

New Online Course from.....

START-UP

Overview of Self-Employment for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities



The success rate of small business is surprisingly high, despite widely accepted folklore to the contrary. The U.S. Small Business Administration reports that over 79% of small businesses are still operating after the initial eight years. And, the long term trend in employment is smaller firms. Self employment and small business are a defining characteristic of America's economic landscape, and present a tremendous opportunity for those most challenged by the competitive labor market.

Self-employment is increasingly recognized as a viable employment option for people with disabilities. Self employment for individuals with disabilities involves minimizing the fears of the prospective business-owner, as well as the rehabilitation and local small business development professionals

who assist them. A person does not need to "get ready" to own a business, if a customized approach is used. In customized self-employment, the focus is on the talents and interests of the individual and identifying personal assets. Self-employment uses a strength not deficit-based outlook.

A person who has all the necessary skills to own and operate a business may be a rare entrepreneur! What is important is to identify each individual's strengths and talents as well as support needs while assembling a team to facilitate self-employment. Self-employment is all about customized supports. The basics are a business plan, a solid marketing plan, management skills, and capital. Where the entrepreneur can lead the way and where support is needed will vary from one person to another

and from one situation to another. Some individuals may need more assistance with start up activities; others may need support with operations; still others may need ongoing assistance using a variety of workplace supports. What is crucial is to provide customized supports to assist the person in moving forward with business ownership.

This new online course will cover the basics and frequently asked questions that individuals with disabilities may have when thinking about starting a business. The course content is appropriate for individuals with disabilities as well as those who support them including family members, community rehabilitation providers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, employment specialists, and others. The course will cover the following topics.....

Some of the questions that should be answered by participating in this course are as follows:

- What types of assessments are best to determine if someone is right for self-employment?
- Where can I get money to start a business?
- Can vocational rehabilitation agencies support self-employment?
- How can a person obtain support from community, and business-related agencies such as SBDCs?
- Should families be involved in someone's small business?

The course will cover these important topics on self-employment and more...

- Strategies for Exploration and the Discovery Process
- Writing a Business Plan
- Conducting a Feasibility Study
- Accessing Community Supports
- Identifying Funding
- Using Work Incentives

- Lesson One:** Self-Employment Overview
- Lesson Two:** Social Security Work Incentives, Medicaid Waivers, and Self-Employment
- Lesson Three:** Accessing Support Services from Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Rehabilitation Programs
- Lesson Four:** Community Supports for Self-Employment
- Lesson Five:** Quick Launch Business Start-Up

Overview Information: ALL instruction is web based. The lectures are in audio format, and you must have the technical requirements for the course as described below to benefit from the course. Information for a specific lesson will be available by 9:00 am (eastern) on the first date listed for any given lesson. The course includes five lessons. Each lesson lasts one week

and should take approximately four to five hours to complete. Weekly lessons an online discussion forum, audio lectures, and select readings. All participants will be assigned to groups. These groups will be asked to correspond with each other during the course on the course bulletin boards. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of nationally known experts in self-employment.

Participants can earn 1.6 CEUs or 16 CRCs upon course completion. A certificate of completion will be issued to all participants who participate in the discussion boards and complete a final essay on the course materials. Participants MUST finish all required assignments within the specified time frame in order to be eligible to receive CEUs, CRCs and/or the certificate of completion from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Technical Requirements: You will be able to log on to the course at any time of the day and access the audio lectures. Each person MUST have an individual e-mail account, or we cannot accept your registration. If the individual does not already have an account, a free one can be set up through <https://login.yahoo.com/> or other free services. We send updates on the course activities and feedback on course activities through e-mail contact. Participants must be able to receive and send

messages in order to benefit from this online experience.

Cost: The first 20 individuals to register online will receive a free registration. After this number registers, the cost will be \$60 per person.

<http://www.start-up-usa.biz/registration/webcourse/index.cfm>

In addition, scholarships are available for individuals with disabilities to participate

at no charge. Please e-mail Katherine Inge at kinge@vcu.edu if you would like to request a scholarship. All requests for participation at no charge remain confidential.

Registration: Register online using a Credit Card over our secure server. Or, complete the following form and mail to:

Attention: Jan Hensel-Smith
VCU-RRTC
PO Box 842011
Richmond, VA 23284-2011

Checks must be made payable to Virginia Commonwealth University.

Total Number of Participants: _____ Total Amount: _____

Method of Payment: _____ Check
_____ Purchase Order (PO #: _____)
_____ Visa
_____ Master Card

Credit Card number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Print Cardholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Cardholder's Telephone Number: _____

Tell us who is registering for the course: (Use additional sheet of paper if needed.)

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Name of Participant: _____ | Name of Participant: _____ |
| E-mail Address: _____ | E-mail Address: _____ |
| Phone #: _____ | Phone #: _____ |
| Name of Participant: _____ | Name of Participant: _____ |
| E-mail Address: _____ | E-mail Address: _____ |
| Phone #: _____ | Phone #: _____ |
| Name of Participant: _____ | Name of Participant: _____ |
| E-mail Address: _____ | E-mail Address: _____ |
| Phone #: _____ | Phone #: _____ |

Questions: Technical questions should be directed to Doug Erickson at 804 827-0760 or doerickson@vcu.edu Content and other questions about course requirements should be directed to Katherine Inge at 804 828-5956 VOICE, 804-828-2494 TTY, or [kinge@vcu.edu].



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