



Community Participation Supports

RESOURCE BINDER



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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SUPPORTS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Providing Community Participation Support, otherwise known as CPS, begins with understanding its purpose. CPS should not be viewed as simply as activities to fill a person's day. CPS is a vehicle for individuals to explore and engage in meaningful and purposeful activities, based on individual preferences and needs as identified in their person-centered Individual Plan. An individual's Individual Plan includes employment related and non-employment related activities but must always be purposeful and supportive of the participant's goals. Pre-planned CPS activities should promote the full integration and inclusion of individuals with disabilities into mainstream society through positive community contributions and relationship development.

CPS options include:

- Career exploration: Assessing interests through volunteer experiences, internships, or situational assessments.
- Community integration experiences to support fuller participation in community life.
- Skill development and training.
- Development of activities of daily living and independent living skills.
- Socialization experiences and support to enhance interpersonal skills.
- Pursuit of personal interests and hobbies.

CPS is NOT:

- A replacement for paid employment.
- A prerequisite for employment.
- Activities to just fill time.
- Activities that individuals are "plugged" into.
- Random activities just to keep people busy.
- Simply fun, recreational activities.

Integrating a pathway to employment is a core component of CPS for individuals of working age. Activities should be designed that allow an individual to explore and discover interests, build skills, and develop connections, that will result in employment. A primary staff role is working with individuals on using CPS activities to guide and inform an individual's decisions about employment options and the types of job to pursue. Also, remember that CPS is not a substitute for employment, and every effort should be made to maximize an individual's time in paid employment.

CPS Values

The success of CPS is dependent upon having the right set of values that underlies the development and implementation of CPS. These include:

- A belief that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can fully participate in typical valued societal roles, side-by-side with their fellow citizens without disabilities.
- Engaging and embracing the full diversity and richness of potential activities in the community.
- Using a mindset of how individuals without disabilities typically participate in the community as a core guide for development of CPS.
- Using generic, typical resources in the community available to all.

- Using a person-centered planning process, and individual needs and preferences as the driver of all activities.
- Maximizing opportunities for the development of individual relationships with community members.
- Viewing the role of the staff and agency as facilitators of inclusion and full acceptance of individuals with disabilities.
- Ensuring typical adult roles for all involved.
- Avoiding activities that reinforce stereotypes and stigma of individuals with disabilities- i.e., “the group from the disability agency is here today”.
- Avoiding activities that unnecessarily segregate.

DESIGNING THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SUPPORTS SERVICE

Person-Driven

The design of a CPS service the types of activities it facilitates, and the way individuals spend their time within CPS is based first and foremost, on a thoughtful, person-centered planning process, that identifies an individual's preferences and interests. The outcomes of this planning process, regularly updated, guide how the participant spends their time in CPS activities.

Purposeful

CPS activities must be part of a larger plan for the individual's progress toward their individually decided goals. Activities that are staged solely for occupying the participants' time are not satisfying to either participants or staff, and they undercut the central purpose of CPS.

Community-Based

Implementers of CPS must ensure that CPS activities occur fully integrated within the community. CPS activities- job training, recreation and wellness programs, volunteer activities, job exploration, etc. – can be implemented with greater quality and typically less expensive in the community, using resources that already exist. For example, rather than assuming the full responsibility of creating a job-training program, an agency should support individuals who are interested in a training program, to access such programs available at Career Centers, community education programs, community college, or similar entity.

Career-Driven

While not every CPS participant is on a career track, those who are should participate in CPS activities that are built around their individual employment goals. While a career-track CPS service can include a variety of activities (for example, travel training and wellness programs combined with other kinds of planning and job development activities, can improve an individual's competitiveness in the job market), it should be clear how the various elements support and are aligned with achieving a successful outcome of paid employment for the individual. For those not on an employment track, CPS offers an opportunity to gain exposure to the option of work in different settings and of such a variety that they may reconsider their interest in employment.

Integration

CPS activities should not be disability specific. For example, wellness activities should occur in a gym or health club in the community. An individual could be supported in a Career Center's resume writing workshop. While there will be some exceptions (Social Security benefits planning will of course remain a disability-specific service.), even these can typically be conducted in community-based settings. Also, development of "artificial communities" for people with disabilities should be avoided. For example, instead of an art group for people with disabilities, individuals interested in art can participate in art classes in the community. Likewise, older people can participate in activities for all seniors in the community (such as at the local senior center). An exception to this use of generic activities is participation in a disability peer support group.

Maximizing Community and Natural Supports

As with employment, the use of community and natural supports should be emphasized, rather than creating reliance on paid staff. Individuals should not just be physically in the community but be full participants in the community. Maximizing the interaction that individuals have with community members helps build the networks and relationships of individuals. It also creates an increased understanding by the community of the competency and contributions that individuals with disabilities can make, while also reducing the reliance on paid supports. One of the chief purposes of CPS is relationship development, which can only occur when individuals are provided opportunities to get to know other community members with common interests. To assist with connecting with the community and developing relationships over time, schedules should include routine participation in activities at set locations rather than a string of ever-changing ones.

Maximizing Time in the Community and Minimizing Time in the Facility

As noted, agency staff should be continuously striving to minimize the amount of time individuals are “on-site”. To address this issue:

- CPS services should be designated with the core goal of maximizing time in the community.
- Minimizing, if not eliminating, the need for individuals to come to the agency building. Work towards designing CPS services in a manner that does not require people to come to the building first to begin their day in the community or end their day there – and avoid having the building becoming the default service location. Design services that allow individuals to meet up with staff in prescribed locations in their home communities and participate in activities from there.

Maximizing Independence

Individuals who participate in CPS do so because they are individuals who need some type of planned and structured non-work activity for at least part of their day. If an individual can participate in community activities on their own, and spend time in their home unsupervised, then their need for CPS services is minimal. While individuals participate in CPS because of the nature of their support needs, a key goal of CPS should be maximizing the independence of individuals involved, the ability of the community to provide necessary supports, and reducing dependence on paid staff. This is not only better for the individual and community, but it allows staff resources to be used more effectively. The following are suggested strategies in that regard:

- Individuals should participate in community activities that are a good match for them, in terms of utilizing their strengths, and accessing assistance and supports from others as necessary.
- Staff should avoid being a barrier to inclusion. As with job coaching, staff should undertake their role in a way that facilitate natural supports, by connecting individuals with other individuals participating in the activity who can aid and support.
- Use the full array of techniques that maximize independence: Accommodations, assistive technology, natural cues, etc.
- Avoid “learned dependence” on staff by both the individuals served and the organizations where individuals are participating in activities.

Identifying Potential Activities

Community mapping, the identification of potential community activities, is the starting point of a quality CPS service. While individual scheduling must be responsive to the person's interests and needs, it is important to develop and maintain a large catalogue of activities from which to begin to develop more individualized schedules. This is an essential start-up activity for all CPS services.

In identifying CPS activities, the ultimate decision regarding activities for individuals to participate in should be driven by the core principles of a quality CPS service including:

- Maximum time in community.
- Deliberate and purposeful activities.
- Driven by individual goals and preferences.
- CPS generic community resources.
- Age appropriate activities.
- Focus on relationship development with community members.
- Maximize community/natural supports.
- Staff modeling interactions with individuals that foster an image of competence and promote acceptance.

As has been emphasized, individual interests and preferences should be the starting point in terms of identifying opportunities. However, the community experiences if many individuals may have often been very limited. As a result, individuals may have narrow and limited views of non-work activities they may be interested in. Therefore, it is critically important that:

- Individuals have opportunities to explore and try activities they previously have not had the opportunity to participate in.
- Staff that support individuals with disabilities have a high degree of awareness of resources and activities in their community that individuals could potentially engage in.
- While exploring new activities remember to have some routine places to go and get involved with community members with whom the people supported can form meaningful relationships.

Communities, both large and small, have various community groups, activities, and leaders. Identifying potential CPS opportunities requires understanding and mapping out the full array of potential resources – bearing in mind that this may be a never-ending process, as communities change, evolve, and more connections are made. Consider the following questions:

- What are the prominent groups in your community?
- Who are the prominent leaders?
- How do we connect with them?

Community mapping – i.e., the awareness of community resources and activities – requires a similar mindset to job development: Using networking as primary tools for identifying opportunities, conducting research on potential opportunities via the Internet and other sources, supplemented as necessary by cold calling.

STEPS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CPS ACTIVITIES

Step 1: Identify Connections

Brainstorm regarding individuals who either live or work in the community where you want to identify opportunities. Be sure to consider staff, individuals supported by the agency, family members, board members, and of course any external connections. Also consider additional individuals and organizations in the community, whether you have a connection or not (the Internet can be a great resource for ideas). All ideas are useful (No “Yes, but...”).

Step 2: Decide Who to Connect With

Who on this list would be good to talk to, to generate ideas? Keep an open mind, but particularly focus on individuals who are active in the community and connected with others.

Step 3: Start Outreach

Start outreaching to individuals. Follow the same basic tenants as you do with job development:

- Keep the ask simple and something people can say yes to.
- Use phone and email for initial outreach, bear in mind that the goal of initial outreach is to get an in-person meeting.
- Be pleasant but persistent.

Step 4: The In-person Meeting

Conduct the initial meeting using the following guidelines:

- Focus on the exploratory nature of what you’re doing: Connecting with community resources, looking for community activities for individuals to participate in.
- Be clear about ultimately matching individuals with activities that meet their interests (like any other person).
- Stress the importance of keeping activities adult-appropriate, typical of other citizens in the community, and fully integrated.
- Keep a focus on developing additional connections. No meeting should ever end without asking, “Who else can we talk to?”

