

Progressive Employment: What It Is and What It Isn't



Progressive Employment is an employment strategy that provides individuals who have little or no work history, low skill levels, corrections involvement or other barriers a way into paid employment that builds momentum and provides a means to increase skill level and confidence.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF PE:

- ▲ Everyone is ready for some kind of work. PE placements:
 - » Create employment opportunities regardless of the job seeker's skill levels
 - » Eliminate waiting for a level of "job readiness" to be achieved--employment activities can begin immediately
 - » Progress at an individualized pace
- ▲ Small success leads to further success.
 - » With small, low-risk, low-pressure activities, a person can overcome fear and be ready for the next step.
- ▲ PE provides flexibility and creativity based on the needs of the job seeker and the employer.
 - » PE meets the needs of both the employer and the participant. An employer may not be in a position to hire someone, and the individual may want to explore the company or the type of job through a short-term placement.
- ▲ PE is low-risk for both the employer and the participant.
 - » The employer is not required to hire the individual at the end of the placement.
 - » The individual is not committing to that particular job.

PROGRESSIVE EMPLOYMENT IS:

- ▲ A series of placement options geared to the skill level of the individual and increasing in skill levels required.
- ▲ A method to evaluate existing work skills, reduce fear, and identify training, support, and accommodation needs.
- ▲ A way to develop interpersonal and customer-service skills.
- ▲ An opportunity for individuals to explore careers in short-term placements.
- ▲ A chance to introduce a candidate to a prospective employer, especially for those individuals who struggle to get their foot in the door.
- ▲ A tool to build a resume and professional references.
- ▲ A list of potential placement options:
 - » company tour
 - » job shadowing
 - » short-term work experience
 - » on-the-job training
 - » temp-to-hire



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- ▲ A way for employment staff to offer a variety of options to an employer, rather than ask for consideration of their customers for open positions.
- ▲ A proven method to increase employers' understanding of people with disabilities.

PROGRESSIVE EMPLOYMENT IS NOT:

- ▲ A promise of employment.
- ▲ Paid work, unless the employer places the person on their payroll through an on-the-job training option (training offsets may be provided to the trainee to cover transportation, meals, childcare, or other out-of-pocket costs).
- ▲ Long-term subsidized employment or "warehousing"--usually work placements don't last longer than eight weeks.
- ▲ A violation of the Fair Labor Standard Act, because:
 - » Training is similar to what would be given in a vocational school or academic educational instruction.
 - » Training is for the benefit of the trainee.
 - » The trainee does not displace regular employees, but works under their close observation.
 - » The employer derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainee, and on occasion the employer's operations may actually be impeded.
 - » The trainee is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.
 - » The employer and the trainee both understand that the trainee is not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.
- ▲ Full-time employment--generally the participant does not work in excess of 25 hours.
- ▲ The only option--those who have skills and experience are placed directly into competitive employment whenever possible.

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