

Kitsap County

Job Foundations and School-to-Work Transition Guide

**A Guide for Students, Families, and Teachers
in the Transition from School to Work Life**



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Introduction

The transition from being a student to a working adult is an exciting process for students and their families. And, as with any change, there can be uncertainties and different expectations. We hope this guide will prepare you with an understanding of who is involved and what their role is, what will happen in the last two years of school, and how everyone can contribute to a successful first job for the student. This guide is not intended to address every aspect of a student’s transition out of school, such as independent living or social activities; this guide is specific to achieving employment goals.

1 Quick Glance of Who Does What

Employment Agencies

- Choosing the right employment agency is an important decision that will affect your employment experience, so take the time to do your research and interview several agencies. (See **Section 5, Contact Information** to find available agencies)
- An employment agency helps with creating a resume, filling out applications, researching job opportunities, meeting with businesses on your behalf, arranging and supporting you through interviews, assisting with transportation arrangement, training at your new job, providing accommodations to help you succeed at your job, and ongoing support to you and your employer to make sure it is a successful job match.
- Your employment agency is not expected to provide transportation to or from a job site, but can help you with travel training (bus, Access, walking commute).
- Your employment agency will spend the first few months of school getting to know you by visiting the classroom and your school work sites. After that, most of their time will be spent out in the community on your behalf talking to businesses that may have the right job for you.
- If at any point you are unhappy with your employment agency, attempt to resolve the issues with them. If the problems are not able to be resolved, you can choose a different employment agency.

Students

- Finding a job is a lot of work and it needs to be your big goal so you should make time for interview prep, going to businesses, and dressing for work.
- Your first job will probably not be your dream job; it will be a way to get work experience that will later contribute to obtaining your dream job.
- Be an advocate for yourself; let your employment consultant know what you want and be involved with the job search process.

Families

- While your student is seeking a job, it is the expectation of your employment agency that work be a top priority.
- You may be called upon to provide or arrange transportation to or from interviews or appointments with businesses.
- You will need to ensure your student has attire appropriate for interviews and the job they are seeking.
- Your student's hours and shifts are determined by the business' needs; this means that your student may work evenings, weekends, holidays, or part time.
- Work is not a replacement for school; your student's work schedule will not take the place of the school day, so there should be planning for other activities to fill their week.
- Like any other first job, your student should not request excessive vacation days.
- It is the role of your employment consultant to maintain communication with your student's employer.
- You can help your student find a job by sharing any personal or professional community connections you have with your employment consultant.

Teachers

- Your student's employment consultant will spend the first few months of services getting to know the student by observing him or her at different worksites and spending time in the classroom.
- You can help us gather information that will assist us with their employment search. Please provide us with information you have, including:
 - A record of school internship/work history
 - References from work experiences
 - Communication systems they use
 - Assistive technology or adaptive equipment they use,
 - Skill building activities they've succeeded in
 - Learning styles, preferences
 - Elements that are barriers to learning or triggers for negative reactions (environmental, sensory, communication, etc)
- Since independence is the goal of paid employment, your student's employment consultant will work with you to brainstorm strategies and accommodations to help your student become more independent at school worksites.
- Your knowledge and experience is important to a student's job success; share your ideas with your student's employment consultant.

2 Timeline of Events

Second to the final year of School

January-June:

- Initial meeting with students, teachers, employment agency and parents, and DVR/DDA to introduce everyone.
- Observe students in their school activities, community outings, internship work sites, and gather information on their dependable strengths and work preferences.
- Completed Job Foundation Report to identify actionable next steps for employment.

Last year of School

July-October:

- A written service plan outlining identified job search plan and activities based on Job Foundation Report information.
- Activities on behalf of student will vary, but may include: community-based assessments, resume creation, interview skill building, and increasing independence in school and/ or community work sites.

October-January:

- Targeted marketing to businesses, networking and outreach to the community on behalf of each student. Some activities will involve students leaving school to meet with businesses, interview, and assess prospective job sites.
- Employment consultants conduct job development activities on behalf of the student, even if the student is not with them.

February-June:

- Job training, targeted transportation training, and on-going support to students and businesses to ensure successful job placement and advancement.

July-December:

- Job development activities will continue for students who are not employed.