Step 5: Track and Build Your Community Resource List

It is critical to build a list of potential community activities and opportunities.

Step 6: Start Exploring

Have individuals start to participate in the activities that have been identified. Start with those activities that are of their interests but give them opportunities to branch out and try different things that they may not have chosen prior.

Step 7: Stay up to date on what's going on

A core part of identifying CPS activities is keeping up to date with activities in the community that individuals might be interested in participating in. Both staff and individuals should regularly be identifying possible activities, by monitoring newspapers, community internet sites, subscribing to community activity updates, etc. This can include one-time community events, as well as information on new groups being started, new ongoing activities, etc.

GET ENGAGED, GET INVOLVED

As part of efforts to expand the community presence of individuals with disabilities, it's important for individuals and the service that support them to increase their presence at community activities. If there's a community event, it's important to have a presence, so that community groups and fellow community members view individuals with disabilities as fellow citizens who have a diversity of interests and talents. If your community has any sort of community events where a cross-section of organizations is represented (town day, community service fair, etc.) be sure to attend. These are great opportunities to network.

VALUED SOCIAL ROLES

Valued roles help people who are vulnerable to be accepted in the community, to experience a sense of belonging, and to be able to contribute according to their strengths. When people are not supported to have valued roles in the community, they may be a burden, a menace, sick or dependent. These are negative or devalued roles.

The importance of valued social roles was recognized by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, who is widely recognized as one of the forerunners for studying intellectual disabilities. He received his Doctor of Psychology from Peabody College for Teachers, which is now part of Vanderbilt University, per the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The value he saw was developed into the theory of Social Role Verification.

Some definitions as defined by Dr. Wolfensberger are:

- Roles are a socially defined combination of behaviors, functions, relationships, privileges, duties and responsibilities that are widely understood and recognized within a society.
- A role is the function assumed or part played by a person in a situation.
- The concept of social roles provides a way to name people's interdependencies. Roles identify the ways that people belong to each other, participate in exchanges with each other and expect reciprocal responsibilities from each other. They identify the contexts which people learn skills and perform skillfully and the areas of life where people can experience satisfaction and earn status.

Social roles are identified as a socially expected pattern of:

- Behavior
- Responsibilities
- Expectations
- Privileges

Valued roles come in many forms:

- Relationship roles: Family member, friend, spouse, neighbor.
- Work/Occupation roles: Colleague, supervisor, receptionist.
- Education roles: Student, classmate, library monitor.
- Community roles: Club member, sports team member, community choir member.
- Leisure and interest roles: Gym member, golfer.
- Cultural roles: Elder, church member.
- Citizenship roles: Voter, local council member, neighborhood action group.
- Household/Residence roles: Homeowner, tenant, gardener, cook.

It is through these valued roles that we increase the likelihood that we will gain access to the good things in life, as outlined in the "A Good Life" section of this manual.

We can begin to look at service provision through a “Roles” lens, so that everything we can do can be thought of in this way; we don’t have to be with someone for a lot of time to contribute in some small way to nourishing and encouraging these roles. This would lead us to act on the following ideas:

- The purpose of support is to support valued roles and the skills to be in valued roles.
- The role of a support worker would shift from “doing for” to one that facilitates, enables and spots opportunities for valued roles.
- How well support is offered could be measured by how well a person performs in a role, how embedded they are in that role, how many doors open as a result of being in that role and how many freely given relationships develop as a result of the person being in a valued role.

Acceptance Belonging Contribution

The importance of roles is the way in which they can address all three of these needs for people.

Acceptance

People would relate to each other almost entirely based on the social roles that they fill. Although many of us would like to believe that we relate to people equally based on their intrinsic human worth, the reality is that we talk about people largely based on the roles they hold. The first thing people often ask you at a party is “what do you do?” Your role gives you the best opportunity to build rapport with people.

Belonging

Roles define people’s “place” in society. Everyone wants to have a sense of belonging in the world and is largely, through their roles that people define and situate themselves in the larger context. We all need to be recognized as having a place, a respected place. There is no worse fate than to be rejected from society.

Finding a sense of belonging:

- Is a sense of knowing who you are and where you fit?
- Means having meaningful relationships.
- Is not the same as being “in the community” – presence does not necessarily lead to participation.
- Means having a chance to contribute.
- Takes time and effort.

Contribution

Roles affect every aspect of our lives. Our roles play a large part in who we relate to daily, where we go, our schedules and activities, the respect and autonomy we enjoy, our participation in the community, where and with whom we live, what our income will be, etc.

It is also our roles which give us a means through which we can contribute to society. If we don't have many positive roles, we are not going to get those opportunities for contribution, and this can lead to just "filling time" which doesn't give people a sense of purpose. Many people at risk of being devalued are in the role of the participant for much of their time. This means they are most often recipients, and don't always get the change to give back. Giving and receiving (reciprocity) is part of the fabric of life and as staff we need to remember that people always have something to give.

Image and Competency

Image

While it may seem superficial, our culture commonly judges people on the image they present. For example, a person being interviewed for a new job will take special care of their clothes and ensure that they present themselves as professional. In the same way, a doctor knows that looks neat and clean makes it easier for her patients to trust her. If presenting a positive image is important for people who are already valued by society, then presenting a good image is even more important for people who are at risk of being devalued and rejected. The reason for this is that if we accept that there is a risk that a community member might already have made up their mind about someone with a devalued status, then we need to help them make up their mind in the positive. We can do this by helping them have positive experiences with the people we support.

Competence

Our culture also respects competence. People who are risk of being devalued may need help to initially learn to do one or two things exceptionally well that another person values. Being competent in something greatly improves the chance that other people will see them in a valued social role. There is a powerfully feedback loop between images and competencies. If a person possesses a positive image in the eyes of others, they will often be given greater opportunities to move into valued roles and acquire the competencies required to move into those roles.

Aspects of Roles

Role Complimentary

All roles exist in relationship to other roles. If we are to assist people to take on valued roles, we also need to ensure that we have people willing to take on the complementary roles: Employers willing to give people a job, customers willing to purchase goods or services from the business person, teachers willing to teach the student.

Different Roles have Different Degrees of Impact

Some roles have a much greater impact on a person's life than others due to the amount of time they take up, such as parenting or full-time work roles. This is known as "role bandwidth". Some roles are more prominent or important in people's lives. A person deeply entrenched in a role is comfortable with the behaviors expected of that role and takes on the responsibilities of the role. They not only look the part but also act the part. This often occurs over time, but time alone does not necessarily lead to role depth.

Role Eagerness

The concept of role avidity highlights the importance of roles in people's lives. It can also be thought of as role hunger, meaning that people very much to see themselves in socially recognizable roles. The immense need for roles means that most individuals are unable to remain role-less. Therefore, a person might prefer even devalued roles to no roles at all.

Appropriateness of Roles

Roles need to be culturally, age and gender appropriate. People with disabilities are particularly at risk of being placed in child roles. This is often related to the way in which they spend their time and the people with whom they spend their time with.

Role Development/Expansion

It is also important to think about the potential for the developmental stages in relation to a role. Service may become complacent once a person is supported to take on a role, assuming no further efforts are required. As a result, the person becomes complacent in that role, with nowhere to progress. Even if a role might be less valued to begin with, it might be possible to create the opportunity to progress into a more valued role.

How to Assist Participants to Have Valued Roles

Prevent Loss of Roles

The first step is to identify the existing valued roles that people have and ensure that these roles are not taken away. There are three key ways that people lose valued roles in their lives, and all of these are usually don't unconsciously, so it is important to increase our awareness of how this can happen so that we can prevent it from occurring:

- Roles can sometimes be unwittingly taken away by the human service system or wider societal trends.
- When we help people make changes in their lives, we can sometimes inadvertently take away their roles.
- When someone's circumstances change suddenly, due to an accident, health problem or some other crisis in their life, important roles can be quickly lost due to the dramatic change in their circumstances.

Maintain and Strengthen Existing Value Roles

When people already have valued roles, we can focus some of our efforts on enhancing and strengthening these roles. Strengthening roles can also increase the possible benefit people might get from these roles through increasing the depth of that role.

Find New Roles

For people who have not had the opportunity to develop many valued roles, then we need to search for new roles that reflect the person's strength and interests.

How we can assist people to find new valued roles:

- Identify talents.
- Brainstorm roles.
- Roles based planning:
 - Start with the dreams and interests of each person.
 - Ensure each person has been provided with enough information and direct experience to make informed decisions about their future - including potential negative outcomes associated with their choices.
 - Apply critical thought to how each dream or interest can be pursued in ways that will help each person be a valued, contributing citizen, and optimize their opportunities for developing friendships.
 - Identify and attempt to overcome the negative impacts of societal stereotypes upon people with disabilities.
 - Identify and attempt to overcome the negative impacts of societal stereotypes upon people with disabilities.
 - Identify and responds to each person's most pressing needs and barriers to success as part of the planning process.
 - Shift focus from filling time with activities to thoughtfully and thoroughly pursuing valued roles and relationships within the community.
 - Pursue a good life.

A GOOD LIFE

According to Martin Seligman's, who is known as the father of positive psychology, theory there are three levels of happiness. They are:

THE PLEASANT LIFE

- Pursuit of positive emotions.
- Creating pleasant experiences increases positivity which creates resilience.

