

Getting Back to Work

Tools to Help You Return to the Workforce While Managing Kidney Disease

Adrienne, working dialysis patient



Feel Empowered

Working while managing chronic kidney disease (CKD) can be challenging at times. But did you know that there are potential benefits to being employed? Working when you have CKD or start dialysis may help you feel healthier, happier and more financially secure.

Some people with kidney disease say that one of the most significant benefits they have experienced by working is that they feel a sense of self-worth and are able to stay more engaged in the world around them. In fact, studies show that some people on dialysis who keep their jobs generally experience:

- Lower rates of depression¹
- Fewer hospitalizations²
- Higher scores on general health and vitality tests³

Another study also revealed that people with kidney disease who work full time are more likely to receive a kidney transplant than people who don't have a job⁴.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide tools and tips to help those who want to get back into the workforce navigate their options.

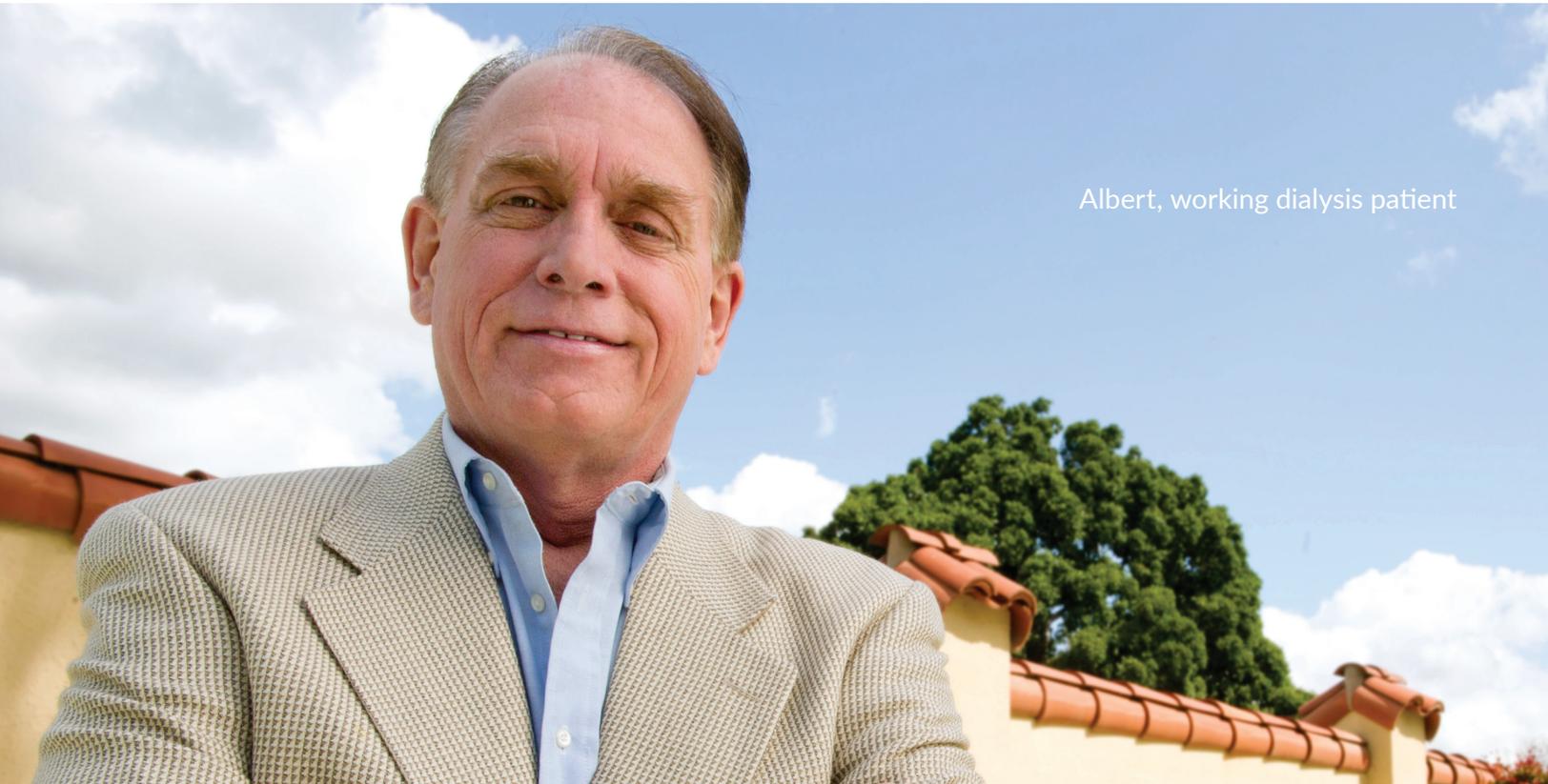
Choose the option below that best describes you and flip to that section to get started.

Are you ...



*Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition of disability: An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

1. Depressed Mood, Usual Activity Level, and Continued Employment after Starting Dialysis. Nancy G. Kutner, Rebecca Zhang, Yijian Huang, and Kirsten L. Johansen, 2012.
2. Physical function, employment and quality of life in end-stage renal disease. Blake C, Codd MB, Cassidy A, O'Meara YM, School of Physiotherapy, Mater Misericordiae Hospital, University College Dublin, Ireland. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/108589784>. J Nephrol; 13(2):142-9, 2000.
3. Dialysis Patients' Mental Health Linked To Heart Health And Longevity. Clinical Journal of the American Society Nephrology (CJASN) April 2012. Ea Wha Kang, MD, PhD, from the Ilsan Hospital in Gyeonggi-do, Korea and Mark Unruh, MD, from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.
4. Sandhu GS, Khattak M, Pavlakis M, Woodward R, Hanto DW, Wasilewski MA, Dimitri N, Goldfarb-Rumyantzev A. (2013 Jun 30) Recipient's unemployment restricts access to renal transplantation. National Center for Biotechnology Information.



Albert, working dialysis patient

Job-Seeker Tools

When looking for a job, questions around how to assess your skill level, craft a resume, and interview effectively may come to mind. Use the following tips and resources to help you answer those questions and give you some suggestions for how to market your skills.

10 Tips When Looking for a Job

1. **Polish your resume.** In many cases, your resume is your first impression. Make it a good one. Prior to starting your job search, make sure your resume is accurate, up to date and includes all the relevant information. To learn what key components to include in a resume, turn to page 5.
2. **Develop your personal “pitch.”** A lot of interviewers start with saying, “Tell me about yourself.” They’re looking for a one- to two-minute explanation of what makes you a standout candidate. In your “pitch,” tell them your work background, your accomplishments, why you want to work at their organization and what your goals are. Write it down, practice it out loud, perfect it and be ready to deliver it on interview day.
3. **Make a list of two or three skills you’d like to improve.** Assess your skill level and determine how you can be better. Employers want to know that you have a thirst for learning and improving. Think about the ways you can build on your skills and become a better employee. Read books, attend seminars or conferences and tell your prospective employer you’re doing so.

4. **Prep for a behavioral interview.** Companies want to know how you'll perform when faced with obstacles. Oftentimes, the employer will conduct a behavioral interview asking questions that will get you to reveal real-life examples that show how you handled a certain situation at work. For example, the interviewer might ask, "Have you encountered a difficult situation with a past supervisor and, if so, how did you handle it?" The reason behind asking these kinds of questions is to predict how you'll handle challenges at their organization.
5. **Do your research.** If you're interviewing for a job, it's fair to assume that you'll be asked why you want to work for the organization. One of the things that might help you stand out is having in-depth knowledge of the organization and the job. Start with the organization's website. Study its products and/or services. Also check out its social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
6. **Request an informational interview.** An informational interview isn't a job interview. Rather, it's a way for you to define your career options or find out more about a company. The best way to find out what a company or job is really like is to talk to people who already work there. Don't expect a job offer out of an informational interview; think of it as additional research.
7. **Network.** Because some jobs aren't posted or advertised publicly, an alternative way for job seekers to uncover career opportunities is through personal connections. Make as many connections as you can with people in your chosen career field and stay in touch with former employers, professors, classmates—anyone who could be a potential resource for a job.
8. **Volunteer.** Not only does a volunteer position help others, it also can help you gain references and may turn into a job opportunity. If you aren't already and can fit it into your schedule, begin volunteering for an organization that focuses on something that interests you. Also be sure to highlight your volunteer experience on your resume and/or job application.
9. **Talk to the right person.** Although many job searches are performed online, there's value in speaking to someone directly about a job you're interested in. Figure out who the best person is to talk to at the company you're pursuing (usually the human resources or hiring manager) and give that person a call. This can help you gain valuable insight about the kind of qualifications they look for, if they have a job that might be a good fit for you and how to apply.
10. **Change your perspective.** Focus on what you can bring to the job. During your interview, promote your skills and vocalize how they will serve the company and help it succeed.

Resume Tip

In addition to detailing tasks you've done, enhance your resume or job application with recognition of your accomplishments, such as being named employee of the month.

The Key Components of a Resume or Job Application

A resume and/or job application tells employers about your skills, education, experience and work history. Use it to highlight facts about yourself that demonstrate you're qualified for the job and that you will bring sought-after skills to the job.

Here are some components that you may want to include:

- Job history
- Education background
- Certifications
- Special job-related skills



Online Resources for Job Seekers

Organization	Services provided
2-1-1 211.org	Find local assistance with training, employment, food pantries, affordable housing and support groups.
AARP Foundation - SCSEP AARP.org/AARP-Foundation/Our-Work/Income/SCSEP 1-800-775-6776	The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) helps low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55+ find work and is available in 21 states.
Benefits.gov 1-800-333-4636	Find out what government benefits you may be eligible for while unemployed.
Career One Stop CareerOneStop.org 1-877-872-5627	Learn how to write a resume, cover letter or thank-you letter. Also get tips on interviewing and negotiating your salary.
Getting Hired GettingHired.com 1-866-352-7481	Look for employment with companies that are committed to hiring people with disabilities.
Hire Disability Solutions HireDS.com 1-800-238-5373	Find a job that will work with your disability.
Local Libraries PublicLibraries.com	Your local library may offer free job search assistance via seminars, webinars, workshops and even one-on-one career coaching in some places.
My Skills My Future MySkillsMyFuture.org 1-800-238-5373	Find job opportunities based on your previous job experience and skills or newly discovered interests.
Occupational Outlook Handbook BLS.gov/ooh 1-202-691-5700	Get detailed information on what specific jobs entail, the training and education needed, as well as earnings and expected job prospects.
United States Department of Labor DOLETA.gov 1-866-487-2365	Learn about federal government job training and worker dislocation programs, as well as how to file for unemployment insurance benefits.
Worker Re-Employment CareerOneStop.org/Reemployment 1-877-872-5627	Learn how to apply for unemployment insurance, as well as what resources can help you with child care, groceries and other necessities.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) organizations support people with disabilities by helping to place them in the workforce. Local or national VR offices can assist you with career exploration and resume development, as well as finding, training for and keeping a job.

The first step you may want to take is to reach out to your local employment network or state vocational rehab agency (see page 9 for a list of agencies).

Additionally, these resources may be able to help:

Ticket to Work

Social Security's Ticket to Work program supports career development for people with disabilities who want to work. Social Security disability beneficiaries age 18 through 64 may qualify for this free and voluntary program. The Ticket to Work program can do the following:

- Help individuals improve their earning potential and progress toward financial independence.
- Connect individuals with the right mix of free employment-support services and approved service providers that are appropriate for their needs.

For more information about Ticket to Work, call 1-866-968-7842 or visit [ChooseWork.ssa.gov](https://www.choosework.ssa.gov).

Federal Employment (Schedule A)

Schedule A is a non-competitive hiring process, meaning that people with qualifying disabilities are distinguished from the general applicant pool and given preferential hiring status for opportunities within the federal government. To qualify, you must meet the qualifications of the job you're interested in and have your disability documented in a letter. Your physician, licensed vocational rehab counselor or any agency that provides you with disability benefits can write the letter on your behalf.

For more information about Schedule A, call (202) 606-2525.

Independent Living Centers

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) help individuals with disabilities maintain their independence by providing job coaching, training and information on disability in the workplace. ILCs may also have information on employers in your area that actively recruit people with disabilities.

To get the contact information for your local ILC, visit [VirtualCIL.net](https://www.virtualcil.net).



