



What is Employment First?

Employment at or above minimum wage is the first and preferred outcome for working age adults, regardless of disability. Employment in the community benefits both the individual and their community. Society values work; being valued may increase a young adult’s confidence and self worth. Working increases personal enrichment, provides more choices, expands social networks/supports, and increases income. ¹

WIOA² has expanded the definition of competitive employment to include customized and supported employment.

How can a young adult be employable?³

 **Supported Employment:** The young adult is supported to obtain competitive employment in the community including support to find a job, learn the job tasks, and/or keep the job.

 **Customized Employment:** The young adult and employer relationship is personalized to meet the needs of both. Job duties and responsibilities are tailored so the young adult will be successful.

 **Entrepreneurship:** The young adult is supported to start their own business and assisted with components of running the business.

“I was nervous about her working because someone could take advantage of her. However, her VR counselor got her a safe job in a business with other people who watched out for her.”

-Mother of young adult



Picture of young woman happily working at her job.

Who can help young adults get a job?

[South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department \(VR\)](#) has Transition Counselors that work with young adults while still in high school to gain employment or the skills for competitive employment after completing school.

Competitive employment means working in the community. VR has job coaches who can assist the young adult to gain skills and become independent on the job.

“We were not sure if this student could work, they were so prompt dependent and needed a lot of support. But then we gave him a chance with the support of a job coach from VR in a community job and he eventually was Independent. The best part: he got the job!”

-Self-contained teacher

Who helps young adults keep their job?

When the young adult is successfully employed and no longer needs VR services, Employment Specialists through the [Department of Disabilities and Special Needs](#) can help the young adult maintain their job, increase new skills on the job, and advance in their career!

Beck, S. K., & Buscemi, B. A. H. (2015). *Employment First (700-07-DD)*. Columbia: SC, South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.¹

“Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act” (PL 113–128, 22 July 2014).² Office of Disability Employment Policy (N.D.). *Customized Employment: Principles and Indicators*. Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/workforce/CustomizedEmployment/practical/indicators.htm> on 8/23/2017.³