THE GOOD LIFE

- Pursuit of engagement.
- Being fully engaged, working to our strengths, actively learning, participating in decision making, being respected and envisioning a future.

THE MEANINGFUL LIFE

- Pursuit of a purpose higher than oneself.
- Contributing to something truly meaningful to ourselves and to others. Speaks to a larger sense of purpose.

Often the concept of a good life is seen as too personal and subjective to define accurately. However, it is possible to identify the elements of a good life that bring together a range of universal things that most people would desire.

The following are 17 core things that are researched across various cultures that have shown what most human beings would associate with a good life:

- A family or an equivalent intimate group.
- A place to call home.
- Belonging to an intermediate but still relatively small-scale social body. (e.g. tribe, clan, neighborhood, local community)
- Friends.
- A transcendent belief system.
- Work (especially work that can be invested with meaning).
- A reasonable sense of safety and security.
- Opportunities that enable one to discover and develop abilities, skills, gifts and talents
- To be viewed as human and treated with respect
- To be dealt with honestly.
- A reasonable assurance that one will not be a victim of gross injustice.
- Being treated as an individual.
- Having a say in important decisions affecting one's own life.
- Access to places of normal interaction.
- Access to many of the ordinary activities of human social life.
- Being able to contribute and have those contributions recognized as valuable.
- Good health.

Wellbeing

Martin Seligman's more recent theory moves more towards the idea of wellbeing. He suggests that there are five key elements that contribute to wellbeing:

1. Relationships
2. Achievement
3. Meaning
4. Engagement
5. Positive emotion

The use of valued social roles, combined with the purpose of providing a good life, guide Via's Community Participation Support Services.

A MEANINGFUL DAY

Meaningful Day activities support an individual to routinely explore, secure, maintain and/or change memberships, valued roles, and/or personal relationships in the community. Meaningful Day supports are age appropriate and provide a wide variety of planned opportunities to facilitate and build relationships and natural supports in the community. Meaningful Day includes substantial and sustained opportunity for optimal health, self-empowerment and personalized relationships; skill development and/or maintenance; and social, educational and community inclusion activities that are directly linked to the vision, goals and desired personal outcomes documented in the individual's Individual Plan.

Such planned activities may include opportunities to:

- Explore, secure, maintain and/or change supported or competitive jobs.
- Explore, secure, maintain and/or change post-secondary educational activities.
- Explore secure, maintain, and/or change volunteer activities.
- Experience and participate in community exploration, companionship with friends and peers.
- Develop, maintain and regularly experience chosen hobbies.
- Maintain family contacts.
- Engage in community events, education experiences, and those activities and services where persons without disabilities are involved.
- Learn and develop new skills to support purposeful participation and independence in the community.

All these experiences would be planned, purposeful, and reflected in daily schedules. Experiences are not just event or time fillers.

The following are examples of Meaningful Day activities:

- The individual is engaged in daily activities that lead toward his/her personal outcomes.
- The individual is trying new things, which are intended to result in the attainment of identified outcome in his/her ISP.
- The individual is learning new and/or maintaining skills, which are intended to result in the attainment of an identified outcome in his/her ISP.
- The individual is doing things on his/her own effort to gain more confidence and skills.
- The individual is choosing what he/she wants to do and is doing things in the community.
- The individual is engaged in preventative health care activities/interventions as needed.
- Support provided to an individual while he/she is engaged in work that is compensated under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Work exploration in the community to learn about jobs that might match the individual's interests and skills.
- Volunteer time in the community, if the individual can be observed to have regular significant personal interactions with non-disabled peers or recipients of the volunteer service.
- Instruction, when it can be demonstrated that learning objectives or skill development are linked directly to the individual's vision goals, and desired outcomes.
- Time that the individual is engaged in exploring new interests and/or relationships or establishing meaningful social roles.

Examples of activities that would **NOT** support this definition are:

- Activities that the general population would not engage in on regular basis for extended periods of time.
- Sustained or extensive time spent in skill-building, or frequent use of leisure activities, that isolate the individual from non-disabled peers, such as:
 - Working training for longer than needed for specific skill development.
 - Window-shopping or mall walking with program staff and other participants as a time-filling activity.
 - Volunteer work in isolated or congregated settings intended for persons with developmental disabilities.
 - Instruction not linked to an individual's vision for life or Individual Plan.
 - Activities that are not individualized or age appropriate, e.g. coloring children's coloring books.
 - Watching television alone or with staff and other participants regularly, for extended periods of time.

RESOURCES

This section provides resources that you can use to prepare for, practice, and explore Community Participation Supports. Please feel free to make copies and use with participants you support one-on-one and in group settings.

Websites

Pre-Employment Interest Surveys

- <http://www.arcnetwork.org/cdmt/tool.htm>
- <https://www.asvabprogram.com/>
- <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/careers/interest-assessment.aspx>
- <https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/clusterSurvey>
- <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/career-planning/find-careers/careers.shtml>
- www.livecareer.com
- www.makingitcount.com
- <https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>
- <http://www.texascaresonline.com/index.asp>

Career Planning Websites

- [America's Career Info Net](#): Helps you identify options and plan your education using an online coach in topics such as exploring various careers and industries, researching education training and institutions, and financing your education.
- [Career.com](#): Click on "Job Seeker" and have access to a list of job openings. You can save more than one version of your resume on this site, and then when you find a job you're interested in, you can send your choice of resume to the employer. Site also offers career advice, college resources and salary information.
- [Career Builder](#): Look for jobs, career fairs, career advice and resume tips.
- [Career Cruising](#): An interactive career resource designed for people of all ages; find the right career, explore different career options or plan future education and training.
- [Career Key](#): Resume services, career Q&A, career articles.
- [Career Voyages](#): Has links for students and parents. Covers a variety of different career industries. Has career videos and career compass.
- [Get that Gig](#): Offers information on careers in many categories, "a day in the life", and a place to post your resume for prospective employers.
- [Job Star Central](#): Information on resumes, career guides, salary info, and the hidden job market.
- [Monster](#): The leading global online careers property; has more than one million job postings; offers premium career information with tips on jumpstarting a career.
- [My Future](#): Explore Thousands of civilian and military careers; provides educational programs and professional certifications to learn new skills, has a resume builder and tips for successful job search, and has statistics on salaries and fastest-growing fields.
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#): For hundreds of different types of jobs, the OOH tells you the training and education needed, earnings, expected job prospects, what workers do on the job and working conditions. In addition, the handbook gives you search tips, links to information about the job market in each state and much more.

- [O*Net](#): U.S. Department of Labor interactive database of occupational information that contains comprehensive information on job requirements and worker skills/abilities for over one thousand occupations.
- [Reality Check](#): Don't know how much money you will need to earn in the future? Don't know which occupation to choose? This site has options to find the career you need to make the money you need to earn to live the way you want, find out how much money you'll make in a certain career, or find out how much you'll make with your chosen career.
- [Reality Check, From Texas Workforce Solutions](#): Do a sample budget to find out how much you'll spend each year; find out which careers pay what you need to make, or if you already know what career you'd like, you can find out how much you'll earn in that career and then make a monthly budget to see what you can afford.
- [Vocational Information Center](#): Offers career activities and vocational lesson plans.

Skills Assessment Websites

- [Career Smart](#)
- [Functional Living Skills](#)
- [Mind Tools](#)
- [Skills Assessment](#)
- [Skills You Need](#)

Job Search Websites

- [Indeed](#)
- [Monster](#)
- [Snag a Job](#)
- [Simply Hired](#)

Other Job Search Opportunities

- Teach your group how to use free press and newspapers to look for help-wanted ads.
- Practice walking into employers and businesses and asking if there are any openings, for an application, “May I leave my resume?”, etc.
- Use CareerLink and other services to keep track of any career fairs that fall during your shift.
 - Use the first attendance to model what you should do at a career fair.
 - Use the latter visits to have your participants practice communication skills, confidence and elevator pitch.

The 16 Career Clusters

Career Cluster	Description
Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	Includes everything related to the creation of agricultural products. This includes farmers, ranchers, scientists, engineers and veterinarians. The work environment is mostly outdoors, so most people who work in this field enjoy being outside.
Architecture and Construction	Includes people who are involved in designing, building and maintaining homes, industrial facilities, streets or bridges. Roles vary from carpenter helper to safety engineer, so educational requirements vary. The people who work in this field have strong skills in math and are passionate about design, home improvement and decor. The typical work environment can be an office or the homes and businesses of customers.
Arts, Audio/Video (A/V) Technology and Communications	Possibly the best career cluster for creative people. It includes journalists, actors, dancers, singers, radio announcers and behind-the-scenes workers. The work environment can be a film, TV or recording studio or a theater. Most people who work in this cluster have an authentic passion for music, dance, cinema or fashion.
Business, Management and Administration	Includes business analysts, accountants, Human Resources professionals and managers, and many entry-level positions, like receptionists, secretaries and typists. Most roles require a bachelor’s degree. The typical work environment is an office. People who are interested in this career cluster usually have strong communication skills and business acumen.
Education and Training	Includes teacher, tutor and instructor roles. The typical work environment is a school or college. This career cluster may be of interest for people who have strong leadership skills or want to act as role models for younger people and/or have a passion for the subject matter.