Monthly:

- Employment consultants will provide a monthly update to the DVR/County on progress and next steps for each student.

Activities during the school day:

- Employment consultants will contact teachers and parents/home staff when an appointment requires the student to leave school.

3 Detailed Roles and Expectations

Employment Agencies

Choosing the Right Employment Agency

When a student enters the employment process, he or she has the option of choosing an employment agency to aid in finding and retaining a job. There are several agencies that you can choose from, so you'll want to be sure to research each company, interview them and find out which one is the best fit for you. (See **Section 6, Questions to Ask an Employment Agency** to view sample questions to ask potential providers)

Each company has its own history, values, and unique services. Employment agencies' websites are a great resource to learn about an overview and structure of the company. Before you schedule interviews with different agencies, call and talk to the managers to find your top choices. Make sure to talk with your teachers, case managers, and friends to learn about their experiences and recommendations. Choosing the right employment agency is an important decision that will affect your entire employment experience, so take the time to do your research. Find a company that you are confident can meet your needs and support you in the job search process.

What you can Expect from your Employment Consultant

An employment agency is responsible for assisting you through every step of finding and retaining a job. This may include creating a resume, filling out applications, researching job opportunities, meeting with businesses on your behalf, arranging and supporting you through interviews, assisting with transportation arrangement, training at your new job, providing accommodations to help you succeed at your job, and offering support once you are independent at your job. Your employment consultant will have conversations with your supervisor or coworkers to see if there are opportunities for you to improve your skills or expand your responsibilities. Your employment agency is not expected to transport you to or from a job site, but they can be a resource to help you think of transportation options and train to use transportation independently.

Employment Agencies in the School

Your employment agency will spend the second to the last year getting to know you and learning about your strengths, likes and dislikes, and job preferences. We will observe you at your school worksites to learn about the different job experiences that you have already, and use this time as an opportunity to ascertain what you have already become skilled at

and enjoy. At these worksites, your employment agency will also work in conjunction with the para-educators on site to brainstorm and implement accommodations and strategies that will help you be more independent. The ultimate goal of paid employment is for you to work independently at your job, so practicing independence at school worksites is great preparation.

Job Search

After we have dedicated the second to the last year learning about your strengths and interests, most of our time in your final year will then be spent out in the community on your behalf, talking with different business owners about employment opportunities. You will see less of us in your classroom, because our time will be spent looking for jobs. Your employment consultant may start setting up more meeting times outside of school for things like interviews or job applications.

While looking for a job, your employment consultant will assist you in creating a professional resume based on school work experiences and volunteer experiences. We will assist you in turning resumes in to prospective employers, filling out online and paper applications, and advocating for yourself to get hired. Your employment agency will also help you prepare for interviews by practicing common interview questions, selecting interview outfits, conducting practice interview sessions, and arranging transportation to and from the interview.

Your employment consultant will also assist you in a variety of ways through interviews at different businesses. Interviews may take different forms- group interviews, individual interviews, working interviews, etc. Your employment consultant will be with you at each interview and provide support by rephrasing questions, offering ideas, and ensuring that all pertinent information is discussed.

Creative accommodations will be an active part of your job hunt, and this may mean creating non-traditional resumes or using technology. If your work skills and experiences are not best reflected through a traditional paper resume, your employment consultant may use a video resume to allow you to demonstrate those skills to a business. If a question and answer interview is a difficult way for you to best express yourself, your employment consultant may advocate for a working interview, where you can do the work to demonstrate your skills. It is your employment consultant's job to create creative opportunities for you to be successful.

Job Training

After finding and accepting a paid job, you can receive assistance from your employment agency with figuring out transportation, on the job training, providing accommodations, and building the natural support of your coworkers.

While your employment agency is not expected to provide transportation to or from a work site, they can help you strategize different options to use. These options may include public transportation, Access, family, friends, taxi services, shared rides, or walking. If the student receives Social Security and is earning an income, there are ways to set aside money to fund services or supports that will enable a person to achieve their work goals, including reliable transportation. For more information on Incentives for Work Related Expenses (IRWE) or plans for achieving self-support (PASS), please ask your employment consultant.

