



Jobs For Individuals With Disabilities

(NAPSA)—About 56.7 million people have some kind of disability, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. If you or someone you care about is ever among them, you may be encouraged to know that despite a U.S. Department of Labor report that says people with disabilities face an unemployment rate of more than 11 percent—double the national average—there is good news. Changes to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have resulted in increased efforts by employers to recruit candidates with disabilities.

More Opportunities To Work

The Rehabilitation Act has supported people with disabilities for more than 40 years by prohibiting the federal government, and businesses that work with the government, known as federal contractors, from discriminating based on a disability. Recent changes to the Act now require these federal contractors to take positive steps to recruit, hire, train, promote, and retain people with disabilities. The changes include a new goal for federal contractors to have people with disabilities make up 7 percent of their workforce. This means that thousands of the businesses that provide goods and services to the government now need to hire more people with disabilities. These companies are also required to invite job applicants to identify themselves as people with disabilities both during the application phase and after a job offer is extended.

A Ticket to Work

Another help is the Social Security's Ticket to Work program. The program offers free employment support services to people age 18 through 64, who receive disability benefits, and who want to work. There are 14 million Americans who are eligible for this voluntary program through which they can select a service provider to help them prepare for, and find, a job. The provider may be a state Voca-



Recent changes in government regulations may mean more opportunities and a better life for people with disabilities and their families.

tional Rehabilitation Agency or an Employment Network—a public or private organization that contracts with Social Security to provide:

- career planning
- job leads and job placement
- ongoing employment support.

Many of these service providers have been using the change to Section 503 to build relationships with federal contractor employers in their communities to help them locate qualified candidates so that they can meet their recruiting and hiring goals.

Finding A Path To Financial Independence

The road to financial independence looks different for each person. Whether joining the workforce for the first time, or returning after a difficult diagnosis, there are challenges that each person must navigate. Taking advantage of new opportunities related to Section 503, and using the free resources offered through the Ticket to Work program can remove some of the speed bumps on the journey to work.

Learn More

For more information about the Rehabilitation Act or the Ticket to Work program, call (866) 968-7842 (V), or (866) 833-2967 (TTY), or visit www.socialsecurity.gov/work.