

OVR and Good Jobs

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OVR 101

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is part of the PA Department of Labor & Industry

OVR mission:

To assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence

OVR Agency Organization



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (COPA)

Department of Labor and Industry (L&I)

Bureau of
Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services (BVRS)

15 District
Offices

Bureau of
Blindness and
Visual Services
(BBVS)

6 District
Offices

Hiram G.
Andrews Center
(HGAC)

Johnstown,
PA

Bureau of
Central
Operations

Harrisburg,
PA

OVR serves people who have disabilities that present an impediment to employment. Services are provided to individuals to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in or regain employment.

You should apply if:

- you have a disability;
- your disability impedes you from preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in or regaining employment; and
- you want to work.



A person's disability could be cognitive, physical, emotional, psychological, or a learning disability.

- Examples of disabilities OVR assists: (this list does not encompass all disabilities)
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - ADHD/ADD
 - Visual impairment or Blindness
 - Hearing impairment
 - Autism
 - Mobility impairments
 - Alcohol/Substance Abuse
 - Learning disabilities (intellectual, dyslexia, etc)

Diagnostic Services: Medical, psychological, and audiological examinations and tests used to better understand the disability and needs for specific types of services.

Vocational Evaluation: Aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance and "hands-on" job experience.

Counseling: Vocational counseling to better understand individual potential, abilities, to set realistic vocational goals, to change them when necessary, to develop successful work habits and to begin a satisfying career.



Training: Education to prepare for a job, including, but not limited to, basic academic, vocational/technical, college, on-the-job, independent living skills, and personal and work adjustment training.

Examples of Training:

- OJT – On the Job Training
- Supported Employment
- College/Vocational Training





Restoration Services: Medical services and equipment, such as physical and occupational therapy, wheelchairs and automobile hand controls.



Placement Assistance: Counseling, job-seeking programs, job clubs, and job development. Individual will receive ideas, practice and advise on finding job leads, filling out applications, getting interviews for a job and on how to interview.

Assistive Technology: Assistive technology includes a wide range of devices and services that can empower persons with disabilities to maximize employment, independence and integration into society. OVR can assist an individual with a disability in effectively selecting and acquiring appropriate assistive technology.



Support Services: Other services are provided for eligible persons if they are necessary to start and maintain employment. Such services may include:

- Occupational tools, licenses or equipment.
- Home modifications, adaptive or special household equipment in order to help get ready to go to and be on time for employment. Van or car modifications, including special driving devices or lifting devices.
- Small business startup



Transition Services: Prepare students with disabilities starting at age 14 years old with work readiness trainings to help prepare them for paid work experiences in competitive integrated environments.

- Real world work experiences
- Job shadowing
- Workplace tours
- Employer mock interviews
- Internships



Blindness and Visual Services:

- Blindness Skills Training
- Instruction: Mobility
- Instruction: Daily Living
- Independent Living Skills
- Specialized Children's Services
- Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program (BEP)



Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC)

SPECIALIZED DEGREE PROGRAMS

- ASB Medical Office Assistant
- AST Culinary Arts
- AST Networking Technology

[Commonwealth Technical Institute
at the Hiram G. Andrews Center
\(pa.gov\)](http://pa.gov)

DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

- Administrative Assistant
- Automotive Technology
- Building Maintenance
- Culinary Assistant
- Materials Management and Distribution
- Nurse Aide
- Welding Technology

- Receiving Community HealthChoices waiver? Contact your Service Coordinator/Managed Care Organization for the referral process
- Anyone interested can also complete an application for OVR services through the PA Careerlink website.

[PA CareerLink® - Job Seeker Registration](#)



- Contact your [local OVR office](#) if assistance is needed in completion

- Andrew's Story: [From Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment – Andrew's Story \(youtube.com\)](#)
- Pat's Story: [Pat Ford's Story \(youtube.com\)](#)

Good Jobs

Definition, principles, and alignment with OVR

- Defining a Good Job — A good job helps workers achieve economic stability and mobility, while prioritizing diversity and worker voice. To this end, the Departments of Commerce and Labor have jointly identified key principles of a good job. The Department strongly advises state and local workforce boards to integrate these principles into their policies, as appropriate. A foundational resource for workforce system partners, policymakers, and practitioners is the Department's Good Jobs Initiative site:

<https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs>

The U.S. Department of Labor's "good jobs" principles set the standard for what constitutes quality employment. These principles emphasize that a "good job" should offer:

- **Living Wages & Benefits:** Adequate compensation, including wages and benefits (such as health insurance and retirement plans) that provide financial stability.
- **Job Security & Advancement:** Opportunities for career growth, job security, and pathways for advancement within the organization.
- **Safe & Healthy Working Conditions:** Environments that prioritize the physical and mental well-being of employees.
- **Training & Skill Development:** Access to ongoing training, professional development, and the tools needed to succeed.
- **Worker Rights & Dignity:** Respect for worker rights, fair treatment, and inclusion in decision-making processes that affect their work.