Your boss and coworkers will provide the majority of on-the-job training, and your employment consultant may step in if additional training or assistance is needed. He or she will identify or create tools that will help increase your independence and success at work, such as checklists, labeled work areas, and items that may increase your efficiency. Your employment consultant will also explore alternative communications systems with you if needed so that you are able to communicate with your coworkers and supervisors. These systems may include PECs, adaptive technology, or other systems you may already be familiar with.

Job Retention – Ongoing Support

Once you, your supervisor, and your employment consultant are all confident with your new work, your employment consultant will start to fade from your job site, eventually only checking in with you and your supervisor as needed (but at least once a month). However, your employment consultant will always be available as a resource for you and your employer. If at any time, you are struggling with one of your tasks or are learning a new task, your employment consultant will step back in to offer assistance. It is our job to help you feel supported throughout your entire career. Some ways we provide ongoing support:

- Checking in with you and your employer each month to see what is new
- Advocating for you to get expanded responsibilities in your job
- Helping you learn new tasks in your job
- Strengthening your coworker relationships
- Providing additional training or retraining if you are struggling with something on the job
- Providing creative accommodations to help your performance
- Helping troubleshoot issues with coworkers or supervisors
- Finding another job if you lose your job or desire a new job

Communication with Employers

It is the job of your employment agency to maintain support and communication with you and your employer throughout your career. Conversations surrounding requests for a vacation, requesting additional hours, schedule changes, etc., should involve your employment consultant rather than a family member or teacher. Your employment

consultant has the professional experience and language to offer businesses support in a way that other members of your support team cannot.

Your Rights

If at any point during your job search you are unhappy with your employment agency, it is your right to choose a different employment agency. The agency and the county require, however, that you address and try to resolve any issues according to the agency's policy procedures first. If an issue cannot be resolved, it is your right to choose a different agency.

Students

Expectations

Your job should be your first priority, over school, extra-curricular, and friends. You may have to reschedule activities to fit around your work schedule once you get a job. When your employment consultant finds different job opportunities, he or she expects that you help apply and advocate for yourself, and attend different interviews. Whenever you get together with your employment consultant to talk to businesses or to attend interviews, you should be dressed professionally. An example of professional dress could include, slacks, black shoes and socks, and a button down shirt.

It is really important that you conduct yourself professionally wherever you go now, because your employment consultant will be talking to businesses that may know you or recognize you. You want people to remember you for good reasons, such as your politeness or friendliness.

Reality of a First Job

Your first job will probably not be your dream job. In order to get hired at your dream job, you need to have work experience and professional references. Your first job will be something that you enjoy, and will give you the opportunity to gain work experience, build connections and earn money. Even though it may not be your dream job, it will still require that you take it seriously and demonstrate dedication. You may have to work during the evening, on weekends, or on holidays, but first jobs require that you are flexible.

Families

Expectations

While your student is seeking a job, it is the expectation of your employment agency that work be a top priority. This may mean having to provide transportation to or from interviews or appointments, scheduling around interviews, and providing professional attire. Your employment consultant will give you as much notice as possible for scheduled appointments, but some events, like quickly scheduled interviews, may be beyond his or her control.

Once your student finds paid employment, work needs to be a priority over school, extra-curricular activities, and volunteer activities. This may require that previously scheduled or reoccurring events be rescheduled so they don't conflict with a work schedule. Your student's work schedule is determined based on a business' needs; this means that, while your employment consultant may advocate for certain hours, shifts are ultimately determined by the business.

Your student's new job needs to be treated with the same respect that any other paid job receives. This means that your son or daughter arrives on time every day, in uniform, ready to work. If you have any questions or concerns to address with an employer, please inform your employment consultant rather than approaching a supervisor yourself.

Like any first job, the hours that your student works may include evening or weekend hours, holidays, and undesirable shifts. Excessive vacation time should not be requested, especially at the start of a new job. Your student will be filling an important position within a business, and they will be relied on to complete their tasks each week. In order to be a valued team member in a business, your student will need to demonstrate commitment to his or her position.

