



Community Employment - Everybody Works™

Via's Community Employment services are based on the belief that Everybody Works™ and no one should be excluded. Work is a typical part of adult life and everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from being a part of the employed community. Every day, Via staff work on innovative ways to help people find and maintain community employment.

Via provides job development, coaching and follow-along support to adults with disabilities so they can work in the community. Via assists adults and students graduating from high school in determining their employment goals through community-based job assessments at businesses where individuals can try different types of work experiences to determine their likes, dislikes and skills.

Via's Community Employment focuses on...

- Creative job opportunities like supported and customized employment, job carving, resource ownership and self-employment.
- 74 new jobs developed over the past 12 months.
- 85% job retention rate after one year.
- Innovative funding options like Braided Funding, tapping into alternative funding sources that work together with Waivers and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

Supported Employment



Via works to provide the best employment option for individuals and excels at creating innovative employment solutions that match business' needs. Via enables adults with disabilities to work in integrated settings in the community and provides ongoing support so people can perform their job well. Via works one-on-one with adults and helps individuals tap into their natural network of support, like family, neighbors and friends, to help ensure job stability.

Via works with employers to make effective job matches and provides onsite job coaching and support to assist individuals in getting, learning and keeping a job. Via works in partnership with area high schools, Intermediate Units, OVR, and Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

Customized Employment

Customized Employment is a newer employment process designed for people with higher support needs. It is based on the strengths, needs and interests of the individual and is designed to create ideal conditions for employment. Via helps develop opportunities through unique scenarios including job carving, resource ownership and self-employment.

Customized Employment is funded through a number of braided funding sources including County Mental Retardation, PA OVR, Social Security Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and a number of grants.

Job Carving

Job carving is the act of exploring work duties performed in a job and identifying specific tasks that can be assigned to an employee with disabilities. Job carving, or job creation, is typically used with individuals who for a variety of reasons may not be in the market for full-time employment.

Resource Ownership

Resource Ownership brings together Lehigh Valley employers with resources necessary for business. For example, a Resource Owner might bring some type of equipment with them to meet a business' need like mailroom services or copying equipment.

Resource ownership identifies a resource that an individual can offer to a company. The individual purchases and owns the equipment or property (through braided funding sources) and is paid wages by the business where they are hired. If the individual moves to another position, the resource still belongs to the individual. Resource ownership can empower a person with a disability and provide an advantage when they negotiate a customized position with an employer.

Supported Self-Employment

Millions of small businesses are starting every year and people with disabilities have historically demonstrated a strong interest in working for themselves. In cooperation with the Department of Labor, Via strives to ensure that individuals have equal access to programs and resources available to all small businesses and help individuals start and maintain their own business.

Via works with adults who have complex needs and require significant assistance to achieve their job goals. Via develops partnerships with local businesses and community leaders to secure funding, develop resources and mentors, and tap into existing networks to help people assess their career goals and establish their business. With innovative ideas and necessary support, like the City of Bethlehem's self-employment grant, Via can make self-employment a reality for adults with disabilities.



Community Employment

Everybody Works™



Travis – CVS



Travis, a student at Bangor High School, wanted to be sure he was prepared for adult life after school. Bangor High School brought Via's Community Employment in to begin working with Travis through a process called discovery, providing him opportunities to volunteer and job shadow in the community before graduation. Discovery allowed Travis to explore his interests, skills and likes in the community. Through this process, Travis narrowed down his interests and likes to continuous interaction with people and organization. He narrowed down his job shadow sites to two, and CVS was one of his choices. Travis learned much more than organization and communication skills at CVS; so much so, that while he was job shadowing, a manager approached Travis about his interest in a job.

Travis' hard work and dedication earned him a part-time job at CVS. He stocks store inventory, provides customer service and helps keep the store organized. He also uses public transportation independently to get to and from work three days a week.

Travis stays busy outside of work and school, volunteering two days a week at Slatebelt Rehab, assisting the secretary at his church, and volunteering at the Bangor High School athletic office two days a week. Travis' community has grown because he stays involved and busy and his opportunities for success continue to grow with his dedication to volunteering and love for his job.



Bruce – Cigars International



Bruce started working with Via while he was still in high school and preparing for graduation. After doing packaging and production work as part of his school work experience program, Bruce wanted to pursue the same type of job after graduation and set his sights on working for Cigars International. Cigars International gave Bruce the opportunity to participate in a work assessment to explore his likes, strengths and abilities. After two days, Bruce performed so well, he was offered a part-time job filling orders on the fast-paced packaging line.

Cigars International has a close-knit culture and, from the day he started, Bruce was embraced as part of the family. His coworkers and supervisors have been very supportive and were quick to recognize his talents and capabilities. In particular, his manager, Bob, saw Bruce's abilities and went out of his way to provide opportunities for him to learn additional responsibilities. Not long after starting his job, Bruce learned how to make shipping boxes by hand and operate an automatic box-making machine to produce boxes of various sizes at a high rate of speed. Bruce excelled in this area and was offered this as his permanent position with an increase in hours.

After five months on the job, Cigars International offered Bruce a full-time position, mostly due to his hard work and manager's support. Bruce has found Cigars International to be a great place to work and his coworkers have made him a part of the team. They also consider him a friend and look out for him; one coworker recently noticed his form of transportation to work, his bike, was old and not working well. This friend gave Bruce a new bike so he could continue to ride to work safely.

Via of the Lehigh Valley is a non-profit agency that provides services for children and adults with developmental disabilities like cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism and intellectual disability. Via's mission is to provide leadership, support, opportunities and resources for people with disabilities so they may be independent, productive and enjoy full lives within the community.

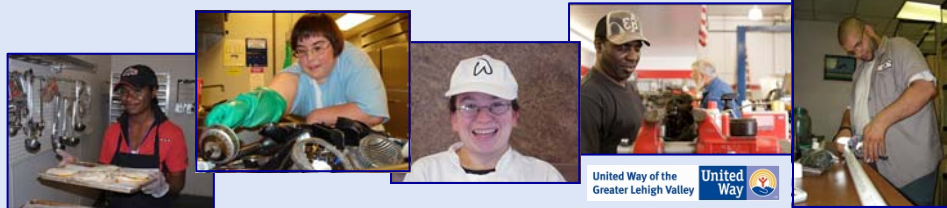
The official registration and financial information of Via of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Via Employment Partners...

- Arby's
- Bethlehem Township
- BonTon
- Building Blocks Child Development Center
- Burger King
- Buza's Green House
- Cedar Brook Nursing Home
- Dairy Queen
- David's Bridal
- Delta Industries
- Eckerd Drug
- Federal Courthouse
- Friendly's
- Giant Food
- Hampton Inn & Suites
- Holiday Inn Express
- Cigars International
- Four Points by Sheraton Hotel & Suites
- Josh Early Candy's
- Kountry Kids Day Care
- Little Apple IGA
- Lomae Foods
- Lowe's
- Macungie Park
- Martin Guitar
- McDonalds
- Micro-tool
- Moravian Village
- Mr. Z's
- Old Orchard Assisted Living
- Olive Garden
- Ollie's
- Panera Bread
- Penn Dot
- Perkins
- Pizza Hut
- Ruby Tuesdays
- Sears
- Sodexo
- Specialty Cars
- Target
- TGI Fridays
- Unclaimed Freight
- Valley Farm Market
- Walgreen's
- Wal-Mart
- WAWA
- Wegman's
- Weis King's
- Wendy's
- Yocco's



336 W. Spruce Street • Bethlehem, PA 18018
610-317-8000 • ViaNet.org • Via@ViaNet.org



United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley