

AbilityFirst Employment Services: Supported Employment and Staff Training

AbilityFirst Employment Services currently has eight supported employee groups. Each group is managed by an AbilityFirst job coach. There are currently 67 supported employees that hold jobs in manufacturing, retail, theme/entertainment and other industries in Southern California. Annually, AbilityFirst Employment Services works with approximately 100 individuals who are interested in participating in this supported employment program.

The AbilityFirst Employment Services staff is trained to provide strong guidance and support to current and prospective supported employment program participants. The goal of the program is to help individuals find gainful employment that matches their skills and abilities, as well as assist them with building a good work ethic. Job coaches provide a support system to supported employees for developing their careers, including training in job retention to increase the opportunity for advancement. In many cases, the job coach will spend time at the supported employee's workplace to learn their job responsibilities and industry standards, so they can help the supported employee to become more efficient and productive.

The AbilityFirst Employment Services staff maintains certifications in CPR and First Aid, and other emergency procedures. Through the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, staff participates in Customized Employment, an initiative to build the capacity of workforce systems to serve all customers, including individuals with disabilities. Staff is proficient in local, state and Federal labor standards, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act and basic Social Security guidelines.

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