Getting Back to Work

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

Working dialysis patient, Adrienne
Feel Empowered

Maintaining a job while managing chronic kidney disease (CKD) can be challenging at times—and for some, it can even be overwhelming. But did you know that there can be significant physical, emotional and financial benefits to staying employed? Continuing to work when you have CKD or even start dialysis could help you feel healthier, happier and more financially secure.

Some people with kidney disease say that one of the biggest benefits of working is that they feel a sense of self-worth and are able to stay engaged in the world around them. In fact, studies show that some people on dialysis who keep their jobs generally experience a lower rate of depression\(^1\), have fewer hospitalizations\(^2\) and score higher on general health and vitality tests\(^3\). 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 job\(^4\).

The purpose of this guide is to provide tools and information to help navigate options for those who want to get back into the workforce.

Choose the description that best fits you and flip to that section to get started.

Are you ...
- Are you not considered to have a disability and are looking to get back into the workforce?
  - Go to Job-Seeker Tools on p. 3

- Are you currently considered disabled?
  - Go to Vocational Rehabilitation on p. 8

- Unsure of whether or not you qualify for disability?
  - Go to Disability 101 on p. 12

---


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.

Job-Seeker Tools

When looking for a job while managing CKD, questions around how to assess your skill level, how to craft a resume and how to interview effectively may come to mind. The following tips and resources can help you answer those questions and give you some guidance so you can better market your skills.

10 Tips for Getting the Job You Want

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, is 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 interviews start with the interviewer saying, “Tell me about yourself.” When an interviewer says this, 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 in the position you’re interviewing for, so oftentimes they’ll conduct a behavioral interview. During this kind of interview, the employer will ask questions that will get you to reveal real-life examples that show how you handled a certain situation on the job. 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 objective behind asking these kinds of questions is to predict how you’ll handle challenges at their organization. Before your interview, practice answering these kinds of questions.

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 will make 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 websites such as 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 many jobs aren’t posted or advertised publicly, one of the best ways 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 lead.

8. **Volunteer.** Not only is it good to help others, volunteer positions can help you gain references or turn into jobs. If you aren’t already and can fit it into your schedule, begin volunteering for an organization that focuses on something that interests you. And 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 about a job you’re interested in. Figure out who is the best person to talk to at the company you’re pursuing (usually the human resources or hiring manager) and give that person a call. The worst that can happen is they don’t have time to speak with you. The best that can happen is you gain valuable insight about the kind of qualifications they look for or if they have a job that might be a good fit for you.

10. **Change your attitude.** Instead of focusing solely on what a job can bring to you, focus on what you can bring to the job. Develop a service-orientated mentality and attitude. During your interview, vocalize how your skills will serve the company and help it succeed.
The Key Components of a Resume or Job Application

A resume and/or job application tells employers about your skills, experience and work history. Use it to highlight facts that prove you’re qualified for the job and that you will bring sought-after skills to the job. Here are some of the components that you may want to include in your resume, or that you may be asked for in an application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resume</th>
<th>Job Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Information</strong></td>
<td>Name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number, email address</td>
<td>Name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number, email address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you eligible to work in the United States?</td>
<td>Are you eligible to work in the United States?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you’re under the age of 18, do you have an employment certificate?</td>
<td>If you’re under the age of 18, do you have an employment certificate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you been convicted of a felony within the last five years (information about convictions varies based on state law)?</td>
<td>Have you been convicted of a felony within the last five years (information about convictions varies based on state law)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and Experience</strong></td>
<td>School(s) attended, degrees, graduation dates</td>
<td>School(s) attended, degrees, graduation dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certifications</td>
<td>Certifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills and qualifications</td>
<td>Skills and qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment History (current and prior positions)</strong></td>
<td>Employer (including address, phone, email and supervisor’s name)</td>
<td>Employer (including address, phone, email and supervisor’s name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job title and responsibilities</td>
<td>Job title and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starting and ending dates of employment</td>
<td>Starting and ending dates of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for leaving</td>
<td>Reason for leaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permission to contact previous employer</td>
<td>Permission to contact previous employer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Online Resources for Job Seekers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>How It Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-1-1</td>
<td>Find local assistance with training, employment, food pantries, affordable housing and support groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits.gov</td>
<td>Find out what government benefits you may be eligible for while unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-333-4636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career One Stop</td>
<td>Learn how to write a resume, cover letter or thank-you letter. Also get tips on interviewing and negotiating your salary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerOneStop.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-877-872-5627</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Hired</td>
<td>Look for employment with companies that are committed to hiring people with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GettingHired.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-866-352-7481</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire Disability Solutions</td>
<td>Find a job that will work around your disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HireDS.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Libraries</td>
<td>Your local library may offer free job search assistance via seminars, webinars, workshops and even one-on-one career coaching in some places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PublicLibraries.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Skills My Future</td>
<td>Find job opportunities based on your previous job experience and skills or newly discovered interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySkillsMyFuture.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-238-5373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Job Bank</td>
<td>Search jobs by occupation and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NationalJobBank.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Outlook Handbook</td>
<td>Get detailed information on what specific jobs entail, the training and education needed, as well as earnings and expected job prospects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLS.gov/ooh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-202-691-5700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Department of Labor</td>
<td>Learn about federal government job training and worker dislocation programs, as well as how to file for unemployment insurance benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLETA.gov</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-866-4-USA-DOL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Re-Employment</td>
<td>Learn how to apply for unemployment insurance, as well as what resources can help you with child care, groceries and other necessities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerOneStop.org/Reemployment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-877-872-5627</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stay employed, stay healthy. Learn more by calling 1-888-405-8915
Create an Action Plan

Start looking for work by making a plan to:

- Create a resume and apply for jobs
- Schedule interviews
- Research the positions prior to the interviews
- Ask interviewers for their business card so you are able to follow up after the interview
- Send thank-you notes within 24 hours after interviews
- Follow up on the status of the interviews within seven days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My next steps:</th>
<th>Due date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 qualify for this free and voluntary program. The Ticket to Work program:
- Can help you improve your earning potential and progress toward financial independence.
- Can connect you with the right mix of free employment-support services and approved service providers that will best fit your needs.