Your student's new job will not be a replacement for school; paid employment is an important part of your student's new, after-school life, but it is unlikely that a work schedule will be 8:00-3:00, Monday through Friday. You should start planning for other meaningful activities to fill your student's schedule in addition to work. The number of hours that a student works depends on the needs of that business. That may mean that he or she starts with a few hours a week. Your employment consultant will seek employment that meets your desired number of working hours in the field of your student's choice, but with more limitations placed on employment, the length of time it takes to find a job increases.

Your Role

You will have the opportunity to support your student in his or her job search or new job by assisting with providing or arranging transportation, ensuring that he or she is dressed

professionally or in uniform, and communicating any questions or concerns to your employment consultant in a timely manner. Your employment agency is a resource for you, so don't hesitate to use them.

While you will not be directly looking for a job for your student, first jobs are often based off of personal connections. Start thinking about people you know who own or work at different businesses, stores or restaurants that you and your student frequent, and other places that you have community connections. Brainstorming different job tasks and asking for a job are the role of your employment consultant, but he or she would be happy to follow up on your personal connections. Your conversations may look something like this:

“(Student’s name) is getting ready to graduate at the end of this year, and they’re starting to look for a job now. We’re working with (employment consultant) at (employment agency), and he/she is talking to different people we know about employment opportunities. Would it be alright if I passed along your contact information so they could chat with you?”

Teachers and Para Educators

Expectations

Your program’s work sites are providing students with valuable work skills and experiences. At the beginning of services, employment consultants will want to take advantage of these experiences by coming in to observe your student working; this will allow him or her to gain insight into what coaching styles work best and what work experiences your student enjoys.

Another way employment consultants work with para educators and teachers is strategizing ways to increase the student’s independence at their school work site to prepare them for their first job when they will not always have a job coach. Even though educators will usually be present at a school work site, there are ways to “fade” the support so that the student is doing tasks with increasing independence. The employment consultant and educator can work on decreasing verbal cues, prompts, reminders, and physical assistance and replace these with checklists, visual cues, and accommodations that the student can use on their own. Ultimately, the educator will be able to be out of the room or out of sight while the student is working which would simulate a real work setting. Similarly, when the student gets their first job, the employment consultant will be on-site to help with training, accommodations, etc, but eventually the employment consultant will fade their support. The goal is that with the right job and proper accommodations, the student will work independently with natural support from their coworkers.

During a student’s job search or once a student is hired, his or her school day may change to accommodate job interviews or a new work schedule. This may require that different methods of transportation be used throughout the school day, or that a student misses days

of school. Your employment consultant will be in constant communication with you to keep you updated about appointments and schedule changes. Your partnership throughout the job search process is crucial to the success of your student.

Your Role

Continue creating all the life and job skill building opportunities that you provide students; the employment consultant will not replace your important work! Continue the worksite rotations, resume building activities, and life-skills that will develop the student's job readiness.

You have valuable knowledge and experience with each student, and your employment consultant may request things like work documentation, resumes, and references from you. You can also share what works and doesn't work for the student in the areas of communication systems, learning styles, adaptive technology, behavior management or modifications and social interactions. In addition, the employment consultant will seek your advice throughout the job search process regarding the type of employment or work environment that will help your student be most successful.

In the interest of your student's continued skill building and work readiness, you can experiment with different ways to fade direct prompts at their school worksites, allowing the student to complete tasks independently. Hopefully you will see the employment consultant as a peer resource that can help brainstorm ideas for accommodations and tools that will allow the student to have a school work experience that could effectively be replicated in a paid job.

In order to respect your work and relationships in the community, your employment consultant will not job develop at your classroom work sites unless it is discussed or suggested by you. In return, your employment consultant requests that you not attempt to develop volunteer sites at places we are developing paid jobs. This mutual agreement allows businesses to continue to provide both job training environments and paid work, and understanding the difference.

It is the role of a student's employment consultant to sustain all communication and support of a business where a student is hired, and to maintain a professional relationship with these businesses. While your employment consultant may ask for your assistance with travel training or schedule changes, please allow all business contact to go through the employment consultant, and do everything possible to allow students to develop professional work relationships. This may include independently traveling to or from work and communicating schedule changes with you.

4 Adult Service System

As a student, there are many resources that schools provide, so it's like one-stop shopping. In the adult service system, there are different government agencies and employment service providers that work together to create the supports people with disabilities need to be successful in their community. While these agencies work together, they have different roles and a student will need to make sure they are connected with each one. Below are the agencies that will be part of your employment supports.

