

ASCIP ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

RESOURCE SHEET

Academy of
Spinal Cord Injury
Professionals, Inc.™
Many Minds. One Vision.

SCI
&
WORK



The Basics

Can persons with SCI work?

YES. Some people start or go back to work on their own; most benefit from a coordinated team approach to provide appropriate work supports.

The Details

Factsheet for
sharing:

[Employment After
SCI](#)

The Basics

State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

What does it offer?

- Helps persons with mental or physical disabilities obtain and maintain employment
- Offers a range of services, such as pre-employment transition training for adults, adolescents and youth, training programs, career services, and other work support services

The Details

[Link to State VR Agencies](#)

VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)

What does it do?

- For Veterans with 10% disability rating or higher and eligible Military service members
- Services include job training, employment accommodations, resume development, and job seeking skills coaching.
- Self-employment services and help with independent living may also be provided.

[Link to VR&E](#)

VA Compensated Work Therapy Program (CWT)

What does it do?

- For Veterans receiving healthcare at VA Medical Centers
- Offers Supported Employment and Transitional Work
- Other employment services (e.g., Supported Education, Supported Self-Employment, Vocational Assistance, Career Development) may be available

[Link to CWT](#)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

What is it?

- The leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues
- Helps people with disabilities enhance their employability
- Shows employers how to create a more disability-inclusive and compliant workplace

[JAN Website](#)

[JAN Job Seekers](#)

The Basics

Benefits and Work

Are disability benefits always affected by work?

- Not necessarily. Some Social Security benefits and Veterans benefits are income dependent and some are not. There are work incentive programs including a Trial work period where people can work while still receiving monthly payments. VA benefits are protected while Veterans are participating in CWT.

What is benefits counseling?

- An essential service to help a person understand the impact of future earned income on disability benefits to make an informed decision about employment options

Where to get benefits counseling:

- Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) - community-based organizations work with beneficiaries to help them make informed choices and successfully transition to financial independence
- Other resources: Local Social Security Administration offices, State Veterans Affairs offices and other State-sponsored programs, representatives of nonprofit and Veterans organizations (e.g. Paralyzed Veterans of America National Service Officers)

What kinds of employment services are most effective for persons with SCI?

Employment services that are integrated with other rehabilitation care and emphasize competitive employment in the community are preferred to pre-vocational or work readiness services. Models include:

- The Individual Placement and Support Model of Supported Employment has strong evidence as an effective vocational intervention for SCI.
- Evidence is emerging for other approaches such as Resource Facilitation and Early Intervention models.

The Details

For information on the types of benefits:

[Work Incentives](#)

[Trial Work Period](#)

[WIPA Provider](#)

[Search](#)

[IPS in SCI Toolkit](#)

For more information:

O'Neill J, Ottomanelli, L. Vocational rehabilitation for individuals with spinal cord injury, In: Kirshblum S, Lin VW, editors. Spinal cord injury medicine. 3rd ed. New York: Demos Medical Publishing; 2019. pp 776-788.

Source

This information is based on research evidence where available and represents the consensus of expert opinion of the Association of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals, Advocacy Committee, Employment workgroup.

Authorship

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Disclaimer

This information is intended for rehabilitation professionals and may be shared with consumers with SCI. This resource sheet is not meant to replace the advice from a vocational rehabilitation or medical professional. Rehabilitation professions are encouraged to discuss this material with consumers in the context of their overall medical rehabilitation care.