Paulita, working dialysis patient

Local Vocational Rehab Agencies by State

In addition to Vocational Rehab, some states have separate agencies that serve individuals who are blind and visually impaired. States with separate agencies are listed near the respective VR listing.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
(800) 441-7607
Rehab.Alabama.gov

Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 478-2815
Labor.State.AK.US/DVR/Home.htm

Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration
(602) 542-3332
DES.AZ.gov/Services/Employment/Arizona-Rehabilitation-Services

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
(501) 296-1600
ARCareerEducation.org/About/Arkansas-Rehabilitation-Services

Arkansas Department of Human Services: Division of Services for the Blind
1-800-960-9270
HumanServices.Arkansas.gov/About-DHS/DBS

California Department of Rehabilitation
1-800-952-5544
Rehab.CAHWNNet.gov

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
DVRColorado.com

Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services
1-800-537-2549
CT.gov/BRS/Site/Default.asp

State of Connecticut Services for the Blind
(860) 602-4000
CT.gov/BESB/Site/Default.asp

Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
DVR.DelawareWorks.com

Delaware Health and Social Services: Division for the Visually Impaired
(302) 255-9800
DHSS.Delaware.gov/DHSS/DVI/

District of Columbia Department on Disability Services
(202) 730-1700
DDS.DC.gov/Service/Vocational-Rehabilitation-Services-RSA

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
1-800-451-4327
www.RehabWorks.org

Florida Division of Blind Services
1-800-342-1828
DBS.MyFlorida.com

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
(404) 232-1998
GVRA.Georgia.gov

Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(808) 586-9745
HumanServices.Hawaii.gov/VocationalRehab

Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
1-800-542-8688
www.ICBVI.State.ID.us/

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(208) 334-3390
VR.Idaho.gov

Illinois Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services
1-800-843-6154
www.DHS.State.IL.US/page.aspx?item=29736

Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
1-800-545-7763
IN.gov/FSSA/2328.htm

Iowa Department for the Blind
1-800-362-2587
Blind.Iowa.gov

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
(515) 281-4211
1-800-532-1486
www.IVRS.Iowa.gov

Kansas Rehabilitation Services Commission
1-833-765-2003
DCF.KS.gov/Services/RS/Pages/Employment-Services.aspx

Kentucky Office for the Blind
1-800-372-7172
Blind.KY.gov

Kentucky Vocational Rehabilitation
1-800-372-7172
OVR.KY.gov

Louisiana Workforce Commission
(225) 342-3111
http://www.LAWorks.net/

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
(207) 623-6799
Maine.gov/Rehab

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services
1-888-554-0334
DORS.State.MD.US

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
1-800-245-6543
MASS.gov/EOHHS/gov/departments/MRC/

Massachusetts State Commission for the Blind
1-800-392-6450
MASS.gov/MCB

Michigan Commission for the Blind (800) 292-4200
Michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-28077_28313---,00.html

Michigan Rehabilitation Services
1-800-605-6722
Michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-25392---,00.html

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
1-800-657-3858
MN.gov/DEED/
Minnesota State Services for

the Blind

1-800-652-9000
MNSSB.org

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

1-800-443-1000
MDRS.MS.gov/Pages/default.aspx

Missouri Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

1-800-592-6004
DSS.MO.gov/FSD/RSB/index.htm

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1-877-222-8963
DESE.MO.gov/VR

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation

1-877-296-1197
DPHHS.MT.gov/DETD/VocRehab/index.shtml

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

1-877-809-2419
NCBVI.NE.gov

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

1-877-637-3422
VR.Nebraska.gov

Nevada Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

(702) 486-5230 or (775) 687-6860
DETR.State.NV.US/Rehab%20Pages/voc%20rehab.htm

New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation

1-800-299-1647
Education.NH.gov/Career/Vocational

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

(609) 659-9045
NJ.gov/labor

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

www.DVR.State.NM.us/

New York Adult Career and Continuing Education Services: Vocational Rehabilitation

1-800-222-5627
ACCES.NYSED.gov/VR

New York State Commission for the Blind

1-866-871-3000
OCFS.NY.gov/Main/CB

North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

1-800-689-9090
NCDHHS.gov/DVRS

North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1-800-755-2745
ND.gov/DHS/DVR

Ohio: Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

1-800-282-4536
OOD.Ohio.gov

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

1-800-845-8476
OKRehab.org

Oregon Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

(503) 945-5600
Oregon.gov/DHS/Employment/VR

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

DLI.PA.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/OVR

Puerto Rico Vocational Rehabilitation Administration

(787) 723-3131
www.OCIF.GoBierno.PR

Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services

(401) 421-7005
www.ORS.RI.gov

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

1-800-832-7526
SCVRD.net

South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services

(800) 265-9684
DHS.SD.gov/DRS/VocRehab/VR.aspx

Tennessee Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

(615) 313-4891
Tennessee.gov/HumanServ/Rehab/VRS

Texas Workforce Commission: Vocational Rehabilitation Services

1-800-628-5115
TWC.Texas.gov/Jobseekers/Vocational-Rehabilitation-Services

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

1-801-526- 9675
USOR.Utah.gov

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1-866-879-6757
VocRehab.Vermont.gov

