

ColumbiaCare Services

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT



LET US HELP YOU
FIND EMPLOYMENT!

we believe **people** get better. | www.columbiacare.org | est. 2003

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Helping People Help Themselves! Supported Employment is a service that provides people with barriers to employment the help they need to get and keep a job that matches their interests, skills and abilities. Support is available to help identify a job goal, to locate a job, to learn the job, and to maintain that job over time. We partner with individuals to make sure they have the support they need throughout the process.



Who Qualifies?

- Residents of a ColumbiaCare facility can just express interest in Supported Employment services to a staff member.
- Community members (non-ColumbiaCare residents) may also apply for services if they have barriers to employment, including a disability, which interferes with their ability to work.

*We start with people where they are at — regardless of prior work history, substance abuse history, or criminal background. The important factor is the individual **wants to work!***



People want to work for different reasons such as:

- To increase monthly income
- Use talents & skills
- Participate in the community
- Meet new people
- Acquire health insurance & other employment benefits
- Enjoy pride in work & increase self-esteem

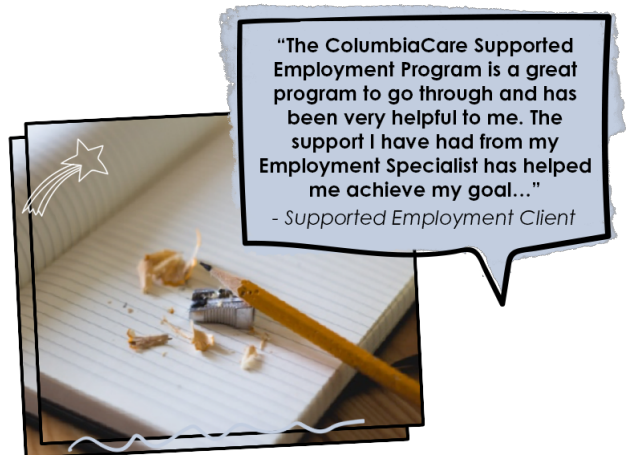
Services Offered.

Career Exploration. For those who have not worked, or it has been a long time – we can help you think about your talents and interests as well as even get some experience to build your resume and develop local references.

Benefits & Work Incentive Planning. Often people are confused about how working will impact Social Security and other benefits. Ask us about the many incentive programs available!

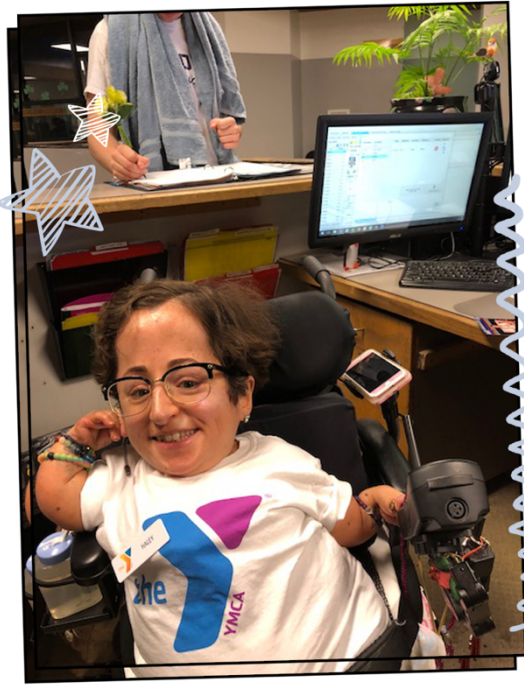
Job Preparation. We can help you develop a resume, prepare for an interview and provide other services to get you ready for work!

Job Development & Placement. We provide specialized assistance to help match your interests, skills and abilities to the needs of community employers. We will provide support during the hiring process and help you figure out transportation, get needed clothing or tools, etc., so you are ready to start your new job!



