



Paul V. Sherlock Center

On Disabilities / Rhode Island College

FEAT - Y

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March 31, 2026

Family Employment Awareness Training for Youth (FEAT-Y)

A webinar series for families of students and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A partnership between the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College and the Indiana Institute on Disability and the Community Center on Community Living and Careers



Housekeeping



- We want to keep things informal, but ask that you keep yourself on mute unless you want to ask a question or make a comment.
- You can also comment or ask questions using the “chat.”
- This session will not be recorded since it is interactive, and we strongly encourage participants to actively engage, ask questions, or share personal examples when appropriate.

Online Materials and Resources



- Materials included for entire series
- PowerPoint handouts
- Glossary
- Activities
- Plan for Employment
- Links to related resources
- Website for resources – www.featri.net

Agenda



- Who We Are
- Panelists
- Adult Employment Supports Funding
- Other services, benefits, and programs
- Types of employment supports
- Planning for Tomorrow



Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities



- Rhode Island's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).
- Provide training and technical assistance, research, and information.
- Individuals with disabilities, their families, and those who support them.
- Across the age span.
- www.sherlockcenter.org

Parent Perspective on Employment Fears



You can use this [link](#) to watch a video. In the video, you will hear from Sue Donovan. She is a mom of a daughter with a disability. She talks about what she fears about her daughter getting a job.

Let's hear from some Rhode Island Workers



- To be announced



Funding for Adult Employment Services



- Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)
- Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals – Division of Developmental Disabilities (BHDDH-DDD)
- Rhode Island Medicaid

Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)



www.ors.ri.gov

[Watch ORS video clip](#)

Activity Questions ...



Steps for your “Plan for Employment”

- Do you know who your HS assigned ORS counselor is? Have you met them?

www.ors.ri.gov

- Are there employment supports that your family member needs that ORS could provide?
- While still in HS? After HS?

Medicaid – Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)



- Funds community services (e.g., supported employment, day services, personal assistance)
- For people with developmental disabilities in Rhode Island, administered by BHDDH-DDD.
- Virtually all DDD supports are Medicaid HCBS.
- Common source of funding for ongoing job support following or along with ORS time-limited vocational rehabilitation
- HCBS rules – Services must be based on person-centered plan and integrated into the community

BHDDH Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)



[Watch video clip
with Susan Haywood](#)



ORS Employment Supports & Services



Supported Employment

- Community-based work experiences
- Job development and placement
- Supported employment –
 - Including job coaching (as needed and time limited)

Employment Supports

- On-the job training
- Self-employment support
- Rehabilitation technology
- Transportation supports (job related)
- Uniforms and tools
- Postsecondary education or training

Community Rehabilitation Providers



- Organization or agency that provides vocational rehabilitation services through ORS
- Services may include:
 - Assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs
 - Job development, placement and retention services
 - Supported employment services and extended services
 - Customized employment supports

Employment Services and Supports



Employment supports are DD services that focus on work. These services help adults with I/DD find meaningful jobs in the community. Learn more on the [Employment webpage](#).

- **Some examples include**
 - Job Discovery
 - Job Development / Job Coaching
 - Assistive Technology
 - Job Retention
 - Personal Supports in the Workplace

Employment Services and Supports



You can use some or all of your DDD funding for ongoing employment supports.
You may also qualify for short-term job help from ORS.

You can make your money go further by:

- Braiding:
 - Using money from different programs at the same time for different services.
- Blending:
 - Putting money from different programs together to pay for services.
- Sequencing:
 - Happens when different funding sources are used one after the other to pay for specific services that help a person.

All of these help people find, get, or keep a job in the community.

Questions?



Antidiscrimination Laws



- **Federal laws**
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- **State laws**
 - Rhode Island Fair Employment Practice Act



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



- Right to reasonable accommodations
 - Change or adjustment to job, work environment, or work practices
- Employee is responsible for asking for reasonable accommodations
 - During the application process OR
 - After hire
- To file a complaint
 - http://www.ada.gov/filing_complaint.htm

Rhode Island Fair Employment Practices Act (RIGL 28-5-1 et seq.)



