

THE PATH AHEAD

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Let's clear the path ahead.

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THE VALUE OF WORK: Making It Happen

When you have a job, it opens a lot of doors. It provides us with connections to co-workers and our community and a paycheck. It also adds purpose to our days. Working can make you feel proud of the things you've been working at and have accomplished.

For people with disabilities, there can be roadblocks on the path to finding a job. Sometimes people feel they don't have the right skills or supports to work. Sometimes employers simply don't realize that people with disabilities can (and do!) make fantastic employees.

Megan Acheson, TMG's new Integrated Employment Coordinator, understands the value of work in the lives of people with disabilities.

People should have the opportunity to find work they enjoy, and employers can benefit from the talents, skills, and points of view that all types of employees bring to the workforce. When people of all abilities are respected and paid fairly, workplaces and communities benefit.

“Everybody can work, and, with the right supports, should be able to find a job that is right for them. It makes our workplaces better and more diverse,” says Megan.



Wisconsin is an Employment First state, which means that Wisconsin's goal is to support and increase the number of people with disabilities who work in jobs throughout our communities. In her role as TMG's Integrated Employment Coordinator, Megan will help to increase the resources and local connections available to TMG IRIS Consultants to support the employment goals of the people they partner with.

“If a person needs supports to find and keep employment, their TMG IRIS Consultant and the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) are here to support them,” says Megan. **“They aren't alone on their path to employment.”**

One resource for job skills training is Project SEARCH, offered through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). By letting students and young adults try out different types of jobs, Project

SEARCH helps people figure out what type of work they would like to do, and trains them in different jobs. Another way that people can get extra support or training at work is to hire a job coach with their IRIS budget.

Of course, even if someone is interested in working, they may worry if having a job and earning money could cause them to lose their benefits. Megan says this is a common fear, and that people should meet and talk with a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist. This can be funded by DVR or funded with their IRIS budget. The Benefits Specialist will go over the person's financial situation and discuss all their concerns about having a job, so that the person can make the decisions that are best for them. Another concern people might have is whether they'll like their new job and the people they'll work with.

They may have had a bad work experience in the past or are worried the job won't be a good fit. Megan says every job is different, and that it can take a little bit of time to get used to doing your new tasks and getting to know your co-workers.

Be patient and give yourself time to really learn how to do your job well. Also, don't be afraid to talk with your job coach, boss or a trusted co-worker if you're struggling with something at work. They believe in you and want to help you do your job well. And, if you feel that your current job just isn't working out, it's ok to look for another job that is a better fit for you.

The road to finding employment may not be short, and it might take a few tries to find a good fit. But in the end, Megan says it's worth putting in the hard work to find the job that's right for you.



“There’s that old saying: If at first you don’t succeed, try try again.” says Megan. **“Don’t let one bad experience limit you. Your next experience could change your life!”**

TIPS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT JOB FOR YOU

When you're looking for a job, it can be tough figuring out what type of work would be a good fit. **Megan Acheson, TMG's Integrated Employment Coordinator, shares her advice on what to ask yourself before going to that first interview!**



What am I good at and what do I like doing?

We all want to spend our days doing things that we enjoy, so look for a job you'll be happy doing! Also, think about what you're good at and how that can be a job skill. For example, someone who likes biking and is good at fixing things might like working at a bike shop as a mechanic.



When am I at my best during the day?

Some of us are morning people, while others like to start our days at noon. Knowing when you're most ready to work can help you pick a job schedule that's best.



How will I get to work?

Is there public transportation that gets you where you need to be? Can you arrange other transportation from co-workers or friends? Knowing how you'll get to work is just as important as having the job.



What do I need to be successful?

Do you need adaptive equipment, a job coach, or other supports or accommodations to do your job? Don't be afraid to ask for what you need to succeed!

Talk to your TMG IRIS Consultant about the employment services that IRIS may fund to help you meet your employment goals. These could include:

- Career exploration
- Assessment or discovery
- Job training and soft skills training
- Job seeking support
- Job coaching
- Work incentives benefits counseling



YOUR MEETING PLACE HOSTED BY TMG!



If you live in Milwaukee, Madison or near New Richmond, you're not going to want to miss one of our open house events! There you can meet other people enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, learn about community resources, and join a listening session to share your thoughts about how TMG can help make self-direction better for you.