"The ColumbiaCare Supported Employment Program is a great program to go through and has been very helpful to me. The support I have had from my Employment Specialist has helped me achieve my goal..."
- Supported Employment Client

Turn the page to see some of our client success stories!



Meet Haley...

When Haley Lapkin came to ColumbiaCare's Supported Employment Program we were initially surprised that she wanted our support finding employment. Haley presented as a cheerful, intelligent, articulate, well-educated woman who happens to use a wheel chair. At first glance most people would think her barriers to employment are her physical disabilities. Soon, you realize that's not how Haley sees it. She has been employed in the past working in telemarketing, and also has a Bachelor of Science in Communication and Media Studies. The reason she came to us was to get support with her anxiety disorder that was crippling her to the point of being homebound.

Haley has a full-time care provider who assists her with all her physical needs and can also travel with her to a job. One of Haley's concerns is why someone would hire her, and not just her support person. The answer is simple; Haley has a great personality and will engage people in a way that not all people can. She is quick-witted with a sense of humor that disarms people who might mistakenly think she is fragile. She is intelligent and insightful and knows that her gift is in her ability to communicate with others.

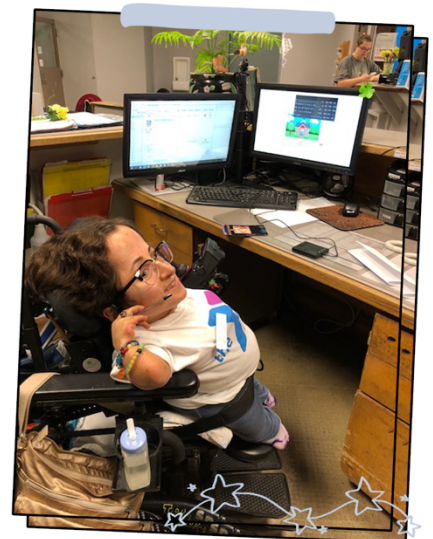
Haley's physical condition makes her vulnerable to injury and respiratory disease. This has created an anxiety disorder and become her primary barrier to employment due to her fear of exposure to physical harm, illnesses, as well as the fear of not being accepted by others because of her differences. This anxiety has kept her home for the last few years.

However, staying home for someone like Haley became unbearably boring and made for an unfulfilling life. She realized she needed to get back in the mainstream. That also meant facing her fears and being willing to put herself out there again.

Haley possesses the primary ingredient for success, and that is willingness! She is an Employment Specialist's dream client because we see what people can do, and we don't focus so much on what a person can't do. Haley is willing to do whatever we encourage her to do and willing to consider any opportunities we afford her. Capitalizing on Haley's communication strength we advocated for her at the YMCA as a receptionist. We opened the door, but Haley sold herself to the employer.

She currently works part time checking people in at the front desk, directs people, checks out equipment, answers the phone, greets patrons and fields dozens of questions daily from curious children as to why she looks the way she does. The Employment Specialist worked closely with Haley's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to get the adaptive equipment necessary for her to do the job as independently as possible. Her personal assistant only helps at Haley's request. This job is helping Haley overcome her fears of being hurt and has brought purpose and meaning to her life and in that, she inspires hope in others as she educates children on people who are differently-abled.

What Haley says she likes most about the job is meeting new people, getting to know them and says, "It's nice when people remember me, the money's nice, but it's not about that for me."



Meet Daniel...

STORY TOLD BY CLIENT

"To start the healing process, I started speaking with my family doctor and 1 year ago, he referred me to ColumbiaCare knowing that they know more about how to help me heal mentally than what he knows in his

specialty of internal medicine. I had a few appointments with ColumbiaCare who - after learning my history - mentioned trying to get me employed for the next step in raising myself up and above the depths of what schizophrenia and other mental illnesses can bring a person to feel and experience in their lives.

I had investigated employment a couple of times in the past but always got the same answer from Social Security over the phone - that I would supposedly lose my social security benefits if I became employed. This scared me to death as relapses can occur out of nowhere with mental illness and other setbacks can happen, forcing me to put employment out of my mind knowing I needed a safety net without a doubt.

After a few months of seeing a therapist and case manager at ColumbiaCare, I was assigned an employment specialist. I explained to her that I absolutely must have a safety net. Losing social security benefits was a fear I had as I had learned that if I lost them, I might not get them back. It had taken me a year with an appeal to be eligible for benefits the first time so losing eligibility was unacceptable and could mean a large amount of hardship (biggest fear being living under a bridge and not knowing if there would be a next meal or when the next meal would be, or far worse. I was afraid that it could start a chain of events that may not stop and even lead to my death). She inquired what type of social security benefits I get and I only knew that I received supplemental security income (SSI). She said that I would be able to work and if something bad happened (relapse) I could easily fall back on it. At that point I knew at the minimum I wanted to try to become employed in an acceptable work place.

"I feel wonderful about where I am in my life, especially now that I am employed."

- Daniel Morrow

Something happened with her - the employment specialist - and she had to move or do something else, therefore assigning me to her replacement Ryan Lindley, who has been legendary in finding employment for those with mental illness at Compass House and ColumbiaCare. I explained everything to Ryan and he found authentic answers to all of my questions and his answers were always genuine. He officially and professionally researched what I questioned and confirmed that because I receive SSI benefits I can definitely work while staying eligible. I could always fall back on SSI if necessary. Ryan answered all of my remaining questions and took away the fear of the unknown which had previously caused me to procrastinate. He helped me get "job interview clothing" which gave me confidence when walking into a business looking for work, and he gave me guidance on what to say and how to behave in that business environment. With Ryan's help, I applied to a large



number of businesses for employment and although it took a while, I finally - out of the blue - was asked by a friend if I want to try working for one of his bosses.

Going back to the 2 or 3 phone calls I made prior to ColumbiaCare about working. The social security administration told me I would lose eligibility because at the time, I thought I had standard social security, when I actually received supplemental security income which is or has been especially intended to let people work while retaining eligibility. So, these 2 or 3 times I called, I said I received social security but I should have said I receive supplemental security income. If I had, I would have been told I would stay eligible even if I was working. Standard social security doesn't have that option without losing eligibility eventually, if one makes enough money. A person won't receive benefits at all while working and earning enough, or will receive small amounts of benefits instead of the normal amount if working while on SSI. However, the earned money is far more satisfying and for me, earning my money makes me able to earn much more than what I would have been given from the social security administration as well.



Like I said before, there are a lot of benefits for me to work where I do. Admittedly, a lot of work places are harsh in many ways but mine seems to be perfect for me! I feel wonderful about where I am in my life, especially now that I am employed. I hope more and more people can learn about working on SSI and to a certain extent SSDI. That way they can do something like this too, potentially. If I didn't have Ryan Lindley - my employment specialist - I wouldn't have grabbed that opportunity, for fear of the unknown. Ryan helped me learn what to expect and how to properly handle situations at work and in finding and accepting employment. I would like to give a big public shout out and thank you to him especially for helping me do this and making it possible. I also want to thank ColumbiaCare publicly. I encourage everyone to spread the word that employment can be had without losing eligibility for benefits. There are ways to find work and there is more than just hope out there, there is help. Thank you, Ryan Lindley and thank you, ColumbaCare!"

- Daniel Morrow, Supported Employment Client

Meet Paul...

Paul, a Curry County resident who has experienced the devastations of mental illness and also a gentleman who has experienced the elation of overcoming

his symptoms of mental illness, and moving from homelessness to being housed, and from joblessness to gainful employment.

In his early adult life, Paul amongst other accomplishments successfully navigated the demands of academia and in 1989 earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Four years later he obtained a Master of Science in mathematics from California Polytechnic State University.