Career Cluster	Description
Finance	Roles include auditor, financial analyst, treasurer, economist, bank worker, debt counselor or insurance professional. Many of the jobs in this cluster require a bachelor's degree or specialized certifications. The typical work environment is an office, an accounting studio or a tax collecting agency. The workers in this field usually have strong math skills and the ability to explain difficult concepts to customers who don't work in the field.
Hospitality and Tourism	Includes jobs you can do in restaurants, bars, tourist attractions, resorts, hotels and travel agencies. Entry-level positions usually only require a high school diploma or equivalent. However, some higher roles like tourist guide or travel agent may require a bachelor's degree and the knowledge of multiple languages. The typical work environment can be the kitchen of a restaurant, a ticket office, a hotel reception or airport. The career paths related to bars and restaurants may be of interest for people who love food and don't mind working long hours standing.
Human Services	Includes not only psychologists, social workers and child advocacy professionals but also paths like hairdresser, manicurist and cosmetologist. The career pathways that relate to counseling and mental health require a minimum of a bachelor's degree and a license. Those related to beauty and wellness require specialized training. The work environment can be a hospital, a spa or a beauty salon. The workers in this cluster usually have strong interpersonal and listening skills and patience and empathy towards others.
Information Technology	This cluster is for aspiring developers, web designers, network administrators and computer support specialists. The people who work in this field usually require continuous training since technology evolves at a fast pace. The work environment is typically an office. This type of career may be of interest for people who have a passion for the Internet, including assisting web navigation and fixing security issues.
Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Workers in this cluster, like police officers, security guards and attorneys, protect citizens. The work environment can be a jail, court, police station or public place where people need to be protected, such as pools, beaches and playgrounds. Working in this sector may be of interest to people who are brave and have a strong desire to protect others.

Career Cluster	Description
Manufacturing	This cluster can be great for people who enjoy working with their hands: Equipment operators, millwrights, assemblers and warehouse workers. These roles usually only require on-the-job training, but there are other pathways that may require a bachelor's degree. A typical work environment is an industrial unit. However, some workers can also work directly at their client's home, to fix household appliances. This career may be suitable for people who have strong manual skills and love do-it-yourself (DIY) activities.
Marketing, Sales and Service	Includes salespeople, telemarketers, real estate agents, customer service representatives, market research analysts and marketing managers. The work environment can be an office, a retail store or the home of the customer. A career in this field may interest those with excellent communication skills.
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	This career cluster includes some of the most highly educated workers, like biologists, engineers, mathematicians, statisticians, chemists and geoscientists. All the roles require a minimum of a bachelor's degree in an appropriate field and professional engineers must also earn a state license. The work environment can be a laboratory, an industrial facility or a weather station. People who are interested in this career cluster are usually passionate about science, math or geography, and willing to continue training and education.
Government and Public Administration	Includes people who help enforce the law, like tax collectors, municipal clerks and military workers. This cluster also includes postal service clerks, mail carriers and aircrew members. A bachelor's degree is a requirement for some positions and both judges and magistrates must have an advanced degree. The work environment is typically a city's municipal office or a customs office. A career in this cluster may be of interest for people who have great communication skills or an interest in politics.
Health Science	Includes doctors, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics and healthcare operators. Specialized training is required for all the roles in this cluster. The work environment can be a hospital, private clinic, pharmacy retail chain or patients' homes. People who are interested in this cluster usually have a natural predisposition to help others.
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	This cluster drives and fixes vehicles or work behind the scenes to make sure that public transportation is efficient at all times. They are drivers, pilots, rail car repairers, parking lot attendants, civil engineers and transportation planners. The work environment can be a car repair shop, a train, a bus or an office. The careers in this cluster may be attractive for people who have a passion for driving vehicles or fixing them.

Career Clusters Interest Surveys

- [School-to-World Career Path Survey](#)
- [Pictorial Interest Survey](#)
- [Career Clusters Interest Survey](#) (available in English and Spanish)
- [Career Clusters Activity](#)
- [CareerOneStop Interest Assessment](#)
- [ISEEK Career Cluster Interest Survey](#)
- [When I Grow Up Interest Survey](#)

Skill Assessments

Personal Skill Assessments

- [CareerOneStop Skills Matcher](#)
- [BizLibrary Soft Skills Assessment](#)
- [Career Information Center Soft Skills Checklist, Worksheet and Life Inventory](#)

Group Work Ability Assessments

- [Rubric for Assessing Group Members](#)
- [Peer Work Group Evaluation Form](#)
- [ReadWriteThink Group and Self Evaluation](#)
- [Quick Peer Evaluation Form](#)
- [ReadWriteThink Cooperative Learning Rubric](#)

Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Common Barriers to Employment Include:

- Age
- Criminal record
- Diagnoses
- Disadvantaged background
- Domestic violence
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Limited education
- Employer biases
- Housing issues/homelessness
- Lack of job searching skills
- Lack of employability skills
- Untreated mental health
- Ineffective communication
- Lack of training
- No high school diploma
- Gaps in employment history
- Unreliable childcare
- Unknown skills
- Unknown preferences
- Lack of funding
- Lack of resources
- Transportation

Learn how to overcome barriers to employment:

- Schedule a time for your group to meet with a representative from the Employment site to discuss other services available.
- Visit PA CareerLink online and schedule an appointment!

Allentown (Full-Service Office)
555 Union Boulevard
Allentown, PA 18109
610-437-5627
610-437-0741 (TTY)

Allentown Employment and Training Center
Donley Center
718 West Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101
610-799-1205

Bethlehem Employment and Training Center
Hispanic Center
520 E. 4th Street
Bethlehem, PA 18015
610-868-7800 Ext. 224

Easton Employment and Training Center
27 S. 3rd Street
Easton, PA 18042
610-829-6099

Other Job-hunting Resources

- The [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#), a service provided by the United States Department of Labor that offers advice on workplace accommodations for a wide range of disabilities.
- The [Workforce Recruitment Program \(WRP\)](#), a recruitment and referral program that connects federal sector employers nationwide to job seekers with disabilities.

Self-Advocacy

Self-Advocacy is an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assess his or her own interests, desires, needs and rights. At Via, we help participants to make informed decisions and take responsibilities for those decisions.

Tips for Self-Advocacy:

- Help that participant to know and understand his/her rights and responsibilities
- Help the participant to learn all he/she can about his/her disability, needs, strengths and weaknesses
- Help the participants know what accommodations are needed and why they are needed
- Help to participant to effectively/assertively communicate his/her needs and preferences
- Identify key people and how to contact them if necessary
- Help the participant to ask questions if something is unclear or clarification is needed

Watch an instructional video on self-advocacy [here](#).

Disclosure

Disclosure is the action of making new or secret information known. At Via, we help participants to share personal information about their disability for the specific purpose of receiving accommodations.

Whether to disclose or not:

- The decision to disclose a secret such as a diagnosis is a personal choice.
- There are pros and cons to disclosure.
- Disclosing a diagnosis can be positive in the sense that it allows specific accommodations.

When to disclose a diagnosis:

- Avoid disclosing a disability on a resume.
- If an individual needs a special accommodation, one may decide to disclose a disability at the initial interview or after the job offer.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications and governmental activities.

Accommodations

Confidence is paramount to any job seeker. The ADA makes it illegal for employers to ask job candidates about their medical history during a job interview. More important, it requires employers to provide "reasonable accommodations" to qualified job applicants or employees.

Employers are required to provide "reasonable accommodation" -- appropriate changes and adjustments -- to enable a participant to be considered for a job opening. Reasonable accommodation may also be required to enable the participant to perform a job, gain access to the workplace, and enjoy the "benefits and privileges" of employment available to employees without disabilities. An employer cannot refuse to consider a participant because he/she requires a reasonable accommodation to compete for or perform a job.

Determining the best moment to tell a prospective employer about the need for reasonable accommodation on the job is a personal decision. Sometimes, applicants are not aware they may need a reasonable accommodation until they have more information about the job, its requirements, and the work environment. Some applicants choose to inform an employer during the application process after they better understand the job and its requirements. Others choose to wait until they have a job offer.

How to ask for an accommodation:

- If an accommodation is needed, the diagnoses should be disclosed to the employer.
- Explain how the diagnoses complicate(s) daily job function(s).
- Explain the accommodations needed.

Reasonable accommodation can take many forms. Ones that may be needed during the hiring process include (but are not limited to):

- Providing written materials in accessible formats, such as large print, braille, or audiotape.
- Providing readers or sign language interpreters.
- Ensuring that recruitment, interviews, tests, and other components of the application process are held in accessible locations.
- Providing or modifying equipment or devices.
- Adjusting or modifying application policies and procedures.

Example: An employer requires job applicants to line up outside its facility to apply for a job, a process that could take several hours. Melissa has multiple sclerosis and that makes her unable to tolerate prolonged exposure to temperatures in the 90's. Melissa therefore requests that she be allowed to wait indoors where it is air conditioned until the Human Resources department is ready to take her application. The employer would need to modify its hiring procedure to accommodate Melissa.

An employer does not have to provide a specific accommodation if it would cause an "undue hardship" that is, if it would require significant difficulty or expense. However, an employer cannot refuse to provide an accommodation solely because it entails some costs, either financial or administrative. If the requested accommodation causes an undue hardship, the employer still would be required to provide another accommodation that does not.

For example: A construction company conducts job interviews in a second-floor office. There is no elevator. The company calls John to arrange for an interview for a secretarial position. He requests a reasonable accommodation because he uses a wheelchair. Installing an elevator would be an undue hardship, but the employer could conduct the interview in a first-floor office. The employer must move the location of the interview as a reasonable accommodation.

