

THE PATH AHEAD

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 **Getting the Job Done:**
How To Find the Work You Want
- 4 **In Their Own Words:**
Employment Success Stories
- 6 **Resources for Finding Employment**
- 7 **Upcoming Events**
- 7 **Virtual Meetings Made Easy**



tmg[®]
Let's clear the path ahead.

GETTING THE JOB DONE: HOW TO FIND THE WORK YOU WANT

You know you're a great worker and you've got a lot to offer. But when you're looking for a job, how can you decide what work is right for you? And how can you show potential employers that you'd be an awesome employee?



Thankfully, Megan Acheson, TMG's Integrated Employment Coordinator, has some tips to help you have a successful job search!

Megan notes that we all have talents and skills to bring to the workplace. So, when you start looking for a job, you'll first want to think about the things you enjoy doing and what you're good at.

For example, if you love animals and are good at caring for them, maybe you'd be a great dog walker or an assistant at a pet store. If you aren't sure what you're good at, you could start by volunteering at a non-profit agency that does something you are interested in. Sometimes volunteering can lead to a paid job.

Megan says that it can also be helpful to talk with a job developer or other supports to figure out what type of

work you want to do, and where you might want to work. Contact the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to connect with a DVR counselor who will help you find a job that fits your interests, skills and needs.

Once you know what kind of job you'd like, Megan says you shouldn't be shy about letting other people know you're looking for work. Talk with your family, friends, neighbors, teachers, classmates or other folks that you know. When they ask what's going on in your life, tell them you're looking for a job and tell them what kind of work you're interested in. You never know when someone might have a great opportunity for you or know of someone who does! And, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, up to 85 percent of jobs are filled through family or personal connections.

If there's a place in your community where you'd love to work, you or your job developer can also call or visit that business directly and ask if they could use any extra help.

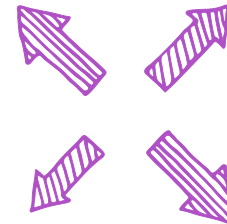
Once you learn what needs the business has, you or your job developer can tell the employer how you can help them address their needs. If the employer thinks you can help them out, they might just offer you a job.

"You can contact or visit a business that you would maybe like to work at and say, 'Are you currently hiring?'" says Megan. "Many times, the jobs that people are getting aren't ones that are advertised. Instead, people often find a job because they asked the employer how they could help the company, or they knew someone who works there."

Once you get a job offer, you and your employer can work out a schedule that works for both of you. Megan says you should also ask for any reasonable accommodations you might need to help you be successful in that job. This could mean getting certain equipment that helps you do the work or having a job coach help you learn how to do your tasks until you are comfortable doing them on your own.

Finally, if you decide to take the job, Megan says it's important to try to get to know your coworkers, so you can ask them for help if you need it, and they can also ask you for help.

"Do your part," says Megan. "When your coworkers see that you're doing your work and maybe helping them out by taking on extra tasks every once in a while, they'll see you as a valued coworker, and that you are helping them and the company!"



IN THEIR OWN WORDS: EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORIES

They say it doesn't feel like work when you do something you love! Here are just a few employment success stories from people who partner with TMG. **Thank you for sharing your stories!**



Mitchell Finnel

Manitowoc, WI

For Mitchell, being connected to his community helped him find a job he loves. Since 2016, Mitchell has enjoyed swimming and working out at the Fox Hills Pool and Health Club. His grandmother worked for Fox Hills for 40 years. He also knows many people from his community who work at Fox Hills.

In April, he began working in the laundry department at the Fox Hills Owners Association. The person who hired Mitchell already knew him, and Mitchell believes that helped him get the job. Mitchell says that knowing some of his coworkers before he got the job meant that they knew what he could do, cared about him and wanted to help him succeed.

Mitchell's Words of Wisdom:

"I think it's a good idea to work at a place in your community. It's good to work with people who know you, understand you and want to help you!"



Danielle Duerst

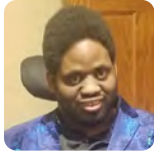
Cottage Grove, WI

Danielle has been an employee at the retail store Marshalls for many years, and she loves being there! She enjoys keeping the store tidy. Before COVID hit, Danielle was working at the store once a week for a few hours. However, when Dane County was in lockdown during the pandemic, she temporarily had to stop working. During this time, Danielle says she was bored and missed her coworkers.

Thankfully, Danielle was able to get back to work last summer. This April, Marshalls increased her work hours, and she is now happy to be working three days a week. This just shows that Danielle is a valued employee who does excellent work!

Danielle's Words of Wisdom:

"I listen to my boss. I'm friendly with customers, and the people I work with are very nice. I love my job!"