Paul had talent and the work ethic to put his skills to use. Unfortunately, about the time he gained his master's degree, Paul began experiencing the effects of manic-depressive bipolar disorder. The disorder was sufficiently severe to generate general dysfunction in most areas of his life. He eventually found himself jobless, homeless, and living on the street for nearly 10 years.

Eventually, he was able to find effective mental health therapy and coupled with medication, Paul began to stabilize. His bipolar disorder became manageable. With assistance, he was able to gain housing and get off the streets. Paul found his way to ColumbiaCare Services and the Supported Employment program where he met Douglas Morgan, a ColumbiaCare Employment Specialist. As they interacted and Doug discovered some of Paul's background, talents and passions, they explored vocational options. None of the vocational options discussed



sparked much excitement in Paul – until Doug raised the possibility of working as a math tutor. Paul's eyes lit up. He was clearly interested.

From that point, this job development duo began exploring options in the math-tutoring arena. One option that arose early was working with the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VR). VR needed math tutors to aid some of their clients, especially those working toward gaining GEDs. Doug guided Paul through the extensive vendor application process.

On February 14, 2013, Paul received notice that VR had approved his application Paul and was now an approved Vendor in Math Tutoring Services for the Oregon Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and could begin delivering services immediately, upon compliance with the required invoicing and reporting protocol. Not only this, but Paul was approved to provide such services at a pay rate of \$25 per hour!

Since then, Paul has been busy tutoring as many pupils as VR will allow him. Both Paul and his pupils report great satisfaction and success in the process. Paul is elated at doing what he loves most – and getting paid for it. His pupils are elated at gaining a capable, quality, and patient math tutor who understands the challenges of overcoming mental health barriers to success.

Meet Jakob ...

After the holidays, Jakob's ColumbiaCare Employment Specialist was contacted by his employer stating that while he was very happy with Jakob's work he had to lay him off because business was slow and they needed to cut back.

He assured the Employment Specialist when business picked up again he would rehire Jakob. The employer said he had this final check ready, so they scheduled a time for Jakob and the Employment Specialist to pick it up.

On the day of the meeting, the employer said they were sorry to let Jakob go because he was really doing a good job. The Employment Specialist said to the employer, "one of the advantages of working with the Supported Employment is that many of our employees are happy to work non-traditional part-time, for example three hours, three days a week". The employers face lit up as he said "really?" The Employment Specialist explained that he could actually reduce Jakob's hours to get the most important task done during the slow season and then when things picked up he could add back more time if he wanted. Additionally, the Employment Specialist offered to do a task analysis and draft a plan to help the employer get his basic needs met within the time frame he could afford.

The employer initially agreed to reduce Jakob's hours from 20 to 10 per week. By the time it was all said and done, Jakob's hours were only reduced to 15 hours per week because the Employment Specialist was able to demonstrate the value of Jakob's work to the business.

The Employment Specialist helped advocate for him and explain to the employer the true value he had in Jakob as an employee. For people learning how to maintain employment, on-going support can truly make a significant difference.



Meet Christina...

STORY TOLD BY CLIENT

"Before coming to [ColumbiaCare's] Supported Employment Program I was lost. I knew I wanted more for myself and my life. I knew that getting into the workforce again was how I was going to accomplish my goals but I had no idea how to get started.

Supported Employment has provided me with the support and resources I needed to set and obtain smaller, realistic goals that ultimately will lead to my main goals. I haven't started an actual paying job yet, but at the moment I am currently a clerical intern at WorkSource Rogue Valley. Since starting with Supported Employment, I have found that I sleep better, I am less depressed, I am being more social, meeting new people, and getting out of my comfort zone. I am learning more and earning certificates for the classes and tests I have already taken which I feel has definitely boosted my resume. I am confident that once I complete this internship I will have the skills necessary to get into a position that suits me.



"My friends and family are extremely happy for and proud of me and all the progress I am continually making. I am super grateful for this program. "

- Christina Coulter

I plan on having a successful life. I plan on one day owning my own home where my future family will live. I plan on traveling someday. My friends and family are extremely happy for and proud of me and all the progress I am continually making. I am super grateful for this program. Without the support and guidance from my Employment Specialist I honestly can't say I would have made it this far, especially not so quickly and confidently."

