

## Supporting Families of People with Disabilities: Understanding and Using the “Pathways to Possibilities” Toolkit A Companion Guide for Workforce Professionals

### What is the *Pathways to Possibilities* Toolkit?

The *Pathways to Possibilities* toolkit is a five-part resource guide designed for parents and caregivers of individuals with disabilities.

Its purpose is to:

- Encourage high expectations for employment and self-sufficiency.
- Equip families with tools to support skill development across the lifespan.
- Break down employment planning into manageable steps, from early awareness to sustained employment.



### The five guides include:

1. **Envisioning the Future** – Helps families set expectations and explore employment potential.

2. **Creating a Support Circle** – Focuses on building networks of support, including professionals and peers.
3. **Discovering Pathways for Possibilities** – Helps families to identify strengths, interests, and developmental milestones.
4. **Implementing Strategies for Success and Safety** – Encourages building daily living and work readiness skills.
5. **Navigating the Journey Ahead** – Helps families understand and access service systems, including American Job Centers (AJCs) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

### Why This Matters to Workforce Professionals

As a workforce professional, you will interact with parents and serve jobseekers with disabilities directly. These guides can:

- Strengthen your engagement with families who may not see the AJC and VR as a resource.
- Build trust by recognizing families as partners in employment planning, career exploration, job development, , and retention support.

Serve as a tool during intake, service planning, or case management/service coordination activities to help families define their goals and support needs.

### Ways Workforce Staff Can Use These Guides

1. **During Initial Engagements or Orientation**  
Introduce the guides to families who are new to the workforce system. Use them as conversation starters to explore goals, barriers, and expectations.
2. **In Partnership with VR or Youth Programs**  
Use the “Discovering Pathways for Possibilities” and “Navigating the Journey Ahead” guides to bridge conversations about VR services, transition planning (including Individualized Education Plans), and wraparound supports.
3. **To Build a Family-Centered Culture**  
Reinforce that AJCs and workforce professionals welcome families as essential partners in employment planning for individuals with disabilities.
4. **During Career Exploration and Case Management**  
Refer to the *Moving Forward* worksheets at the end of each guide. These tools help document customer goals and guide next-step planning.

### Additional Resources:

[WorkforceGPS – Disability and Employment Community](#) is a helpful resource for AJC staff to learn how to support people with disabilities. It includes practical tools, webinars, and examples from the field to support jobseekers with disabilities. This

platform, run by the U.S. Department of Labor, is designed specifically for workforce professionals

[\*\*Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities | U.S. Department of Labor\*\*](#) is a helpful tool AJC staff can use when talking with employers about hiring people with disabilities. It gives easy tips for how to have a good interview, what to focus on, and how to handle things like accommodations. AJC staff can also share this tool with businesses to help them feel more confident and prepared when interviewing someone with a disability.