (208) 364-7785
Fax: (208) 895-8441
E-mail: meridianmail@labor.idaho.gov

Mountain Home

1993 E. Eighth N.
Mountain Home, ID 83647-2333
Phone: (208) 364-7788
Fax: (208) 587-2964
E-mail: mountainhomemail@labor.idaho.gov

Payette

501 N. 16th St., Suite 107
Payette, ID 83661-0179
Phone: (208) 642-9361
Fax: (208) 642-7150
E-mail: payettemail@labor.idaho.gov

Central and Eastern Idaho

Blackfoot

155 N. Maple
P.O. Box 9
Blackfoot, ID 83221-0009
Phone: (208) 236-6713
Fax: (208) 785-5036
E-mail: blackfootmail@labor.idaho.gov

Blaine County

513 N. Main St., Suite 1
Hailey, ID 83333-8417
Phone: (208) 788-3526
Fax: (208) 788-3041
E-mail: blainecountymail@labor.idaho.gov

Idaho Falls

1515 E. Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401-3653
Phone: (208) 557-2500
Fax: (208) 525-7268
E-mail: idahofallsmail@labor.idaho.gov

Magic Valley

420 Falls Ave.
Twin Falls, ID 83301-5129
Phone: (208) 735-2500
Fax: (208) 736-3007
E-mail: magicvalleymail@labor.idaho.gov

Mini-Cassia

127 W. Fifth St. N.
Burley, ID 83318-3457
Phone: (208) 678-5518
Fax: (208) 678-1765
E-mail: mini-cassiamail@labor.idaho.gov

Pocatello

430 N. Fifth Ave.
P.O. Box 4087
Pocatello, ID 83205-4087
Phone: (208) 236-6710
Fax: (208) 232-0865
E-mail: pocatellomail@labor.idaho.gov

Rexburg

1133 Stocks Ave.
P.O. Box 158
Rexburg, ID 83440-0158
Phone: (208) 557-2501
Fax: (208) 356-0042
E-mail: rexburgmail@labor.idaho.gov

Salmon

1301 Main St., Unit 1
Salmon, ID 83467
Phone: (208) 756-2234
Fax: (208) 756-4672
E-mail: salmonmail@labor.idaho.gov

Soda Springs

95 E. Hooper Avenue #20
P.O. Box 576
Soda Springs, ID 83276
Phone: (208) 236-6711
Fax: (208) 547-4763
Email: sodaspringsmail@labor.idaho.gov

For more information or to download a copy of this manual, go to

labor.idaho.gov

Choose “Publications” and then “Employment Services.”