For more information about Ticket to Work, call 1-866-968-7842 or visit ChooseWork.net/About/Index.

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 positions 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 office, visit VirtualCIL.net/CILS.
## Local Vocational Rehab Agencies by State

In addition to VR, 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>VR Agency Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Department of Rehabilitation Services (800) 441-7607 Rehab.Alabama.gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (800) 478-2815 Labor.State.AK.US/DVR/Home.htm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Services Administration (800) 563-1221 <a href="https://www.azdes.gov/rsa/vr/">https://www.azdes.gov/rsa/vr/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Services (800) 330-0632 ARSInfo.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Department of Human Services: Division of Services for the Blind (800) 960-9270 <a href="http://www.State.AR.US/DHS/DSB">www.State.AR.US/DHS/DSB</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Department of Rehabilitation (800) 952-5544 <a href="http://www.rehab.cahwnet.gov">www.rehab.cahwnet.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (866) 870-4595 DVRColorado.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Department of Rehabilitation Services (800) 537-2549 CT.gov/BRS/Site/Default.asp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (800) 451-4327 RehabWorks.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Division of Blind Services (800) 672-7038 DBS.MyFlorida.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (866) 489-0001 GVRA.Georgia.gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (808) 586-9744 HumanServices.Hawaii.gov/VocationalRehab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (800) 542-8688 icbvi.state.id.us/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (208) 334-3390 VR.Idaho.gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (219) 864-8163 IN.gov/FSSA/2328.htm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Department for the Blind (800) 362-2587 <a href="http://www.blind.state.ia.us/">http://www.blind.state.ia.us/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stay employed, stay healthy. Learn more by calling 1-888-405-8915
Stay employed, stay healthy. Learn more by calling 1-888-405-8915

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
(515) 281-4211
http://ivrs.iowa.gov/

Kansas Rehabilitation Services Commission
(866) 213-9079
DCF.KS.gov/Services/RS/Pages/Employment-Services.aspx

Kentucky Office for the Blind
(800) 321-6668
Blind.KY.gov

Kentucky Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 372-7172
OVR.KY.gov

Louisiana Workforce Commission
(225) 342-3111
http://www.laworks.net/workforce/LRS/LRS_Main.asp

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
(207) 623-6799
http://www.maine.gov/rehab/

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

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
(800) 245-6543
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mrc/

Massachusetts State Commission for the Blind
(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
(800) 605-6722
Michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-25392---,00.html

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
(800) 657-3858
DEED.State.MN.us/Rehab

Minnesota State Services for the Blind
(800) 652-9000
mnsssb.org

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
(800) 443-1000
www.MDRS.ms.gov/Pages/default.aspx

Missouri Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind
(800) 592-6004
DSS.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/index.htm

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(877) 222-8963
DESE.MO.gov/VR

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation
(877) 296-1197
DPHHS.mt.gov/detd/vocrehab/index.shtml

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
(877) 809-2419
NCBVI.NE.gov

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation
(877) 637-3422
VR.NE.gov/index.html

Nevada Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation
(775) 684-4040
DETR.State.NV.US/Rehab%20Pages/voc%20rehab.htm

New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 299-1647
Education.NH.gov/career/vocational/

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
(609) 292-5987
http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 224-7005
http://dvrgetsjobs.com/Pages/Index.aspx
New York Adult Career and Continuing Education Services: Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 222-5627
acces.nysed.gov/vr

New York Commission for the Blind
(518) 474-6812

North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
(800) 689-9090
NCDHHS.gov/DVRS

North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 755-2745
ND.gov/DHS/DVR

Ohio: Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
(800) 282-4536
OOD.Ohio.gov

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
(800) 845-8476
OKRehab.org

Oregon Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
(877) 277-0513
Oregon.gov/DHS/VR

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 442-6351

Puerto Rico Vocational Rehabilitation Administration
(787) 728-6620
GoBierno.PR/GPRPortal/Inicio

Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services
(401) 421-7005
www.ORS.State.ri.us

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department
(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
www.Tennessee.gov/humanserv/rehab/vrs.html

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
(800) 628-5115
DARS.State.TX.us

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation
(800) 473-7530
USOR.Utah.gov/

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(866) 879-6757
VocRehab.Vermont.gov

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
(800) 552-5019
VADRS.org

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
(800) 622-2155
VDBVI.org

Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 637-5627
DSHS.wa.gov/dvr/

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services
(800) 642-8207
WVDRS.org

Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(800) 442-3477
DWD.Wisconsin.gov/DVR

Wyoming Vocational Rehabilitation
(307) 777-7389
WyomingWorkforce.org/Contact/Pages/Vocational-Rehabilitation.aspx

Stay employed, stay healthy. Learn more by calling 1-888-405-8915
Disability 101

The definition of disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act 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 Kinds 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 cash 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 low-income adults over 65, as well as low-income disabled individuals. SSI is not tied to an individual’s work record; instead it pays based on financial need. It provides cash to help meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter.

Learn More About Disability Benefits
SSA.gov/Disability

Stay employed, stay healthy. Learn more by calling 1-888-405-8915
Get help answering your employment and kidney disease questions:
Contact the Patient Advocate Helpline at
1-888-405-8915