The ADA also requires that employers give application tests in a format or manner that does not require use of an individual's impaired skill, unless the test is designed to measure that skill.

If the participant has a disability that doesn't require any accommodations or affect his/her ability to perform the functions of the job, they are under no legal obligation to disclose their disability to a prospective employer.

You can obtain more information about the ADA and its requirements through Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) [website](#). This website contains documents addressing various ADA issues, including the following:

- [Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship](#)
- [Preemployment Disability-Related Questions and Medical Examinations](#)
- [The ADA and Psychiatric Disabilities](#)

Useful Exercise:

Questions	Yes	Sometimes	No
Can you easily explain your skills and strengths to other people?			
Do you ask for help when you need it?			
Are you present at your own Individual Plan, Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 meeting?			
Do you participate in your own Individual Plan, IEP or Section 504 meeting?			
Do you disclose your diagnosis to others?			
Do you like the reaction you get when you inform someone about your diagnosis?			
Do you describe your diagnosis differently depending on the setting or the people?			
Are there times you choose not to tell someone about your diagnoses?			
Do you know what "reasonable accommodation" means?			
Do you know what accommodations you need in school in order to be successful?			
Do you know what accommodations you need on the job in order to be successful?			

- If you answered **YES** to many of the questions, you should be very proud of yourself! You have a good sense of yourself and your diagnosis. This means you're on the road to be a very self-determined individual.
- If you answered **SOMETIMES** to many of the questions, you possess some very good skills in understanding yourself and your diagnosis, but you have some specific areas that need to be developed.
- If you answered **NO** to many of the questions, you are at the beginning stage of understanding yourself and your diagnosis. Take the next step and seek out others whom you trust and who know you well; ask them to help you sort out your areas of strengths and needs.

Job Applications

Participants may face particular challenges in filling out job applications. Have the participant complete a practice application with your assistance and explain the different sections to it. Once he/she has finished the application with your help, allow the participant to try another one on their own and then review it with them.

You can find sample applications here:

- [Sample Application #1](#)
- [Sample Application #2](#)
- [Sample Application #3](#)
- [Sample Application #4](#)

Tips for Participants Completing Job Applications

- Read over all of the questions first.
- Follow directions carefully.
- Answer all questions completely.
- Leave no blank spaces.
- Print N/A (for not applicable) for questions that do not apply.
- Print or type – use blank ink and bring your own pen.
- Write neatly and completely.
- Use action verbs.
- Check your spelling.
- Carry a pen and a ruler.
- If filling out at home, make additional copies for your records.
- Check your appearance, even if you are just picking up the application.
- Bring a professional copy of your resume.
- If you have little to no experience:
 - Use volunteer, hobbies, chores, and other life experiences.
 - Use classroom and other educational and training experiences.

You can find more information on how to assist participants with the application form and process [here](#).

Resume Building

A resume for job seekers with disability can resemble anyone's resume. A resume should be a one (1) page concise piece of self-advertising focused on a specific position or job objective. Good resumes are well organization with a focused employment objective.

Tips for Participants Developing Resumes

- It is a resume, not an autobiography.
- You can never have enough volunteer experience, but try to keep it short and simple, maybe only include the name of the organization or area you volunteered at.
- Make your resume stand out, boring resumes will not catch the employer's eye, at the same time, keep it professional.
- Your resume should include:
 - Identifying data: Your name, address, phone number and email address.
 - Objective: A clear statement identifying the position you are seeking. Be specific and mention the exact job title is possible.
 - Education: List your most current degree/credential first, including the institution. For example: High School Diploma from Lehigh County High School.
 - Experience: Include all work-related activities. Describe not only job responsibilities, but also what you created, accomplished or achieved. If you have little or no work experience, use other experiences from school or the community (volunteer work).
 - Professional Development: Include completed exams or special courses taken.

Here are some websites that are helpful resume builders:

- [Indeed Professional Resume Templates](#)
- [Microsoft Office Resume and Cover Letter Templates](#)
- [ResumeGenius Resume Builder](#)

The Interview

In this section, you will find sample interview question, tips on what to wear and what not to wear when you go for an interview and other important information involving the whole hiring process.

Interview Questions

- Tell me about your work experience. How has it prepared you for a career? *Be specific and make a clear connection between a relevant experience and something you know about this job.*
- What are your greatest strengths? *Describe skills that pertain to this job.*
- What are your greatest weaknesses? *Mention skills that aren't critical to the job. Turn the negative into positive. Example: Triple checking spreadsheet.*
- Why do you want to work here? *Summarize your accomplishments and what makes you unique. What working style or people skills do you have. What do you have to offer this company?*
- Tell me about yourself. *Use the Present-Past-Future formula. Start with the present—where you are right now. Then, segue into the past—a little bit about the experiences you've had and the skills you gained at the previous position. Finally, finish with the future—why you are excited for this opportunity.*
- Give me an example of a good customer service you provided.

- Why should we hire you? *The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job.*
- How will you handle a difficult customer? *Don't argue, listen, show them you care, don't blame your company, try to solve the problem or find someone who can.*
- Where do you see yourself five (5) years from now?
- Do you have any questions for ME? *You should always have questions to ask the interviewer!*
For example: What would a typical day look like? What do you think are the biggest challenges of this position? Is there a dress code? When can I expect to hear from you?

What NOT to Wear



What TO Wear

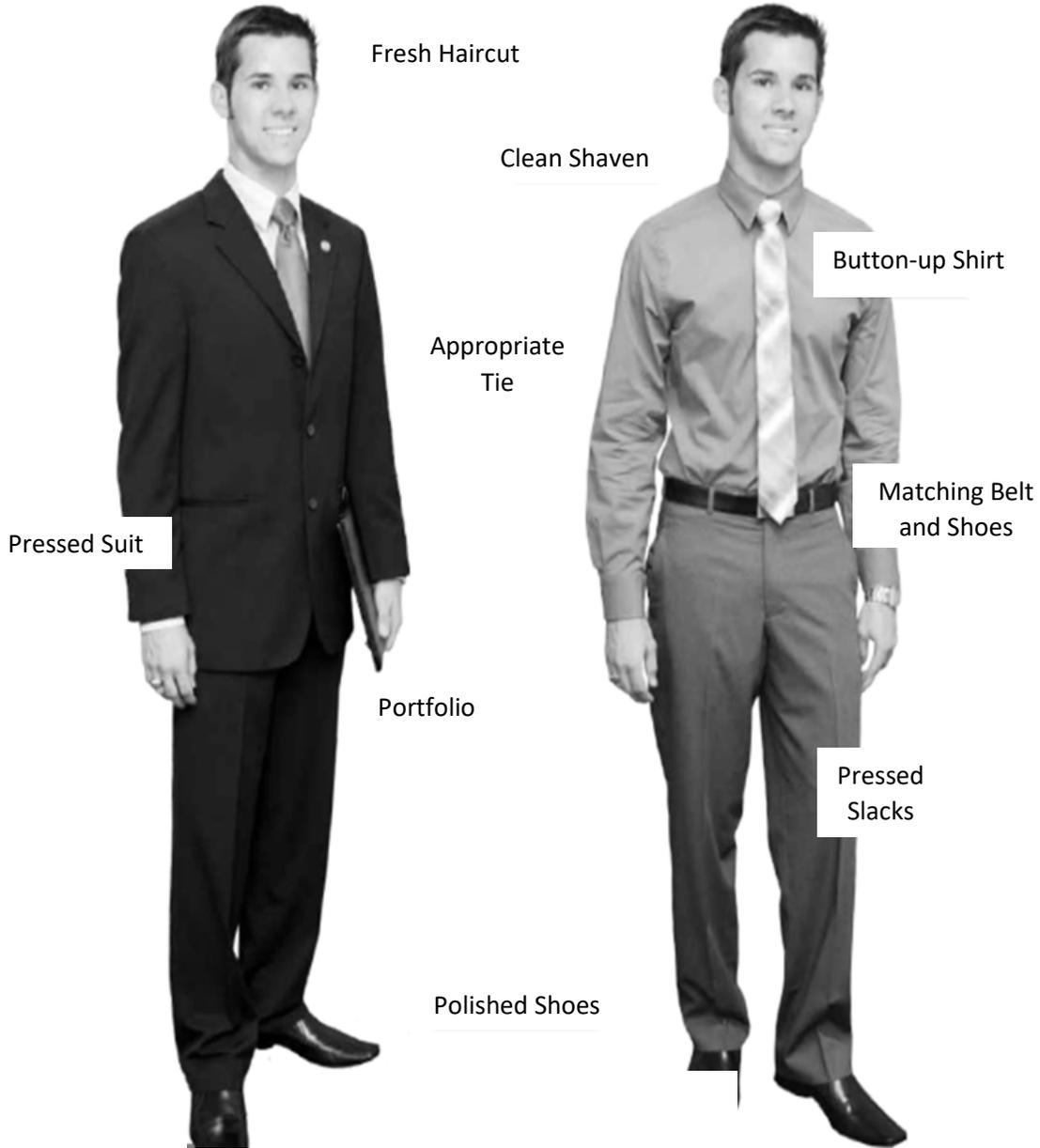
BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

BUSINESS CASUAL



BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

BUSINESS CASUAL



The Night Before the Interview

One recommendation for the night before your interview is to make a schedule for yourself, for the next morning. Planning out your morning includes staying on your time. Let's say your interview is at 10:30 in the morning and you live 15 minutes away from the company at which you are interviewing. A good rule to go by is to show up at least 15 minutes before your interview starts, it is a good first impression.