- **Employment agencies:** You have the opportunity to select an employment agency that aligns with your employment goals. Your employment agency is responsible for all tasks that are directly related to finding, training, and keeping a job. Given the School to Work program's overall goal is to assist you in becoming employed prior to graduation, be prepared that you may select an agency that does not currently have the capacity to accept all referrals.
- **Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR):** You need to apply for DVR services. Once you are enrolled, they will assign you a DVR counselor who will refer you to the various employment agencies to select the one you want. When you and an agency have agreed to work together, your DVR counselor will write up a plan that outlines your employment goals and activities the agency will do to help you reach those goals. DVR is a short term service – they will jump start your job search and training.
- **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA):** Your DDA Case Manager will receive updates about your job search from DVR and/or your employment agency. Your Case Manager will be the one to help you get ongoing support from your employment agency even after you have your job and leave school. Your Case Manager is also a resource for you if you need other supports in your life like moving out on your own, medical needs, etc.
- **Kitsap County Developmental Disabilities (Kitsap DD):** Kitsap DD will pay your employment agency to provide ongoing support to you after you complete your DVR plan (remember, they are short term support). You will develop annual employment goals with your employment consultant, and Kitsap DD will make sure your employment agency is helping you reach these goals.

See diagrams on pages, 13 and 14 to understand how all the agencies work together to make employment opportunities happen.

**WASHINGTON STATE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
State and County Flow Chart**

LEGISLATURE



(\$) DSHS

Department of Social & Health Services



(\$)DDA

**Developmental Disabilities Administration
Olympia**



**REGIONAL DDA OFFICES
Regional Administration**



COUNTY SERVICES

\$ Employment Services (21 and Over)