- Christina Coulter, Supported Employment Client

Meet Weeden...

STORY TOLD BY CLIENT

"My name is Weeden Cole, I live in Milwaukie, OR, and I work at Grocery Outlet. In high school, I did track and really enjoyed distance running. Nowadays, I love cinema and movies. My favorite films are ones that have messages about life – not just surface level topics. I have a teenage son, and we go see a movie at the theater every Sunday.

I was referred to the program by the team at Alder Creek because I had expressed my interest in looking for employment. I officially joined the program back in April of 2016. At the time, Eden Hale was my Supported Employment Specialist that helped get me started. I had many great interviews, but I never was offered a job because my background check never passed. I spent a solid 3 months working with Eden (before she moved to another position) and then began working with Nina Askew for the rest of the time.

As I started to lose hope that an employer would never accept me because of my background, Grocery Outlet decided to give me a chance and offered me a job. I started out as a checker/cashier and then was recently promoted as manager of the dairy department. I am very proud of the work that I have done so far and what I will accomplish in the future.

"You will only get as much out of something as you are willing to put into it."

- Weeden Cole

Nina and I meet about every 3 weeks to check in and see how I'm doing. She has been amazing to work with and is willing to help me in any way possible. It is all the little things she has done for me along the way. She just is a really cool person. I would encourage anyone to get involved with the Supported Employment Program. It has been a great experience.

My way is my way. If you stay true to yourself with the program's process, you will find the right job to fit your needs. Everything happens for a reason, and I am glad that in the beginning I was rejected because I ended up getting the best job for me. I love what I'm doing, I get to work with a great group of people, and there is nothing else I could picture myself doing."

- Weeden Cole, Supported Employment Client



Anonymous Client Story...

This client's story with Supported Employment began with a 19-year-old young woman who was very fearful of stepping into the world of work, but knew it was time for her to move forward in her life. She had struggled with depression and an anxiety disorder since her early teens, and for many years she, alongside her mother, had been caring for relatives in the home. The life of a family caregiver can be 24/7 as it was for herself and her mother. The client's mother wanted her daughter to expand her life outside the confines of her family. She was

willing to apply for any entry level job, but her long term goal was to work in the fashion industry. With this in mind, Julia Peery, ColumbiaCare Employment Specialist, targeted employers that had entry level retail positions in clothing stores.

The client asked to move very slowly and it took her several employment meetings before she felt ready to speak to employers face to face. Her nervousness was never evident as she was friendly and outgoing when addressing an employer. There were some barriers for her such as her health and other severe physical concerns, so a discussion of how to express these health issues with the employer ensued. She ultimately felt that she could explain to them the necessary health information.



After applying online to David's Bridal, the client went into the store to tell the manager that she felt she had "totally messed up" the assessment. The manager was empathetic telling her that it is easy to do that. She ultimately got the job of Sales Associate at David's Bridal and was open and honest about her physical disabilities and how they may occasionally affect her job. Her employer was impressed with how forthright she was and offered her the support she sought. After two months on the job, the client received a promotion to a Dress Specialist. She was blossoming in her work, and her supervisors and co-workers were complimentary and supportive. In her third month, she received another promotion to the coveted position of Stylist.

*turn the page to see our program
referral form!*



SELF-REFERRAL FORM

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

*Please fill out your contact and program information below. **

FIRST NAME:

LAST NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:

1. I am interested in getting a job now for these reasons:

2. My strengths to achieving my employment goals include:

3. I need help overcoming the following employment barriers:

***If you would like to fill out a self-referral form, please ask the front desk for a paper copy.**

For more information about Supported Education and/or Supported Employment, please contact Madonna Werthman, Supported Employment Program Manager at mwerthman@columbiacare.org.