



Informed Choice of Employment

You have the right to decide the type of job you want to have, including a career meeting your skills and interests in the community. The process to help you select the kind of work that you'd like to do is called informed choice.

What Is Informed Choice?

With employment, informed choice happens when you make a career decision, choosing from several options, based on available information, skills, and/or experience. Informed choice can help you decide how you spend your days, whether it be working in the community, going to a sheltered workshop, volunteering in the community, attending non-work day programs, or staying home. Importantly, Indiana has an Employment First Plan that states working in the community is expected of people with disabilities.

What Are Some Basic Beliefs about Informed Choice?

Generally, the informed choice process recognizes the following principles.

1. Everyone can make choices, regardless of the supports they might need to make those choices, and everyone needs opportunities and support to practice decision-making.
2. Choices are not unlimited. Informed choice means knowing about the available options and picking from among them.
3. It is important to clearly understand the results of a choice.
4. Not all choices are equal. Some choices are more acceptable or positive than others.

It seems simple. Why am I struggling?

Making informed choices can be difficult. Because family members and professionals frequently make decisions for people with disabilities, people with disabilities can lose opportunities to develop decision-making skills. Similarly, because people with disabilities often have less employment experience than peers without disabilities, they have less experience to draw from when making job-related decisions.

Initially, you may not know what you want. That is okay. Fortunately, even making small informed choices, like choosing to observe a particular job before making a bigger

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decision, can help you build your skills and experiences. Practicing informed choice regularly may help you become more comfortable processing new information and reaching decisions, as well as having the confidence to share your decisions with others.

Can I get help?

Absolutely! Even people without disabilities rarely make major life decisions without getting help from friends or family members. You can also get help from professionals, if that is what you need. For example, if you have questions about how a choice might affect your government benefits, you may want to ask your case manager, Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor or Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program. If you have questions about a service or support you need to do your job, you may want to ask a friend who has the same accommodation or a lawyer to advise you on how to request it. Remember, though, that you are the decision-maker.

Questions?

If you believe that someone is denying your right to make an informed choice about employment, feel free to contact Indiana Disability Rights through one of the methods below.

Phone: (317) 722-5555

Toll Free Phone: (800) 622-4845

Website: <https://www.in.gov/idr/for-help-fill-this-out/>

Email: info@IndianaDisabilityRights.org
