Northeast Texas Pathways

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

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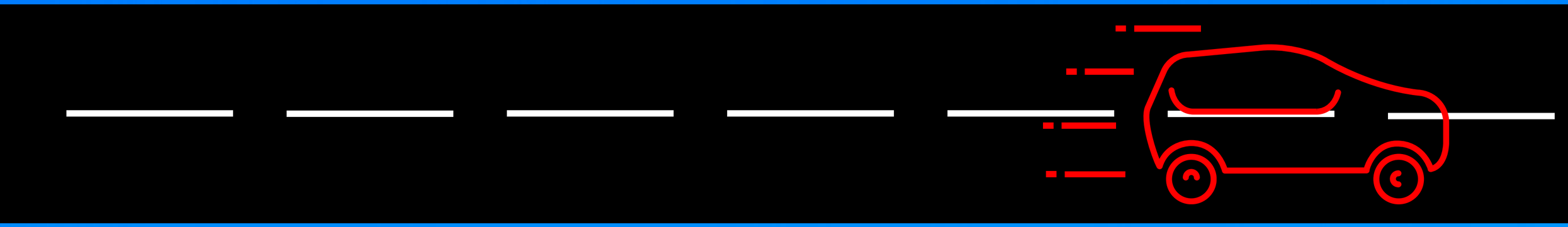


Guide for Students and Job Seekers: Finding and Maximizing your Work-Based Learning Experience

Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs bridge the gap between academic learning and practical work experience, providing benefits for both employers and employees.

Guiding Principles of Work Based Learning

Align to Career Pathways

Work-based learning experiences build knowledge, skills, and competencies aligned with in-demand careers and support participants in advancing along career pathways, leading to measurable economic success.

Identify and Validate Skills to be Gained

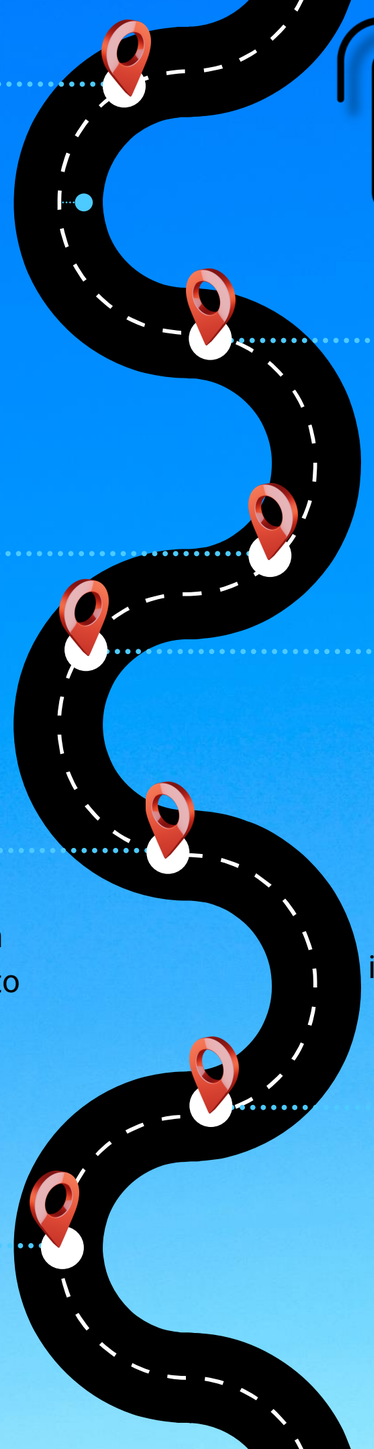
WBL programs are more valuable to both participants and employers when everyone has a clear understanding of the skills that participants are expected to attain and when there are clear guidelines for verifying that participants have mastered those skills.