Example of this would be:

- 7:30am: Wake up. Brush teeth and eat something for breakfast.
- 8:30am: Shower and make sure all hygiene is completed.
- 9:30am: Leave for the interview.

Hygiene Tips for Daily Employment

Hygiene to do list activities:

- Go to Walmart, Target or another similar store and ask the participant to find the health and beauty care aisles. Ask them to bring you back AT LEAST three (3) hygiene items that should be used daily before work (i.e. Toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, brush/comb, wipes/washcloth, shampoo, soap, etc.).
- Make a checklist that you can go over each day and rate your participant(s) hygiene and attire for social norms. Have a self-monitoring checklist and ask peers rate each other. FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE AS A TOOL TO TEACH AND WATCH FOR IMPROVEMENTS AS TIME GOES ON.
- Have your participant(s) go to the clothing sections of department stores you accompany them to. Have them practice picking out interview appropriate work attire, daily work attire, etc. Practice picking out attire for a variety of occupations and work settings.

Basic Employment Skills

- Practice eye contact, handshake, etc. for interview etiquette: While out in group for the day, pose a challenge among groupmates pertaining to greeting members of the community. You can tally points- for example, solid eye contact when participating in a conversation would be one (1) point.
- How to formally accept a job offer and obtain the necessary information: Role play situations.
- What to expect on the first day of a new job: Give scenarios to the participant and act as if you are the interviewer. You can also ask their Coordinator to set up an interview with them as practice. This will allow not only to go through the whole routine, but it will also allow the participant to feel more comfortable in their clothing, their answers to the questions and the all-around feeling of an interview.
- Ensure that you go over Human Resources paperwork, timesheets, schedules, etc. Allow your participant to meet with Human Resources here at Via, ask HR if they have 15 minutes to meet with participant on a specific day to go over the paperwork in case the participant has questions that you cannot answer.
- Asking for help and self-initiative on the job site: Tally challenges at volunteer site and provide them with role playing scenarios to conquer the issue and move past it.
- Active learning lessons on communication with co-workers, stakeholders, customers and superiors: Each participant can be given a sentence or topic to discuss and it is matched with a level of relationship. The group will work through all the different options.

- Time schedule maintenance: Make a schedule for the day and groupmates take turns overseeing the “clock” for the day so they learn to monitor time and time spent time on each activity as well as how to communicate that to others.
- Transportation particularly related to work: Borrow exercises from the Transitional Work Employment program. Host transportation scavenger hunts- getting to certain locations using certain methods- group against group/ 1:1’s make it a challenge.
- Conflict resolution skills: Role play scenarios- each person chooses an index card with a certain scenario on it. Example: You were hired for certain shift, now your manager has changed that shift to a later one when busses are no longer running for you ride home- What do you do? (Open ended or multiple choice works for this scenario.)
- Supervisory meetings and performance evaluations: What to expect. Mock supervisory meetings again get their Coordinator involved. Volunteer sites- those who are in charge, explain what is going on to them and ask them to participate in it as well.
- Promotions: Explore options for support services through OVR.
- Mock Interview: Use coordinators, Human Resources, volunteer sites that are willing to assist, CareerLink, etc.

Possessing a Positive Work Attitude

It is the enthusiastic employee who creates an environment of goodwill and who provides a positive role model for others. A positive attitude is something that is most valued by supervisors and co-workers, and that also makes the job more pleasant and fun to go to each day.

A Positive Work Attitude

Greet your co-workers – that’s called FRIENDSHIP.

Give the best of yourself – that’s called SINCERITY.

Organize your day – that’s called PREPARATION.

Now that you are prepared, work – that’s called ACTION.

Work with happiness – that’s called ENTHUSIASM.

Give the best of yourself – that’s called EXCELLENCE.

Help those with difficulties – that’s called compassion.

Don’t gossip – that’s called INTEGRITY.

Realize that everyone is not like you – that’s called TOLERANCE.

Treat everyone fairly – that’s called RESPECT.

Tell the truth – that’s called HONOR.

Social Networking

This section explains in detail how to navigate through three (3) social media outlets – ZipRecruiter, Indeed and LinkedIn – that employers look at and post job openings on. The instructions will go into detail on what the website or outlet does, as well as how to sign up and make an account for the websites.



ZipRecruiter

1. You do not have to make an account, however if you sign up with your email address, the website will notify you with job openings when they become available.
2. Whether or not you decide to create an account, you can still search jobs within your area.
 - a. To do this you go to the search bar, type in what it is you are interested in.
 - b. Put in your location and how many miles it is you are willing to travel for work.
 - c. Then, press “search jobs”.
 - d. Your page will bring up many jobs with the descriptions, qualifications and lots of other information on the job.

This is the second hardest website to navigate around, compared to Indeed and LinkedIn. It is recommended to use Indeed prior to using this one, as Indeed is much similar, yet easier to navigate through.

Indeed

1. Like ZipRecruiter, you can make account, however it does not make you create an account to search job postings.
2. With Indeed, you will search whatever it is you are looking for and in whatever area it is you live within.
3. Once you have searched, on the left side of the screen there will be filters for you to be able to change anything you could want to change within the search.
 - a. Salary
 - b. Shift
 - c. Location (how many miles from where your exact location is set to)
 - d. Part Time/Full Time

Along with being able to pick exactly what type of job and all the other options Indeed gives you, this is the most easily navigated website in terms of the three (3) covered in this section.

LinkedIn

1. LinkedIn is the only website out of the three on this list that you **MUST** make an account for.
2. It is also the most difficult to navigate through as it is not a search engine. It acts more like a social media outlet, like Twitter, but with more of a professional approach.
3. Either way, if you decide to make an account you will be greeted with many interview-like questions before allowed to connect with other users.
4. Include all your work history, volunteer experience, education, etc. in your LinkedIn profile.
5. LinkedIn is a social media platform that allows companies to search you, instead of you searching them and applying for jobs.

The Do's and Don'ts of Social Media/Networking

- DO maintain your accounts. Update regularly (but DON'T update so much that your posts become white noise).
- DO share articles, videos, blog posts and other content that people in your target audience will also find useful, inspiring, informative, educational.
- DO promote yourself. Share your accomplishments, strengths, professional challenges you've overcome, etc. (but DON'T brag).
- DO actively participate and engage your peers. Ask and answer questions, join conversations and groups, comment on others' updates, retweet, etc.
- DO remember whom you are "talking" to. On Facebook, for example, you are sharing information with everyone that you have added as a friend. On Twitter, you are sharing information with everyone... period. Twitter is a public network.
- DO check – and be sure that you completely understand privacy settings.
- DO present yourself with consistency. Make sure that your LinkedIn profile, Twitter bio and Facebook page show the same job histories and experiences.
- DO network where you want to be/belong (make sure you are using the correct application).
- DON'T share too much information (TMI), especially information of a personal nature.
- DON'T neglect to proofread your social media posts as carefully as you would your resume. Just as it is important to have a resume free of errors, the same is true of any public writing that an employer may see.
- DON'T forget that people may have a different sense of humor. What you may think is funny may sound obnoxious to others.

Support Groups

- Elwyn: [Autism Resource Community Hub of Lehigh Valley](#) (ARCH) is an inviting, user-friendly center that provides comprehensive services to individuals and families touched by autism. ARCH of LV professionals offers on-site individuals, group or family counseling. They also offer a group specifically for Spanish speaking community.
- [Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Inc.](#)

Support Groups in the Lehigh Valley

- Abuse Survivors Center (for sexual abuse and assault), 610-435-9651
- [Adoptions from the Heart](#) (for child adoption services), 800-355-5500 or 610-838-9240
- [Survivors of Incest Anonymous](#) (for survivors of childhood sexual abuse), 610-437-6610
- Adult Rape Survivors, 610-437-6610
- AIDS Outreach, 112 N. Fifth Street, Allentown, 610-435-8424
- [Alcoholics Anonymous in the Lehigh Valley](#), 24-hour hotline 610-882-0558. Their website contains information on AA groups within the Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton area.
- [Alzheimer's Association](#), 24/7 helpline 800-272-3900
- [American Cancer Society](#) Lehigh Valley Unit, 2121 City Line Rd., Bethlehem, 610-882-4397, Call for referrals to one of the many support groups in the Lehigh Valley.
- [American Diabetes Association](#), 610-227-5445
- [American Liver Foundation](#), Lehigh Valley Faith UCC Church, 25th and Livingston Street, Allentown, 610-432-2481 or 610-776-5470

