

# Skills to Pay the Bills:

## Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success



### AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR YOUTH PREPARING TO ENTER THE WORLD OF WORK

In all occupations and industries, interpersonal skills—such as teamwork, decision-making and communication—are critical for employment success. Yet, many youth do not have exposure to training focused on such “soft” skills prior to entering the workforce. **Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success** is a creative and universally designed program of interactive, hands-on activities that educators and youth service professionals can use to help youth prepare for employment, regardless of their interests or intended career paths.

**Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success** was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP); however, its content is applicable to youth both with and without disabilities. It is available in both English and Spanish.

[www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills](http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills)



Disability Policy.  
Employment Practice.  
**Full Inclusion.**

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Success is targeted at youth ages 14 to 21 in both in-school and out-of-school environments. The program comprises modular, hands-on, engaging activities framed around six key skill areas:

- **Communication**
- **Enthusiasm and Attitude**
- **Teamwork**
- **Networking**
- **Problem Solving and Critical Thinking**
- **Professionalism**

The curriculum is appropriate for all youth, regardless of disability or differences in learning style, and as such was designed with an inclusive spirit and a structure supporting universal design for learning. Each exercise consists of an activity designed to get young people thinking about, practicing and discussing important attributes necessary for career and personal success—soft skills.



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**“It was an experience  
going beyond my  
wildest dreams”**

–Brandon Pursely (student)

**“The Soft Skills activities  
are fabulous. They  
cover the areas that are  
desperately needed in  
today’s workforce”**

–Virginia Dever (facilitator)