Jethro Heard

Milwaukee, WI

Jethro loves to work. He has worked for Lowes, Walmart and the Milwaukee Public School District. He says working connects him to his community. He also says he enjoys what he does, and that he's proud to show that people with disabilities can be good workers.

As a person who uses a power wheelchair, Jethro needs an accessible workspace. Recently, Jethro was hired at Amazon. When he first saw his workstation, he realized he needed accommodations so that he could do his job. Jethro went to the human resources department and told them what he would need. They agreed to make those accommodations, and they also chose to pay him while he was waiting for those accommodations. Jethro understands he has a right to necessary work accommodations, and he encourages others to not be afraid to speak up.

Jethro's Words of Wisdom:

"Remember to be honest with your employer about what you need. Practice talking about what you need with family, friends or your job coach so that you are comfortable asking for accommodations. You have to work up the courage to advocate for yourself!"



Jerry Vasfaret

Roberts, WI

Sometimes trying something new can be hard, but it might actually lead to great things. For more than 30 years, Jerry enjoyed working in a facility alongside other people with disabilities. However, recently it became clear that he would make more money if he found work in his community. To find a new job, he began working with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).

At first, Jerry was nervous about learning something new, and didn't want to sign up for the services at DVR. Some people in his life also didn't think he would be successful. But, as he started partnering with his DVR counselor, his job supports, his job development specialist and his job coach, he slowly became more comfortable with the idea of finding work in the community. Today, he works three days a week at Kwik Trip, and he loves his job! His coworkers think he's awesome, and he recently received a pay raise. Jerry has surprised everyone with his job success, including himself.

Jerry's Words of Wisdom:

"Old dogs can learn new tricks. I am helpful to customers, and I am friendly. I have learned a lot."

RESOURCES FOR FINDING EMPLOYMENT



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, which celebrates all the great ways that people with disabilities contribute to the workforce. It also highlights the importance of accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. Most importantly, though, it's a reminder that integrated employment in the community (where people of all abilities work together and are paid at or above minimum wage) supports people with disabilities, their coworkers and their employers.

So, if you're ready to get to work but need a bit of support, be sure to check out these fantastic resources! You can find additional resources in the Employment & Transition section of TMG's Partner Links & Resources page at tmgwisconsin.com/tmg-resources-for-self-direction/partner-links.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), a part of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, helps individuals who have had a hard time finding a job, keeping a job or getting a better job due to their disability.

DVR can help you find and use employment supports, like career exploration, assistive technology, job experience, work training and on-the-job supports. To learn more and find out if you're eligible for DVR's services, visit dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr.

Project SEARCH is a national organization that connects businesses and individuals with disabilities, creating 9-12 month internships that benefit everyone involved.

There are over 30 Project SEARCH sites in Wisconsin, including hospitals, airports, zoos and resorts. To learn more, visit dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/programs/project-search.

Work Incentive Benefits Counseling can help you learn how work might impact your benefits, and show you how to stay eligible for public benefit programs that you might use, such as Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid and IRIS. To find out where to receive benefits counseling, contact your IRIS Consultant or **local DVR office**.

Handling Disability Discrimination in the Workplace: While we hope everyone's employer treats them fairly and follows the law, that might not always happen. It's important for you to know your rights, how to advocate for yourself and how to find the help you deserve. Learn more at disabilitysecrets.com/topics/the-americans-with-disabilities-act-ada.

Talk to your TMG IRIS

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

- Discovering or assessing your skills and interests
- Exploring different careers that are a good fit for you
- Work incentive benefits counseling
- Support finding a job
- Training for job skills and how to be a good employee
- Job coaching



UPCOMING EVENTS



13th Annual Black Women's Wellness Day September 24-25, 2021 | Virtual Event

The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness is excited to host the 13th Annual Black Women's Wellness Day. This two-day virtual event provides inspiration, education and empowerment to live a healthy life. MolinaCares, the charitable foundation for TMG's parent company, is proud to sponsor this event.

Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference October 18-20, 2021 | Free Virtual Event

SD CONFERENCE IS
FREE & VIRTUAL

The 2021 Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference is back, and better than ever! This year, join virtually and enjoy the largest self-determination event in the state. Get to know other self-advocates, learn ways to strengthen your self-determination skills and celebrate all the amazing things that make a great life possible. TMG is once again proud to sponsor and present at this conference. We hope you can join us!

Virtual Meetings Made Easy

Interested in attending any of these events, but not sure how to use Zoom or Microsoft Teams? TMG has created short instructional videos that you can find on TMG's Virtual Meetings Made Easy page. Don't miss out on any of these virtual events. Learn how to get connected and join in the fun!



To learn more about these events and TMG's Virtual Meetings Made Easy, visit tmgwisconsin.com/tmg-events.



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FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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

There, 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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