

Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Preparing for Self-Employment

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For high school students considering self-employment, the future looks bright. By 2026, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects, self-employment will grow 7.9% in sectors such as maintenance, construction, management, transportation, financial operations, arts, media, and more.

To meet their self-employment potential, students must understand the process, necessary forms, marketing strategies, and much more.

There's a lot to master—but success is attainable!

What is self-employment?

Self-employment means you earn a living working for yourself rather than for an employer who pays you wages. Self-employment comes in a variety of business structures such as independent contractor, sole proprietor, or in a partnership, and each model has pros and cons. Working for yourself requires you to be highly skilled in a particular industry or service area. Succeeding as your own boss takes knowledge of tax law, support from family and others, an effective marketing strategy, research, start-up funding, and sales forecasting, to name only a few elements. As the would-be business owner, it is your responsibility to set yourself up for success.

Nuts and bolts

If self-employment is in your future, there are a few nuts and bolts to understand:

- You are responsible for reporting earnings to Social Security (SSA) and on annual taxes. The self-employment tax rate is 15.3% of gross sales (about 12% goes to SSA, and about 3% goes to Medicare).
- Successful self-employment requires writing a roadmap—also known as a business plan.

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- Having a team of supportive people is important. Think about who these people are and begin asking them for help.
- Think about start-up funding to cover any costs as you launch a business.

Who can help you become self-employed?

While it may seem overwhelming, there are people who can help. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) can assist would-be entrepreneurs develop a business plan, prepare for a business launch, and provide start-up funding. [Contacting your local VR](#) is an excellent first step. Personnel providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are another source for support. [Pre-ETS providers](#) can assist a student by providing a few service activities related to entrepreneurship.

Transition Services and Activities

Need help figuring out transition services or activities? No problem! Check out our free publication, [Entrepreneurship Education for Pre-Employment Transition Service Providers](#). In addition, there are [several resource collections](#) to guide your way.

There's a lot you'll need to know when contemplating self-employment, but with the right preparation, support, and a little persistence, success is within reach.

Resources

- [Bureau of Labor Statistics Forecast](#)
 - [Indiana Service Corps of Retired Executives](#)
 - [Self-Employment: What to Know to be Your Own Boss](#)
 - [U.S. Small Business Administration Start Up Guide](#)
 - [Vocational Rehabilitation's Self-Employment Guide](#)
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What's Next? is a project of the Center on Community Living and Careers and the Indiana Department of Education.

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