








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 with a disability as well as their community. Society values work; being valued may increase self confidence and self worth. ¹

Employment means:



Picture of young woman happily working at her job.

-  **Identity:** Being seen as an employee, coworker, friend, and a valued community member.
-  **Personal Enrichment:** You are continuously learning new skills on the job.
-  **More Choices:** Choices on where to work, how to get there, who to spend time with during breaks, and more!
-  **Expanded Social Networks and Supports:** Coworkers can also be friends, and support your success.
-  **Increased Income:** Along with working comes a paycheck and making money is where it is at!

“Eeeek! This is my money? Not what my parents give me, but mine?”
-Young adult on her first paycheck.

Who can help me get a job?

[South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department \(VR\)](#) has Transition Counselors that will work with you while you are in high school to get a job or learn new skills so you can get a job after completing school. Competitive employment means working in the community; VR has job coaches to help you learn skills and become independent on the job too! VR is the first step to opening the door to a job and adult opportunities.

Who helps me keep my job?

When you successfully have a job and no longer need VR services, Employment Specialists through the [Department of Disabilities and Special Needs](#) can help you keep your job, learn new skills on the job, and advance in your career!

“I was nervous about him starting work, but now he loves it! He looks forward to working and tells me more about his day at his job! He is beyond excited to earn a paycheck and to see his coworkers that are now friends.”

-Mother of young adult working