



## Does Having a Disability Mean You Cannot Work?

Under current Supplemental Security Income (SSI) rules, an individual with a disability must prove they cannot work to be eligible for benefits, including health care and other independent living supports. And, after an SSI award, available work incentives are difficult to navigate and little used. Many youth and families think work will risk access to health care, personal care services, and the reliability of their monthly SSI check. However, there is another approach that can and will provide young adults with disabilities pathways to work and careers.

### What is CareerACCESS?

CareerACCESS is a career building alternative to the SSI Program for young adults who are seeking independence through employment. A young adult working with a CareerACCESS Coach would develop an Individualized Career Plan (ICP) to define goals, timelines, steps, tools and supports needed to meet the goals.

### Who Can Participate in CareerACCESS?

SSI eligible young adults with disabilities age 18-30 and the service providers who aid them in transitioning to careers through coaching, counseling and long-term employment support services.

### Why Support CareerACCESS?

In *full* implementation, CareerACCESS will enroll young adults with disabilities, age 18 to 28, and support participants up to the age of 30. CareerACCESS rules would allow increased earnings and remove asset limits in a new model to invest in *employ-ability versus incapacity to work*. To get there, pilots of the following areas need to build evidence of the CareerACCESS policy and implementation model:

- **Coaching, Counseling, and Employment Support Services** will be managed through an Individualized Career Plan to increase success.
- **Eligibility** will NOT require an “incapacity to work” test.
- **Health Care and Independent Living Supports** will remain available.
- **SSI Cash Benefit Retention and Removal of Asset Limits** will offset the cost of managing a disability while building a career.

Young adults in CareerACCESS may decide to opt out or return to the current SSI Program at any time. Furthermore, CareerACCESS will not change the SSI definition of disability currently used for blind individuals and it makes no changes in the SSI benefits currently available to blind individuals.

## CareerACCESS Coach & Individualized Career Plan

Until the climate exists to use waivers to pilot the full program, CareerACCESS will work to develop the methods, procedures, and tools in an early proof of concept phase. After identifying early participants, the CareerACCESS requirements will be captured, implemented and tested in highly controlled contexts.

### CareerACCESS Coach

A CareerACCESS Coach is more than a job coach, career coach or benefits counselor. The main goal of the CareerACCESS Coach is to support and ensure that each CareerACCESS participant meets or exceeds their potential and self-identified personal and career goals. A sample job description, a position comparison chart and recommendations for how to integrate the position into an organization have been created to enable CareerACCESS Coaches to help young adults navigate the complex systems that are often required to obtain the goods, services, and supports needed to succeed in their careers. CareerACCESS Coaches will:

- Create a CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plan.
- Help young adults grow the self-confidence, social capital, and other soft skills required in today's marketplace.
- Coordinate professional development courses, peer mentoring relationships and internships.
- Provide long-term employment supports.

### CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plan

A CareerACCESS Individualized Career Plan (ICP) template has been created to assist CareerACCESS Coaches in developing customized plans to assist young adults with building careers. The ICP contains timelines, steps, tools and supports needed to meet the goal AND when fully implemented, the CareerACCESS ICP will be a federally-approved document that is a requirement to remain eligible for the benefits program which ends on or before age 30. The ICP template includes an assets inventory, needs assessment, goals, revision tracking and more.

### CareerACCESS Training and Curriculum

CareerACCESS incorporates career readiness and resilience training and curriculum to equip young adults with new information and tools. Pilots will test a variety of content, including:

- Professional Development and Disability
- Asset Building Strategies for People with Disabilities
- Navigating the Job Search Lifecycle
- Enhancing Emotional Intelligence
- The Importance of Building Your Personal Brand

## Learn More & Support CareerACCESS

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