



Life after High School: A Guide for Students with Visual Impairments

What You Can Do in High School to Prepare for Employment

- At age fourteen, learn about vocational services available through the [Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired \(SBVI\) at the Office of Rehabilitation Services](http://www.ors.ri.gov/) (<http://www.ors.ri.gov/>), and when you should apply.
- Once you are determined eligible for vocational services, arrange regular times to meet with your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor. Ideally, before your senior year, you will have completed career interest inventories, and you and your VR counselor will have arranged for vocational assessment activities, including experiences real work environments. You can explore today's job market on your own using the web resources listed below:
 - [CareerConnect](http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/1) (<http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/1>) is an employment resource developed by the American Foundation for the Blind, and includes access to a mentor program
 - [EmployRI](https://www.employri.org/vosnet/Default.as) (<https://www.employri.org/vosnet/Default.as>), sponsored by networkRI, provides resources on occupations, careers, and labor market information.
- As you research career options, ask yourself these questions:
 - What kind of job do I see myself doing when I am 25?
 - What kind of training or education will I need to do that job?
 - What do I need to accomplish while in high school to reach my goal?
- Share the questions above, and your answers, with your parents and your IEP (Individualized Education Program) team as you work on developing your

transition IEP plan.

- Research shows that work experiences in high school have consistently been associated with better employment opportunities after high school. Actively seek summer employment, part-time jobs after school, volunteer opportunities, and internships. Investigate opportunities to job shadow in a field of interest. Enlist your vocational rehabilitation counselor, TVI, resource teacher, family, and friends to help you find work in the community. Keep a log of your experiences, including dates and names of supervisors, to reference when completing job applications.
- Learn as much as possible about available technology. Develop the skills to monitor your own technology needs and to match your needs to the appropriate technology tools. Students who are skilled users of typical office technology such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint will fare better in a competitive job market.
- Having strong mobility skills will help you to travel with confidence to and from future jobs. If you have an Orientation and Mobility Instructor, talk with them about strategies to improve your skills at home and in the community. If considering having a guide dog in the future, proficient mobility skills, including white cane skills, are a prerequisite.
- Strengthen your organizational skills. Schedule your own appointments with medical specialists and transportation services. Keep a calendar of your appointments in a tool such as Microsoft Outlook. Keep a list of contact, including your guidance counselor, doctors, and SBVI counselor.