

Aspire's Employment Training Program: FAQs

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What is the Employment Training Program?

The Employment Training Program is a 10-week program that helps people with disabilities gain employment in a number of industries. During these 10 weeks (about 2.5 months), trainees will practice skills in Aspire's simulated work environments, improve their fitness, and learn how to get ready for a job. After training, trainees will have a guaranteed 8-week paid internship at one of Aspire's employer partners. If they do well, they may be offered a permanent job!

What started this program?

The program began with one of our employment partners, [Wesco](#), who recognized a need for dependable and skilled employees in the distribution industry. Together, we worked to create a training program designed to prepare people with disabilities for these types of roles.

Through research and experience, we've found that many people with disabilities excel in this type of work, which often involves structured routines, hands-on tasks, and careful attention to safety rules and regulations.

What industries does the training program focus on?

Our Employment Training Program prepares trainees for careers in multiple industries, including **distribution** and **food services**, with plans to expand into additional industries in the future!

How is the program different from existing programs?

This program builds on the Weinberg Career Academy by focusing on a specific industry. Throughout the program, trainees will visit real work locations from industry leaders to learn more about potential jobs within the specific industry.

This training also **guarantees** an internship at the end of the program. If trainees perform well during the internship, they may be offered permanent employment!

Where is the training program located?

The training program is located at Aspire's [Weinberg Career Academy](#) in Hillside, IL.

We have built a state-of-the-art mock warehouse environment that feels like a real, functioning warehouse space. For the food service industry, trainees gain hands-on experience in a functioning kitchen and restaurant space designed to give them a true feel for both front and back-of-house roles.

When does the program start?

The program's cohorts occur on a quarterly basis, with 4 cohorts in a year per industry.

Who is eligible to take part in the training?

Anyone who is over 18 years old and has a documented disability can join. It is **FREE!** There are some complexities with funding, so people who attend an Aspire Academy (or another day program) would not be able to do both at the same time.

If you know someone who's interested, please reach out to our admissions team to apply - services@aspirechicago.com

How is the program funded?

The program is funded by a federal grant from the Department of Education's Disability Innovation Fund (DIF). The grant can only be used for this program. The grant covers team member pay and all trainee fees, **making the program FREE for trainees!**

What does the internship pay?

After successfully completing the 10-week training program, trainees transition into paid internships with one of our employer partners. **Interns earn \$17 per hour** and typically work between 12 and 20 hours per week, with shifts lasting at least five hours per day, including a 30-minute lunch break.

Is transportation provided?

Transportation is not provided directly, but we do offer support. This can include training on using services like PACE, CTA, or Uber. We also guide trainees through the process of applying for the RTA Paratransit Program, which provides discounted rides for those who qualify.

Who would be a great candidate for this?

This program is designed for people who are ready to build meaningful careers and enjoy hands-on work. It's a great fit for individuals looking for the right job opportunity, who enjoy staying active, and who take pride in following clear, repeatable processes that lead to great results. Ideal candidates are team-oriented, enjoy challenging themselves, and like work that keeps them engaged and moving throughout the day!

Why is Aspire doing this?

Our mission is to connect people with disabilities to ever-greater possibilities. The Employment Training Program allows us to do that. This program, developed with top companies, helps businesses find quality employees and provides jobs for people with disabilities. It's a win-win!

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