Competitive integrated employment (CIE) means that individuals, including those with disabilities, are employed in jobs within the open labor market, alongside non-disabled peers, where they receive competitive wages and benefits. Here's the connection:

- **Quality of Work:** Both the “good jobs” principles and competitive integrated employment stress that employment should be meaningful—not just any job, but one that supports an individual’s economic and personal well-being.
- **Inclusivity & Equality:** By focusing on competitive integrated employment, the aim is to ensure that all individuals, regardless of disability, have access to positions that offer the same quality, security, and advancement opportunities as those enjoyed by others.
- **Support & Accommodations:** Employers are encouraged to provide necessary supports and accommodations, ensuring that persons with disabilities can thrive in roles that meet the good jobs criteria.

The **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)** is dedicated to assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment. Their mission aligns with the good jobs principles in several key ways:

- **Empowerment through Quality Employment:** OVR works to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not only employed, but that they secure good jobs that provide living wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
- **Removing Barriers:** By advocating for inclusive practices and offering rehabilitation services, OVR helps dismantle barriers that might prevent individuals from accessing or sustaining high-quality employment.
- **Promoting Equal Opportunities:** OVR's initiatives support competitive integrated employment by ensuring that employment opportunities are open and accessible, aligning with the Department of Labor's vision of work environments where all employees are treated with dignity and fairness.

OVR Dual Customer Model

OVR has Two Primary Customers

1. ***People with disabilities*** who have an impediment to preparing for, attaining, maintaining, or advancing in employment and independence.
2. ***Employer customers*** who hire or may want to hire or retain qualified people with disabilities.

OVR Services for Employers at **NO COST**

Staffing

- Pre-screened, qualified candidates
- Help retain current employees
- Accommodation solutions



Follow-up Services

- OVR communication with customers
- Will help employer & new-hire problem solve future issues

Accessibility Analysis

- Consultation on job analysis, worksite modification and reasonable accommodations
- Info about assistive technology

Disability Awareness

- Disability etiquette training
- ADA Consultation



Financial Incentives

On-the-Job Training (OJT) wage reimbursement

- OJT can help to offset training costs by providing businesses with wage reimbursement for employees who are OVR participants
- OJT wage reimbursement can be offered to OVR customers to learn required job skills as a new employee, or to retain their current job with skills advancement
- Employer will become a provider via our provider enrollment process
- Invoice biweekly, monthly– proof of paycheck is required
- Wages are reimbursed to the employer after submitting proof of payment

Federal Bonding Program

- The Federal Bonding Program was created as an incentive to employers to hire "at-risk," hard-to-place job seekers.
- Provides a business insurance policy that protects an employer against loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty.
- The bond is good for six months in the amount of \$5,000 at no cost to the business or the employee. [Resources \(pa.gov\)](#)

Work Opportunity Tax Credit, WOTC

- Employers generally can earn a tax credit equal to 25% or 40% of a new employee's first-year wages, up to the maximum for the target group to which the employee belongs.
- Employers will earn 25% if the employee works at least 120 hours and 40% if the employee works at least 400 hours.
- [Resources \(pa.gov\)](http://pa.gov)

Disabled Access Tax Credit

- Available to small businesses in the amount of 50% of eligible access expenditures that are more than \$250 but less than \$10,250.
Maximum of \$5,000/year.
 - Examples: providing sign language interpreters, creating Braille documents, building ramps

Architectural / Transportation Tax Deduction

- Removal of physical, structural, and transportation barriers.
- Examples include: widening doors, building ramps, modifying vehicles
- Maximum of \$15,000 tax credit/year

[ADA Quick Tips - Tax Incentives | ADA National Network \(adata.org\)](#)

How to get connected to employer services:

Please contact the email below and an OVR Business Services representative will be in touch to discuss your business needs

RA-LIOVR-BSOD@pa.gov

Directory for local office where an individual or an employer can refer an employee for services:

[OVR Office Directory \(pa.gov\)](#)

- The purpose of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is to help people attain economic self-sufficiency, while giving employers opportunities to train, hire, and retain workers.
- WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.
- Job quality expectations “good jobs” are directly related to WIOA

In summary, the Department of Labor's good jobs principles lay the foundation for what constitutes quality employment, and competitive integrated employment is the practical application of these principles—especially for individuals with disabilities. OVR's mission is directly connected to these ideals, as it strives to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to secure and retain good jobs that support their long-term success and integration into the workforce.

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Questions, Comments

Thank you!