

A grayscale photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge at night, with its towers and suspension cables illuminated against a dark sky. The bridge spans across the water, and the city lights are visible in the distance.

# **MOVING FORWARD:** Employment Opportunities



**Golden Gate Regional Center**

# Getting a Job

A job helps you earn money, meet new people and develop professional skills. Having a disability does not disqualify anyone from having a job. For many people, a job is an important part of their life and who they are.

- You have the right to set employment goals.
- If you want to work, talk with your social worker and have an employment goal written into your Individual Program Plan (IPP).

## How Do I Get Started?

Look around your community. What interests you? To discover a career direction, think about your skills, interests and environments where you are at your best.

- Write down your interests, strengths and types of jobs that might interest you.
- Discuss your employment goal with your family, friends and teachers.
- Identify what help you might need to find, get and keep a job.

When you are ready, talk with your social worker who can refer you to employment resources and services. These may include day programs, internships or the Department of Rehabilitation.



# What Does the Department of Rehabilitation Do?

The Adult Service System for employment involves two agencies – Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR).

- **GGRC** can help you *prepare* for employment and *maintain* your job long term.
- **DOR** can help you *find, apply and start* a new job.
- Your first step is to talk with your regional center social worker.

There are different titles for people who help you find and keep a job.

- A *job developer* works with you and employers to help you get hired.
- A *job coach* is someone who will help train you and answer your questions once you start the job.
- An *employment specialist* refers to a professional who does both – job develops and coaches



# What Help is Available When I am Working?

Once you start a new job, the amount of help available to you is dependent on what you need to be successful.

- Typically, there are more hours of direct help from a job coach at the start of a new job and fewer hours as you become more confident in your position.
- Even after you are settled into your new job, a job coach may continue to check on your progress and help you communicate with your manager.



**DOR provides a few months of job coaching after you start work. After that, GGRC provides on-going job coaching as needed to help you maintain employment.**

## What is an Internship?

If you are not sure you want to work or what kind of job is for you, talk with your social worker about an internship. An internship is a time-limited position with an employer. It offers an opportunity to learn what interests you, gain new skills and build self-confidence.

- You are in training during an internship and not a permanent employee.
- GGRC service providers offer internships that may be:
  - Paid or unpaid
  - Within a specific field such as food services, a hospital or a store

# A Perfect Fit: Customized Employment

Jose wanted to work but has had a hard time finding a job. As a person who uses a wheelchair and whose speech is unclear, Jose found it difficult to meet a job posting's written requirements. Using customized employment techniques, a job developer worked with Jose to discover his strengths and interests and identify the best environment to minimize his challenges.

Jose loves animals. In his neighborhood, there is a pet hotel but it had no job openings that he could fill. Going on an informational interview and tour of the pet hotel with his job developer, the two learned what tasks were done at the pet hotel. They discovered that he would be able to work in the kitchen preparing food trays for the dogs' meals from his chair or with his crutches. The employer was willing to try this role out with Jose for two hours per day while the other staff was busy elsewhere. Jose loves his job – earning money and seeing the animals.

## **What if I Want My Own Business?**

Do you have an idea for a business or a product to sell? A lot of people enjoy working for themselves.

- Check with your social worker about what services are available to help you start and grow your business.
- Depending on the service providers in your area, there may be one who can help you develop a business plan, sell your product, and assist with the money management.

# From Day Program to Employment

Anna knew she wanted to work after high school but felt too shy to start a job on her own. Working with her GGRC social worker, Anna joined a community-based day program to make friends, increase her confidence in the community and prepare for employment. A year later, Anna felt ready.

With the help of her family and support from her GGRC social worker, Anna opened a case with DOR. With DOR's job developer, she prepared a résumé, practiced interviewing and searched for employers. Together, they attended a job fair and met with employers – one of whom hired her on the spot! At first, Anna needed frequent job coaching to learn the new tasks. As Anna learned her job, she no longer wanted coaching. Her co-workers now provide her with all the support she needs.

## Why Work?

There are many good reasons: money, friends, independence, contribution to the community, pride, etc. Whatever your reason is, more money may mean more choices in living your life. Talk with your social worker about opportunities in your area.

# What Happens to My Benefits When I Work?

People who work – even a part time job – have more money to do the things they enjoy like seeing a movie, shopping, or going out to dinner with friends.

- Social Security benefits and MediCal coverage can continue while working but there may be changes.
- Talk with a Certified Work Incentives Counselor to get the facts on how a job might change your benefits. The Center for Independence (CID) provides benefits counseling for San Mateo, San Francisco and Marin counties. Visit [cidsanmateo.org](http://cidsanmateo.org) or call (650) 645-1780 / (650) 522-9313 (TTY).
- A good online reference is [ca.db101.org](http://ca.db101.org) which offers helpful explanations.
- For a fee, you may work with a private benefits counselor.



# Move Forward to Employment!

Contact your social worker for more information.

## **Golden Gate Regional Center Offices**

### **San Francisco County (Main Office)**

1355 Market Street, Suite 220

San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 546-9222

### **San Mateo County**

3130 La Selva Street, Suite 202

San Mateo, CA 94403

(650) 574-9232

### **Marin County**

4000 Civic Center Drive, Suite 310

San Rafael, CA 94903

(415) 446-3000

## **Department of Rehabilitation**

For the DOR office near you, visit [dor.ca.gov](http://dor.ca.gov).



**Golden Gate Regional Center**

*Supporting Lives of Liberty and Opportunity*

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