**Background**

**Youth with visual impairments** have particularly low employment rates. Research shows that **finding a job independently** is beneficial, yet these youth often rely on others to find jobs for them.

The **goals of this program** are to:

1) Develop the job search skills of youth with visual impairments

2) Strengthen youths’ job search self-efficacy and self-confidence

3) Encourage a proactive approach to finding employment

4) Help youth develop strategies to overcome barriers to employment

**Putting Your Best Foot Forward**

A **job search skills training program** designed for youth with visual impairments, ages 16 to 22 years

About **40 hours of content** focusing on various aspects of job-seeking ranging from identifying strengths and skills to starting a new job

Two trainers deliver the content through group and individual activities

**(see examples on next page)**

**Program Principles**

**Active learning:**

Youth use their knowledge & skills to find answers & solve problems

**Referent power:**

Trainers develop a motivating influence by building respect & trust

**Enhancing self-efficacy:**

Youth observe others perform behaviors well, practice the behaviors, & get positive feedback

**Building social support:**

Trainers model supportive behaviors; youth get positive feedback from trainers & each other

**Overcoming barriers to success:**

Youth prepare to overcome job-seeking challenges or setbacks

Researchers at the National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision developed the *Putting Your Best Foot Forward* materials based on the *School to Work* program. The method is based on active learning principles and the group activity model developed by the Michigan Prevention Research Center in the JOBS program. The JOBS program has extensive evidence of its effectiveness in improving job obtainment for its participants.

Putting Your Best Foot Forward

NRTC logo: National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision

Mississippi State University logo

**Main Topics and Sample Activities**

**Identifying strengths & skills & the employer’s point of view**

Youth work in **small groups** to evaluate completed job applications

Youth **set goals** for the program and complete a **personal data sheet**

**Presenting your skills & thinking like an employer**

Youth **brainstorm** features of a good resume and **discuss** disclosure strategies

Youth practice filling out **job applications** and write a **resume**

**Finding job vacancies**

Trainers use **role-play examples** to model calling personal contacts for job leads

Youth call their **personal contacts** and search for **job openings** on the internet

**Preparing for a job interview**

Youth **interview an employer** to learn about interview and hiring processes

Youth **call employers** to ask about job openings and develop a **transportation plan**

**The job interview as a whole & starting a new job**

Youth interview each other through a **role-play exercise**

Youth identify **accommodations** for specific jobs and **interview with employers**

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