- [American Lung Association of the Lehigh Valley](#) (children with asthma and their families), 610-867-4100
- [Arthritis Foundation of the Lehigh Valley](#), 610-776-6632
- [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](#), 610-261-2944
- Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (low vision rehabilitation optometrist center), 610-433-6018
- Asthma Family Support, 610-791-5683
- August Survivors Center (Sexual Abuse and Assault), 610-791-5683
- [Autism Society of America](#) Lehigh Valley Chapter, 610-778-9212
- Bereavement Group (Family Survivors of Homicide), 610-437-6610
- Brain Tumor Support Group, St. John's Lutheran Church, Emmaus, 610-776-2566, dfioriglio@aol.com
- Breathing Buddies (Coped), 610-867-4100
- [Camelot for Children](#) Support Groups, 610-791-5683
- [Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder \(CHADD\)](#) of Lehigh Valley, 610-433-9595
- Children with Cancer Family Support Group, 610-791-5683
- Children's Support Group (sexually abused/assaulted), 610-437-6610
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association of the Lehigh Valley, 610-868-8745
- Co-Dependency Support Groups, 610-435-9651
- [Coalition for a Smoke-Free Valley](#), 17th and Chew Sets., Allentown, 610-402-4855, csfv@lvh.com
- Compassionate Friends (death of a child), 610-391-9972
- Confront/Treatment Trends Inc., 610-433-0148
- [Crime Victim's Council of the Lehigh Valley](#), 610-437-6611
- [Crohn's & Colitis Foundation](#) Support Group, 610-435-3375
- Cystic Fibrosis Family Support Group, 610-791-5683
- Down Syndrome Parents Newmark, 800-435-7309
- [Easton Hospital](#) Support Groups, 610-250-4636
- [Emotions Anonymous](#), 610-797-7110
- Encore/YMCA & YMCA of Allentown (post-mastectomy), 610-434-9333
- [Epilepsy Foundation of SE PA](#), 800-887-7165
- [Fathers and Children's Equality \(FACE\)](#), 610-770-9150
- Fibromyalgia Support Group of Sacred Heart Hospital, 610-776-4690
- Families in Separate Houses (FISH) for children of divorce, 610-435-9651
- [Gamblers Anonymous](#), 855-222-5542
- Gay Men of the Lehigh Valley, 610-954-7775
- Good Shepherd Support Groups, 610-776-3100
- Grief and Bereavement Kids Group, 610-791-5683
- [Hepatitis C Support Group of the Lehigh Valley](#), 610-954-7900
- Huntington Disease Support Information, 610-377-5599
- Homicide Survivor's Group, 610-487-6610
- La-Leche (breast feeding), 610-867-8570
- Lehigh/Northampton Counseling Service for the Deaf, (TTY) 610-8860940; (voice) 610-432-9118
- Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Society of Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)/Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), 610-776-5992
- Lehigh Valley Head Trauma Support Group, 501 Saint John St., Allentown, 610-432-1619
- Lehigh Valley Hospital Support Groups, 610-402-2273

- Lehigh Valley Lesbians, 610-954-7775
- Lehigh Valley Mothers of Twins, 610-838-8592
- Lehigh Valley Parents Group for Hard of Hearing Children, 610-865-4868
- Lehigh Valley Polio Survivors Group, 610-886-8092
- [Lehigh Valley Renaissance](#), P.O. Box 157, Trexler town, 610-814-0530 or 610-814-0531 (support for crossdressers and transsexuals)
- Lehigh Valley Sickle Cell Anemia Support Group, 610-791-5683
- Lehigh Valley Transplant Support Group, 610-402-8406
- Lehigh Valley Zipper Club, 610-395-6771
- Loving, Caring, Sharing Drop-In Center for Mental Health Consumers, 610-437-7919
- Lyme Disease Support Group, 215-529-9456
- [Mothers Against Drunk Drivers \(MADD\)](#), 610-814-6233
- [National Multiple Sclerosis Society](#), 800-548-4611
- [Muscular Dystrophy Association](#), 610-391-1977
- [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill \(NAMI\)](#) PA Lehigh Valley Support Group, 802 West Broad St., Bethlehem, 610-882-2102; (FAX) 610-882-0440, info@namipalehighvalley.org
- Narcotics Anonymous ABE Area, 610-439-1998
- New Choices/New Options, 610-861-5350
- [Overeaters Anonymous](#), 610-435-2736
- [Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#), 610-967-5219
- Parent Support (children with diabetes), 610-791-5683
- [Parents without Partners](#), 610-398-3875
- Parkinson's of the Lehigh Valley, 610-435-1852
- Pediatric Oncology Support Group, 610-791-5683

Events and Activities

Free Group Activities in the Lehigh Valley

- [Free Activities from Lehigh Valley's Find & Go Seek](#)
 - [The Mack Truck Museum](#) at 2402 Lehigh Parkway South in Allentown. 610-351-8999. The Mack Truck Museum displays the history of the Mack Truck Corporation. Trucks are on display for visitors along with documents, photos and artifacts from the famous truck brand's past. Group tours and field trips are available.
- [Outdoor Activities from Lehigh Valley's Find & Go Seek](#)
 - [The Wildlands Conservancy](#) in Emmaus. 610-965-4397. Ages 3-14+. The Wildlands Conservancy is a Lehigh Valley non-profit organization that promotes the preservation of green space. Open from late April through mid-September.
- [Attractions & Activities in Lehigh Valley](#)
- [50 Things Everyone in the Lehigh Valley Should Do](#): This link may be one of the most important on the list. The list of 50 things to do in the Lehigh Valley has all different types of activities. From MusikFest to America On Wheels, this list will be able to give you many ideas on activities to plan with participants.

- [A Guide to Free Lehigh Valley Summer Events](#)
- [The 10 Best Things to Do in the Lehigh Valley](#)
- [Discover Free Things to Do in the Lehigh Valley](#)
- [Lehigh Valley Events Find Festivals, Exhibits & Performances](#)

Exercise and Mobility

Below are a list of Group Fitness classes as well as schedules that are offered through Lehigh Valley Health Network. While these classes are NOT free, calling LVHN and discussing opportunities and fees is encouraged.

- Bike & Barre: 45 minutes of stationary cycling followed by 45 minutes of Barre fitness.
- Boot Camp: 30 minutes of challenging exercises that encourage muscle strength and endurance military style! High Intensity challenging workout.
- Bump Yoga: 60-minute class for expectant or new mothers.
- Cardiac Fitness: Health promotion and well-being for individuals transitioning from Cardiac Rehab into everyday fitness.
- Cardio Cross Training: 45-minute class combining cardiovascular intervals with strength and core conditioning.
- Core Synergy: 30 minutes of abdominals and low back strengthening and stretching.
- Cycling: 30, 45 or 60 minutes of stationary cycling coached by certified instructors. You control the intensity making class suitable for all levels of fitness.
- Energizing Yoga: 60 minutes of active yoga, including Sun Salutations and poses that enhance strength and flexibility.
- Functional Fusion: a 45-minute class featuring a combination of TRX suspension training exercises and kettlebell functional movement training. This class will challenge movement!
- Member Orientation: 60 minutes of introduction to the equipment in LVHN Fitness. Proper setup and technique demonstration. Appropriate for all fitness levels. Individualized exercise programs are not provided during these sessions.
- Everybody's Yoga: a 60-minute class incorporating the fundamentals of Yoga basics while enhancing strength and flexibility through the progressions of the Sun Salutations. This class is recommended for all levels of Yoga participation.
- Exercise for Life: a 60-minute class that is perfect for anyone new to exercise and individuals with physical limitations. Involves light low-impact movement, followed by chair exercises utilizing light resistance.
- Get Up & Go: Health promotion and well-being for individuals dealing with the physiological and psychological challenges of movement disorders.
- Making Treads Club: 45-minute expertly designed training program on the treadmill. Gain a great foundation of miles and speed with motivation! For all levels with any goal! Available all day on Wednesdays!
- Relaxing Yoga: 60 minutes of a gentle form of yoga that includes mindful mat poses to reduce stress and assist in rebalancing your life, with a strong emphasis on "the breath".
- Strength Train and Tone (STAT): 30 minutes of circuit training. Moderate to high intensity.
- Staying Strong: 60-minute workout combining low-impact cardio, strength training to maintain muscle mass and enhance bone density.
- Tabata: 30-minute maximal workout including a variety of high intensity intervals.

- Very Gentle Yoga: 60-minute class format that includes a very gentle form of yoga appropriate for individuals who have physical limitations. Many poses are adaptable to utilizing a chair.
- WMC (Weight Management Class): Health promotion and well-being for individuals who are from the LVHN Weight Management program
- Yogalates: 45-minute fusion class of Pilates and Yoga for core/body conditioning.
- ZUMBA: 60-minutes of dance inspired aerobics. Latin and salsa style music. Join the party!
- ZUMBA Gold: 60-minutes of Zumba designed to be less intense for beginners and participants needing modifications.

The rest of this list is not all within the LVHN system but are still great ways to stay fit and exercise!

- [Capital Blue Cross Store](#) at the Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley: Capital Blue is your one stop shop for healthy living needs. They offer free fitness classes all week long from Zumba, to Tabata classes to a No Fear Fitness class, a judge free fitness class designed to increase your functional fitness level, perfect for someone just starting out in their fitness career! They also offer free wellness and nutritional seminars. You can even purchase a healthy snack at the Rodale Café, located inside Capital Blue. Yoga, 30-minute Shred, Zumba and more! Free for members- \$5 for non-members. Free health classes on topics such as stress, dieting and men's health. WalkingWorks meets Monday-Saturday @ 10:30a.m. and 6 p.m. for a healthy walk.
- Walk Your Way to Wellness: Looking for an easy, free way to stay physically fit? Consider walking. Use our indoor walking trail at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest. We've mapped out walking trails inside Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest in Allentown to help guide you walk your way to wellness. Try our trails if you need a place to walk during inclement weather, while you're waiting for your appointment or a loved one's appointment, or if you're in the area and have some time to spare.
- [The Fitness Plaza](#): Too wet outside to run? Maybe too cold? The Fitness Plaza's indoor track lets you get your runner's high even in inclement weather! 1124 Glenlivet Drive in Allentown. 610.481.0100.
- [Lehigh Valley Active Life](#): Exercise classes. 1633 West Elm Street in Allentown. 610-437-3700. info@lvactivelife.org
- [LAP Swimming and Water Aerobics @ Muhlenberg College](#): The pool is in the Sports Complex just east of the stadium (Liberty and 24th Street). Please park on the street and enter the campus through the stadium gates and walk to the other side of the building. On your first visit, get there a half hour early. Upon entering the building ask the receptionist for directions to the locker room. 84° water. MWF 10:00am to 11:00am. \$4.00 Instructor: Jerry Vogwill.