- Prohibits employment discrimination
- Enforcement:
 - Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights
 - 401-222-2661 (V), -2664 (TTY)
- Disability Rights Rhode Island (formerly RI Disability Law Center)
 - 1-800-733-5332
 - 401-831-5335 (TTY)
- Mediation – Governor’s Commission on Disabilities
 - 401-462-0107

Other Services, Benefits, and Programs

- Social Security Work Incentives
- Benefits Planning
- ABLE Accounts
- Transportation



Work Incentives and Benefits Counseling



Info you need to know

- Impact of earnings
- Work Incentives
- Wage Reporting
- Avoiding Overpayments

How to access

- Ticket to Work Helpline
 - 1-866-968-7842 or
 - 1-866-833-2967 TTY/TDD
- ORS – referral by counselor
- BHDDH – [online EE-RF](#)

More online resources at the [Sherlock Center's WI Webpage](#)

Is benefits counselling right for you?



- Do you have concerns about your SSDI, SSI, Medicaid, SNAP, or Housing Assistance changing?
- Are you working now and don't know how to report your wages?
- Have you heard you can only work part-time and wonder if that is true?
- Have you received letters from SSA or DHS you don't understand?

If you answer "**yes**" to one or more of these questions, consider getting Work Incentive Benefits Counseling to learn how you can work with benefits!

Social Security Work Incentives



Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Income Exclusions
- Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)
- Plan for Achieving Self Support
- Youth:
 - SEIE
 - Section 301
- Medicaid – 1619(b) \$46,819 (2026)

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- IRWE
- Subsidy/Special Conditions
- Income Averaging
- Plan for Achieving Self Support
- Three Work Phases
 - TWP, EPE, Post-EPE
- Medicare – EPMC, continues for over seven years

Medicaid for the Working Disabled



[Read more on EOHHS website](#)

- Two categories:
 - Ticket to Work for ages 16-64
 - Sherlock Plan for ages 65 and older
- Full Medicaid medical benefits:
 - LTSS & HCBS, Supported Employment
- Premium Payment based on earnings (greater than 150% FPL)

| | Ticket to Work | Sherlock Plan |
|--------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Age | 16 – 64 | 65+ |
| Income Limit | None | 250% FPL |
| Asset Limit | None | \$10,000 individual / \$20,000 couple |

ABLE accounts



- Achieving A Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014.
- RI's ABLE helps individuals save while preserving their SSI and Medicaid – up to \$20,000 per year in 2026 (additional if contributing from wages).
- Balances of \$100,000 or less not counted toward asset limits.
- RI website – <https://savewithable.com/ri/home.html>
- National Resource Center <http://www.ablenrc.org/>

Transportation



Supported options

- Public transportation – RIPTA, RIDE Anywhere
- Travel Training (Learning how to use public transit)
- Driver assessment and training

More options

- Carpooling
- Friends or family
- Volunteer drivers
- Ride-hailing (Taxi, Uber and Lyft)

IRWEs may help with costs of transportation

Questions?



Types of Employment Supports



- Job developer/job coach
- Natural supports
- Assistive technology



Job Developer/Job Coach



- Assists with finding a job
- Negotiates issues with employer (job carving, creating, customizing, accommodations, etc.)
- Teaches how to do the job
- Facilitates relationships and natural supports
- Models interactions and support for the employer
- Ensures the job is done to the employer's standards
- Provides ongoing support

Natural Supports



- People
 - Employer and co-workers
 - Family and friends
 - Community
- Strategies
 - Environmental modifications
- Instructional techniques



Assistive Technology



- Items, equipment, or systems used to increase, improve, or maintain the capabilities of people with disabilities
- Low-tech items – an adjustable desk, penholders, or cup holders
- Medium tech – Smartphone or tablet apps
- High-tech items – switches, voice output communication devices, or specially designed robotics
- www.ataap.ri.gov

Planning for Tomorrow



Next steps towards Employment

- Big Picture Outcomes of Employment
- Individual quality of life
- Family quality of life
- The desirable life



PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT



What is your action plan?

- Use the activity sheet to plan steps for the next six months
- What are your steps to employment?
- What resources will you use to accomplish those steps?

PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR: _____

| My next steps for employment are: | The resources I will use to accomplish my next steps are: |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

Notes:

I will complete this plan by the following date: _____

If you need help or guidance in accomplishing the steps or identifying the best resource, please contact Crystal Cerullo at the Sherlock Center.

By email: ccerullo@ric.edu

By phone:

Technical Assistance



Sherlock Center on Disabilities

www.sherlockcenter.org

- Providing coaching and being able to answer individual questions
- Ian Armitstead
- Email: iarmitstead@ric.edu
- Call: 401-456-2760

RIPIN

<http://www.ripin.org/>

- Can provide information and assistance related to transition IEPs and connecting with DDD.
- Call: 401-270-0101

THANK YOU!



EVALUATION FOR TODAY

Click on this [link](#), find it in the chat, or use the QR code.

Please complete!