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

1-800-552-5019
VADARS.org

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

1-800-622-2155
VDBVI.org

Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1-800-637-5627
DSHS.wa.gov/DVR

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

1-800-642-8207
WVDRS.org

Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1-800-442-3477
DWD.Wisconsin.gov/DVR

Wyoming Vocational Rehabilitation

(307) 777-7386
WyomingWorkforce.org/Workers/VR

Disability 101

The definition of disability under the Social Security Administration is strict. To be considered disabled, you must meet the following guidelines:

1. You cannot do work that you did before.
2. You cannot adjust to other work because of your medical condition(s).
3. Your disability has lasted or is expected to last for at least one year or to result in death.

The Types of Social Security Disability Insurance

A person with chronic kidney disease may qualify for either Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

SSDI

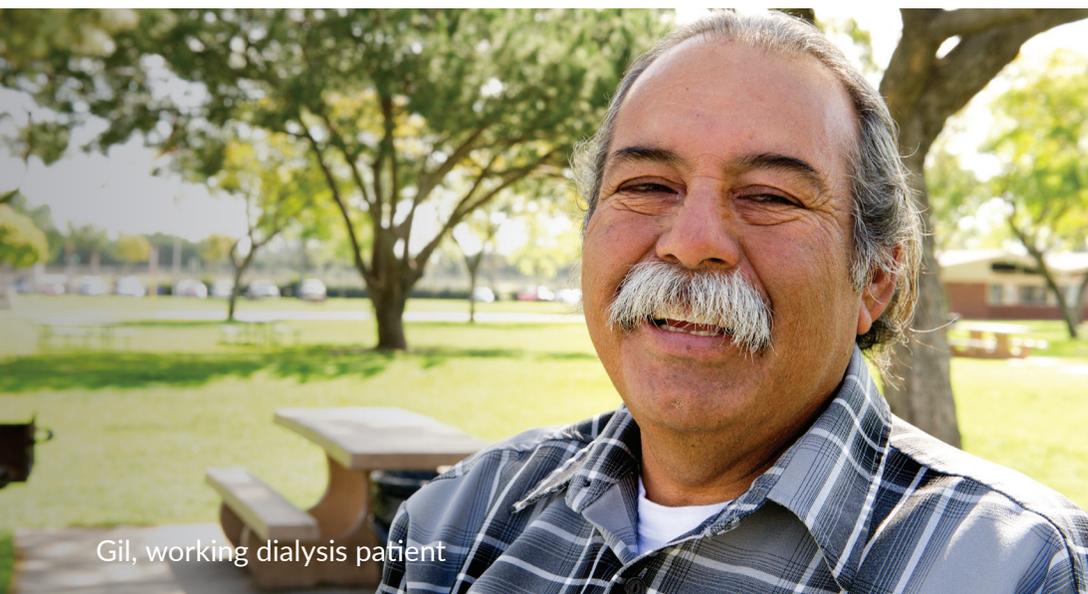
To qualify for SSDI benefits, which are available regardless of age and income, you must first have worked long enough in jobs covered by Social Security (or earned work credits based on self-employment) and must have a medical condition that meets Social Security's definition of disability (mentioned above).

In general, SSDI pays monthly benefits to people who are unable to work for a year or more because of a disability. Benefits usually continue until you are able to work again on a regular basis. SSDI may cover only 30 to 40 percent of your current wages.

SSI

SSI is available to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. These benefits also are available to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits. It provides financial assistance to help meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter.

You can apply for SSDI and SSI via the Social Security Administration (SSA) website, or if you prefer, you can apply by calling 1-800-772-1213. Representatives there can make an appointment for your application to be taken over the phone or at any Social Security Office.



Gil, working dialysis patient

Learn More About Disability Benefits

Visit ssa.gov/benefits/disability or call 1-800-772-1213.



2000 16th St.
Denver, CO 80202

Get help answering your employment and kidney disease questions.
Contact the Patient Advocate Helpline at **1-888-405-8915**.