

On this page

- [Who is this guide for?](#)
- [Why should you think about developing a pathway to work?](#)
- [Who can you talk to about developing a pathway to work?](#)
- [What support options are available for developing a pathway to work?](#)
- [Where has the information in this Guide come from?](#)
- [Disclaimer](#)

Who is this guide for?

This guide has information for participants who are thinking about work. You may have never worked, or haven't worked in a long time.

The information is for:

- people on the autism spectrum
- people with an intellectual disability
- people with a psychosocial disability

Other people may also find the information helpful.

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Why should you think about developing a pathway to work?

Developing a pathway to work is a good way to start planning for a career.

Before you jump straight into looking for work you might need to think about:

- what you like to do
- what you are good at
- what skills you need to build before getting ready to start working
- activities that will fit with your life

Developing a pathway to work can also help you understand what supports you might need to reach your work goals.

Who can you talk to about developing a pathway to work?

You can talk with your parents, carers, local area coordinator (LAC), planner, service provider, friends and other people you know about what work might be like for you.

Together, you can:

- think about your work goals
- think about what jobs might be good for you
- see what training you need to get the job you want
- think about what supports you might need
- use the [‘Let’s talk about work’ booklet](#) to help you to make a plan

You can also:

- Talk to people you know in the community, like a coach, community leader or family friends. They can help you get work experience or find a job.
- Learn from other people’s experience. Talk with role models or people you look up to. Together, you can see what work is possible for you.
- Talk to a career guidance or counselling professional about developing a pathway to work. You can talk about your skills and interests and match these to different types of jobs. Career guidance can help you see if you need to learn new skills to reach your work goals.

What support options are available for developing a pathway to work?

Below is a list of options that can help you develop a pathway to work. You might try some different options before you find one that works for you. Your supports might combine 2 or more of the options listed below.

Getting ready to develop a pathway to work

You can:

- Decide what new skills you might need to help you get a job
- Think about how you will get to a job and any supports you might need to do this
- Get experience in different workplaces to see what interests you
- Volunteer in organisations that interest you
- Look for Individualised Placement Supports- these are supports that can help you look for a job and stay in work. Individualised Placement Supports may have different names. They usually includes mental health support and support to build your skills so you can get a job. They are most often used for people with psychosocial disability
- Look at Bridging programs- these match people with disability to work opportunities. They also provide support to you and your employer.

Think about:

- Where you want to work?
- How you can get to work?
- Do you want to work full-time or part-time?
- Do you need any supports at work to help you? This can be things like screen reading software, support for personal care or interpreting at work?
- If you need supports at work, how can they be included in your work day? If you need help talking with your employer about supports at work, you could talk first with your family, friends, local area coordinator (LAC), or support coordinator if you have one.

How these supports can help:

- Building new skills can help you live more independently. These skills can also help you at work. New skills might be catching public transport or getting your driver's licence. New skills could also be managing money, communicating with colleagues, keeping on time, teamwork and controlling emotions. Participants have told us building new skills helped them get a job, keep that job or move on to a new job. Research suggests the best way to develop new skills is with on-the-job training.
- Work experience is a good way to learn more about a job you are interested in. Work experience can build your confidence, skills and contacts for future job searches.
- Apprenticeships/traineeships can give you both training and paid work in a field you are interested in. Apprenticeships and traineeships usually take 2 to 4 years.
- Work placements are paid work while you are studying.
- Vocational programs are usually a combination of 2 or more interventions including: career guidance, skills development, work experience and/or work placements.
- Volunteering is unpaid work. It can be a great first step to getting paid work. Like work experience, you can spend time volunteering in a job you are interested in. Volunteering can build your confidence, skills and contacts for future job searches.
- Individualised Placement Supports (IPS) can help you look for a job and stay in work. IPS may have different names. IPS usually includes mental health support and support to build your skills so you can get a job. IPS is most often used for people with psychosocial disability.
- Bridging programs match people with disability with work opportunities. They also provide support to you and your employer.

Who can you talk to?

Talk to your NDIA planner, local area coordinator (LAC) or support coordinator about:

- developing and using your plan to pursue your work goals
- accessing supports in the community.

Ask them questions like:

- How do I develop a plan so I can get a job?
- What supports and services are available for me to build new skills?
- What supports and services are available to help me think about the kind of job I want?
- What activities have other people like me found useful?
- How do I find a good provider to help me?

Read more about [questions you can ask providers](#).

Where has the information in this Guide come from?

1. Kavanagh A, Brown D, Dickinson H, Mallett S, Marck C, Weld-Blundell I. (2021). Evidence review: Strategies to increase employment and economic participation for people with a cognitive disability. The University of Melbourne.
2. National Disability Insurance Agency 2021. Achieving a 'sense of purpose': pathways to employment for NDIS participants with intellectual disability, on the autism spectrum and with psychosocial disability. Australia. Prepared by L Smith, A Ames, M Bennett, R Morello.
3. Wilson, E. & Campain, R. (2020). [Fostering employment for people with intellectual disability: the evidence to date](#) , Hawthorn, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology.

Disclaimer

This guide can help you understand which supports you could use to help you pursue your work goals.

It does not mean a support will be added to your plan. It does not mean a support will be funded by the NDIS.

Some of these supports are provided outside the NDIS. All supports in your plan must meet our reasonable and necessary standards. This includes being value for money.

If you read this guide, you should also read [work and study supports](#).