Your Meeting Place at Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Thursday, June 20, 2019 | Madison, WI

Your Meeting Place at IndependenceFirst

Thursday, August 29, 2019 | Milwaukee, WI

Your Meeting Place at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

Tuesday, October 8, 2019 | New Richmond, WI

Check out tmgwisconsin.com/events for more information. We hope to see you there!

UPCOMING WISCONSIN EVENTS

Madison Disability Pride Festival 2019

Saturday, July 27, 2019 | Tenney Park - Madison, WI

Wisconsin Summer Inclusion Institute 2019

July 29-31, 2019 | Westwood Conference Center - Wausau, WI

Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference

October 15-16, 2019 | Kalahari Resort - Wisconsin Dells, WI



IN THEIR WORDS: EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORIES

What does having a great job mean for people with disabilities? We asked some of the people who partner with TMG to talk about their experiences in the workforce. One thing's for certain – no matter what type of job you have, it can help you live a fuller, more independent life. **Thank you for sharing your stories!**



Brianna McLaughlin

Merrill

Food Preparer

Brianna works at an Italian restaurant, where she helps prepare food for customers to enjoy.

“Working gives me a sense of purpose,” says Brianna. **“It gets me out and socializing with other people. I feel accomplished at the end of my shifts.”**



Alex Haunty

Madison

Art Business Owner and
Non-Profit Founder

Alex is an artist and the owner of Inspiring Art by Alex (inspiringartbyalex.com). He also has a non-profit organization that buys tickets for people with disabilities to see Broadway shows at Overture Center for the Arts.

“Taking people with disabilities to see a Broadway show is a big motivator for me,” says Alex. **“The more art I create and money I make, the more people I can take. I like giving them that opportunity and making it special for them.”**



Michael Thomas

Milwaukee

Co-Founder of
Adaptive Works

Michael is a military veteran who helped start Adaptive Works (adaptiveworks.org), a non-profit organization that gives people who use wheelchairs the chance to work on a community farm using adaptive equipment.

“I want our workers to feel better about themselves and not settle with just being a part of the medical system ‘machine’,” says Michael. **“Adaptive Works’ goal is to increase accessibility so that individuals can do activities they wouldn’t be able to do otherwise.”**



Alexis Olson
Hammond
Kennel Assistant

Alexis has worked at an animal hospital for three years, and she helps take care of dogs, cats, goats, llamas, and calves.

“Keep exploring. Do not give up, don’t get discouraged,” says Alexis. **“There are jobs for everyone no matter their skill set, needs, wants or desires.”**



Kenny Glisper
Milwaukee
Cafeteria Worker

Kenny is a successful Project SEARCH graduate who used his new skills to get a job in a cafeteria at a local college.

“My job is good because it lets me help people and make friends,” says Kenny. **“It keeps my mind focused.”**



Ani Grafwallner
Brown Deer
Laboratory Aide

Ani works in a laboratory at the local children’s hospital, where she gets things ready so that her co-workers can do their work, and much more.

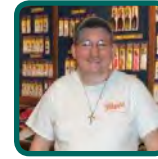
“The work I do in the lab is important and I like to do my best. The lab keeps me busy and I like that,” says Ani. **“I want to keep working.”**



Randy Trawick
Milwaukee
Gym Assistant

Randy works at a local gym, and he wipes down gym equipment and helps clean up the workout areas.

“Randy is contributing to the community,” says Randy’s grandmother, Bernice. **“He understands that he can work and be a part of something.”**



Scott Bayer
Deerbrook
Fishing Lure Maker

Scott works for a company that sells fishing lures, which he helps make.

“I like it all. My job keeps me busy, and I like my co-workers a lot,” says Scott. **“I want to work there for the rest of my life!”**



To read more of each person’s story, as well as find employment

advice from those who partner with the TMG ICA, please visit tmgwisconsin.com/employment-success-stories



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FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A lot has been happening on TMG's Facebook and Twitter pages! Have you visited them lately?

You can read up on important news and events, learn about others who are living self-determined lives, and see what TMG has been up to throughout Wisconsin. Be sure to share your favorite posts and become part of the broader self-determination community in Wisconsin!



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