\$ Birth to Three Programs

\$ Training and Family Support

Contract Administration

Quality Assurance

Voluntary Citizens Advisory Board

Service Coordination

High School Transition Students

Community Infrastructure

DDA FIELD SERVICES

Determine Eligibility

Case Management

Referrals Day/Employment

Residential Programs

Respite

Family Support

Links with DCFS, SSI, ARC,
Mental Health, Family Support

Clients

KITSAP DVR

Determine DVR Eligibility

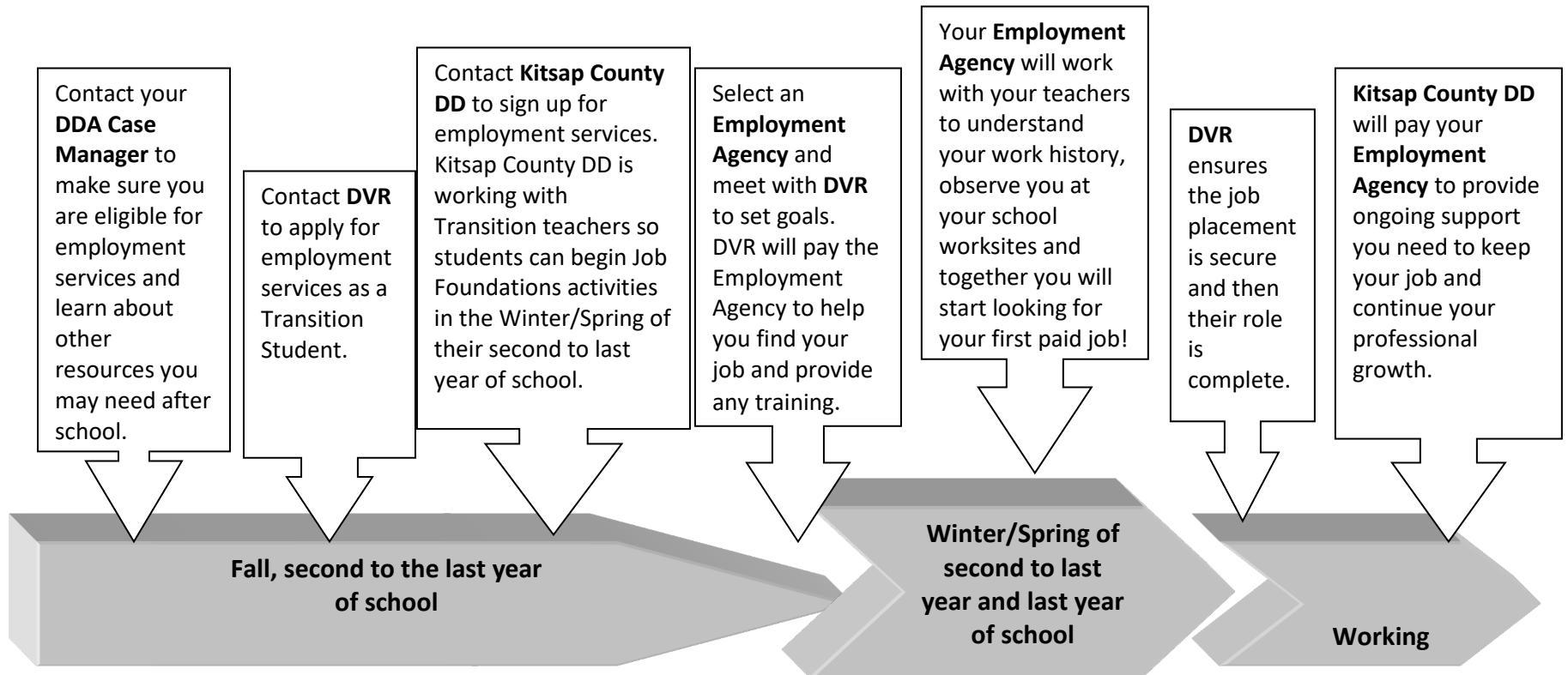
Fund Vocational Assessment

Job Development

Short Term Employment Training Support

Education Programs

CONNECTING TO EACH OF THE AGENCIES



5 Contact Information

Employment Agencies:

There are seven employment agencies serving people with developmental disabilities in Kitsap County. For a brochure with the agencies' information, please go to the website below and select **Resources, Employment and Community Inclusion Brochure for Kitsap County.**

<https://spf.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/DD-Landing.aspx>

Also, most agencies have a website that can provide you with more information (current newsletters, blogs, FaceBook pages, staff bios, etc.) that will help you select the agency that will best suit you. Talk to teachers, older students, and families who can share their experience with various agencies. **Please be aware not all agencies may participate in the School Work Program. Kitsap County DD will provide you a list of participating employment agencies.**

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR):**Silverdale DVR**

3888 NW Randall Way, Ste 201
Silverdale, WA 98383

Toll free: 1-800-548-1406 Voice/TTY

Voice: (360) 698-4360

TTY: (360) 698-4362

Fax: (360) 698-4363

Website: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/strategic-planning/division-vocational-rehabilitation>

Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA):**Kitsap County Outstation**

4710 Auto Center Blvd., MS-W18-2
Bremerton, WA 98312

Local: (360) 405-7800

Toll Free: 1-800-735-6740 (Also, No Paid Services Number)

Fax: (360) 478-4530

Website: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda>

Kitsap County Developmental Disabilities (Kitsap DD):

Kelly Oneal

Human Services

Developmental Disabilities

Email: koneal@co.kitsap.wa.us

Phone: (360) 337-4624

Kirsten Murray

Human Services

Developmental Disabilities

Email: kmurray@co.kitsap.wa.us

Phone: (360) 337-4622

Fax: (360) 337-5721

614 Division Street, MS-23

Port Orchard, WA 98366

Website: <https://spf.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/DD-Landing.aspx>

6 Questions to Ask Employment Agencies

Sample Interview Questions you can ask when interviewing an agency

1. Can I choose what kind of job I think is right for me?
2. How would you help me get the job that is right for me?
3. Who from your agency will I be working with?
4. If I choose you, how often can I expect to meet with you?
5. How long does it usually take you to find someone a job?
6. What types of jobs have you gotten for other people?
7. How much an hour do these jobs pay?
8. How many hours a week are people you support typically working?
9. Where are the jobs located?
10. How long do most people you work with keep their jobs?
11. Would you continue to help me after I get my job?
12. What happens if I don't like the job I get?
13. What will you do if I lose the job I get?
14. What happens if a job is not found for me?
15. As your customer, what is expected of me?