Parks

This section has a comprehensive list of parks as well as the directions to those parks will be listed.

Parks in Bethlehem Township

- **Municipal:** Municipal Park is the township's community park, centrally located within the township on Farmersville Road between Freemansburg Avenue and William Penn Highway. The main area of the park has four lighted tennis courts, two lighted basketball courts, public restroom facilities, play equipment, one hardball field and one softball field. A one-mile paved fitness trail with exercise stations wraps around the perimeter of this area. Picnic pavilions, volleyball courts and horseshoe pits are also available in this area of Municipal Park.
- **Municipal Park North:** The north side athletic complex is accessible from Meyer Lane off William Penn Highway, just west of Farmersville Elementary School. This lighted complex hosts three (3) softball fields and a football/soccer field. This northern section of Municipal Park also has a pavilion, play equipment, volleyball court and horseshoe pit. The walking path through the wildflower meadow and along the pond where various waterfowl are residing balances all of these active areas.
- **The Janet Johnson Housenick & William D. Housenick Memorial Park:** This park is currently in development and is open to the public. Consisting of 55.84 acres of land, its use is solely for passive recreational activities.
- **Birchwood Park:** The latest addition to the Park System, Birchwood Park is located at 12th and Washington Streets between the Prospect Heights and Birchwood Farms neighborhoods. Play equipment a half-court basketball court; a pavilion, lawn swings and other play courts are located under the canopy of a naturally forested area. This hidden neighborhood park is surrounded by a soft-surface walking trail, complete with tree identification signs and a butterfly garden.
- **Comer Park:** This neighborhood park, located behind the Coolidge Building between 5th and 7th Streets, hosts play equipment, a gazebo, picnic tables, park benches and play courts. Surrounded by split rail fencing and mature Sycamore trees, Comer Park is an ideal location for a quick picnic lunch.
- **Hetwyn Terrace Park:** Originally dedicated in 1967, Chetwyn Terrace is the Township's oldest park. Located at the end of Charles Street, this neighborhood park is tucked away under the shade of several very large Silver Maple Trees. Play equipment, a pavilion, play courts and access to the Palmer/Bethlehem Rail Trail highlight this wonderful treasure of the Park System.
- **4th Street Park:** Named for its location, this park currently hosts a tennis court, multi-purpose court, street hockey court and a basketball court.
- **Palmer/Bethlehem Rail Trail:** The Palmer/Bethlehem Rail Trail is a continuous 7.3-mile trail through two beautiful communities. The National Recreation Trail was built on an abandoned railroad bed with the assistance of the United States Department of Interior and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as part of the National Rails to Trails Program. The trail's paved surface is ideal for pedestrian, bicycle, rollerblade and stroller traffic. The trail is open to all non-motorized traffic including dogs. Dogs must remain on an in-hand leash and we ask that you please clean up any deposits left by your pet.
- **Emerald Hills Greenway:** This greenway serves a dual purpose. It has both a paved recreation trail and serves as the storm water management facility for the multiple phases of the Emerald Hills Development. This is open to all non-motorized traffic including dogs, however, Township leash laws do apply. Dogs must remain on an in-hand leash and we ask that you please clean up any deposits left by your pet. The trail connects to 10th street.

Parks in Whitehall/Allentown

- Allencrest: 1020 Livingston Street in Whitehall. Allencrest playground consists of 1.25 acres in the south west zone of the township recreation system. The park has a playlot designed for tots and children up to 12 years. It is a small, passive sitting park with a down-sized pavilion (not available for rental) and several pieces of playground equipment.
- Cementon/Victor Talotta Park: 5185 Dewey Street in Whitehall. The Cementon/Victor Talotta boasts 18.0 acres in the Northeast zone of the township recreation system. The Cementon Steckel Pool (3 acres) is adjacent to the park. It has three baseball fields, two lighted basketball courts, two lighted tennis/volleyball courts and an enclosed air-conditioned building available for rental. Activities at Cementon: Township summer camp program, Camp Whitehall. The Cementon Athletic Playground Association offers sports programs for including Spring Coed T-Ball, baseball/softball. The Cementon Park and Laurel Fire Company host the annual Cement Belt Fair the last week of June.
- Egypt Memorial Park: 4540 Hillcrest Lane and Bank Street in Whitehall. Egypt Memorial Park is approximately 17.36 acres in the northwest zone of the Township Recreation System. The Egypt Memorial Park is not owned by Whitehall Township. This park consists of four baseball fields, two lighted basketball courts, a play lot, a pavilion and an enclosed building which are both available for rent. Indoor ADA restrooms. Indoor pavilion now heated for year-round rentals. Please see rental information at the bottom of this page. Youth activities include Spring Coed T-Ball, Spring and Fall Baseball and softball and summer adult volleyball. Outdoor Pavilion Capacity- 400; Indoor Pavilion Capacity- 200 year-round. 610-262-9841.
- Schadt Avenue (Zephyr) Park: 1975 Schadt Ave in Whitehall. Schadt Avenue Playground (also known as Zephyr Park) consists of 17 acres located in the central west zone of the township recreation system. The park contains four baseball fields, four soccer fields, one football field, two basketball courts and a play lot. The Schadt Avenue Park, Playground, Athletic and Recreation Association Offers Spring Coed T-Ball, Baseball Softball and field hockey for the youth in the area. Outdoor Pavilion Capacity- 25; Indoor Pavilion Capacity- 200 year-round. 610-248-9119.
- Hokendaqua Park & Playground: 3417 Lehigh Street in Whitehall. Hokendaqua Park offers 10 acres in the central east zone of the Township Recreation System. The Hokendaqua Park Area to immediate north of Lehigh Street is not owned by Whitehall Township the total park has three baseball fields, three lighted basketball courts and a play lot. There is a pavilion available for rentals (please see bottom of page). Youth activities include Spring Coed T-Ball, Spring Baseball, softball, winter basketball. The competitive length Parkview Pool shares a 13-acre parcel of land adjacent to the park with a police agility training course and pavilion. (available for rental). Hokendaqua Park 484-294-6966 (Rentals); Outdoor Pavilion (playground) capacity- 50 Rentals 484-294-6966; Parkview/Hokey Pool 484-437-5524 ext. 160 (Rentals); Outdoor Pavilion (Hokey Pool).
- [Hokendaqua Athletic Association](#): 2nd & Lehigh Street. Hokendaqua Athletic Association offers 6 acres at the site of the former Whitehall High School Athletic Fields. The Park contains one football field and two baseball/softball practice fields. The Hokendaqua Athletic Association offers a fall football program and football cheerleading program. Football is divided by weight classes.
- Jefferson Street Playground (Fullerton Memorial Playground): 901 Jefferson Street in Whitehall. Fullerton Memorial Playground, also known as Jefferson Street Playground, consists of 14 acres in the south zone of the Township Recreation System. The park features five baseball fields, one football field, two lighted basketball courts and play lot. There is a pavilion and a community

center building available for rentals (please see bottom of page). Youth activities include Spring Little Tykes Baseball, Coed T-Ball, Baseball, Softball and indoor competitive cheerleading and the township's summer camp, Camp Whitehall. The Jefferson Street Pool sits adjacent to the playground on 1.5 acres.

- Stiles Playground: 3017 South Fourth Avenue in Whitehall. The Stiles Playground consists of five acres in the central zone of the Township Recreation system. The park features a ball field, basketball court, tennis court, play lot and pavilion. Their Park Association generally meets for the first Thursday of each month. Outdoor Pavilion capacity-40. 610-437-5524 x160- Rentals.
- West Catasauqua: 2301 Pine Street in Whitehall. West Catasauqua Playground consists of 18 acres in the south-central zone of the Township Recreation System. The park features two baseball fields, one soccer field, two lighted basketball courts, two lighted tennis courts, two lighted volleyball courts, a pavilion and a community center building (both available for rent- see below). Besides youth activities, West Catasauqua has an Adult Volleyball Program. Indoor Building Capacity- 100 year-round; Outdoor Pavilion Capacity- 50 (first come first served). 610-264-8456.
- Central Park: Undeveloped recreation area at Columbia and South Church Streets.
- Ebwater Baseball/Softball Field Hokendaqua Park and Playground: Use 0.7-acre baseball/soccer field.
- Village Green Elmhurst Drive SAPPRA: 0.3-acre tot lot with play structures. Front Street St.
- Elizabeth Athletic Association use-baseball fields at Wood St. playground in Fullerton.
- Jordan Greenway- Trails and walkways for $\frac{3}{4}$ to 3 miles along Jordan Creek.
- Peachtree Playground SAPPRA- 2.4 acre play lot and grassy area.
- Pershing Park Township- 1.5-acres next to bird sanctuary.
- Presidential Ball Field SAPPRA- 2.1-acre parcel for baseball/softball/soccer.
- Presidential Tot Lot SAPPRA- .5 acre play area off Presidential Drive.
- Riverwalk Park Cementon- 6 acres on Front Street in Cementon, next to the D & L Heritage Trail.
- Warke Park Cementon- Football/Baseball field located in Hokendaqua.