

Youth Seeking Subminimum Wage Employment Frequently Asked Questions

Subminimum wage employment is an option for some people with disabilities who are not ready to work in competitive jobs in the community. Workers in Subminimum Wage Employment receive a high level of supervision and support while they complete work tasks. Workers are paid based on productivity, and wages are less than the federal minimum wage. Please see below for frequently asked questions about Subminimum Wage Employment.

1. What is a subminimum wage job vs. a competitive integrated job?

In a Subminimum Wage Job:

- Workers are typically individuals with significant disabilities who are not ready for competitive integrated jobs
- Workers receive a high level of supervision and support
- Wages are based on productivity and are less than the federal minimum wage
- Work is typically performed in a non-integrated setting (i.e., a special environment suitable for people with disabilities)

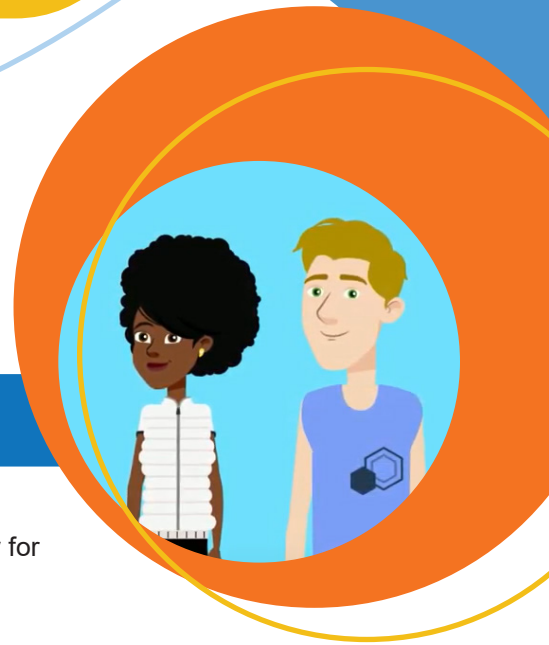
Subminimum wage jobs are also often referred to as Center-Based Employment (CBE) or Sheltered Workshops/ Employment

In a Competitive and Integrated Job:

- Workers are people with and without disabilities
- Work is performed in an integrated/community setting rather than in a special environment for people with disabilities
- Wages are competitive and are at least the federal minimum wage or higher

2. Why am I being referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)?

VR helps people with disabilities obtain and maintain competitive integrated jobs. If you are between 14 and 24 years old, the law requires you to complete activities within the VR program before starting a subminimum wage job. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that you have access to information and services that can help you obtain the employment that is best for you.



3. What are the required activities that I need to complete?



- A. First, you must complete Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) or Transition services. Both services help youth prepare for getting a job but there are a few differences.
- Pre-ETS are short-term services provided through the VR program. There are 5 specific services that you can participate in and VR staff will talk with you about your options. Pre-ETS are complete when you have completed the service of your choice.
 - Transition Services are provided by a public high school. These services are identified on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and are considered complete once you have exited high school (e.g., graduated, dropped-out).
- B. You will also be required to receive career counseling from VR staff who will talk with you about your job goals and the services that can help you meet those goals.
- C. The final activity is to complete and sign a VR Application form (this form is different than a VR referral) **AND**:
- Be determined 'ineligible' for VR (if you still want to get a job that pays subminimum wage, you will be determined 'ineligible' for VR);
or
 - Be determined eligible for VR, develop an employment plan, and be unsuccessful in obtaining a job in the community that pays at least minimum wage.

4. How long will it take to complete the required activities?

Completion time varies from person-to-person and will depend on your specific situation.

- Pursuing a job that pays subminimum wage generally takes between 3 weeks to 3 months to complete the required activities.
- Pursuing competitive and integrated employment with help from the VR program may take several months to several years. If you are successful in obtaining a job through the VR program, it is unlikely that you will need to look for a job that pays a subminimum wage.

5. How will I prove that I completed the required activities?

VR staff will complete and sign a specific form to document the completion of each required activity. They will give you a copy of each form. When all required activities are complete, they will also give you a cover sheet that lists the documentation that has been provided to you. These documents are required by the law.

Once you receive your documents and cover sheet, let your case manager or Support Coordinator know. They will help you with the next steps.

You are responsible for providing your employer with the documents to show that you completed all of the required activities.

6. What happens if I do not want to complete the required activities?

Speak with your case manager, Support Coordinator, or your VR counselor about the reasons you do not want to complete these activities. If you refuse to complete the required activities, you will not be able to get a job that pays subminimum wage until you are 25 years-old.