Support Academic Progress and Achievement

By demonstrating the real-world value of classroom learning and providing students with opportunities to apply and contextualize their knowledge and skills, WBL supports and accelerates academic progress and achievement at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Measure Shared Progress

Employer, participant, and program outcomes are measured and monitored using metrics that are transparent and hold all partners accountable for success



Incorporate Meaningful Job Tasks

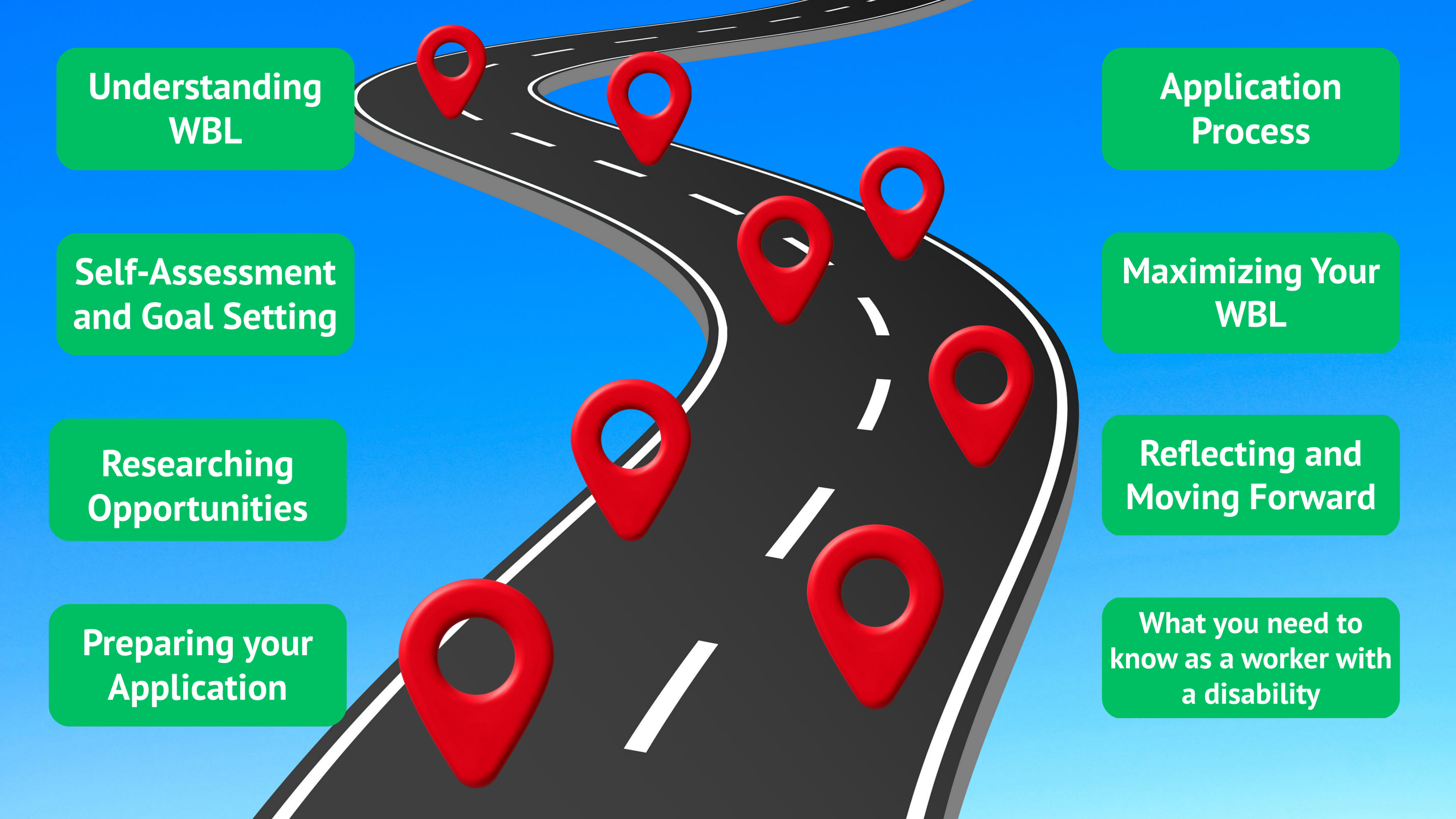
Participants in work-based learning must have opportunities to engage in appropriately complex and industry-relevant tasks that build career skills and knowledge.

Reward Skill Gains and offer Compensation

Skill development is recognized and rewarded through mechanisms such as opportunities to take on greater responsibility, high school or postsecondary credit, opportunities to transition to permanent employment, and promotions for incumbent workers. Participants earn compensation as appropriate for the work they complete.

Integrate Opportunities to Develop Professional Networks

Intentionally embed opportunities to build professional networks within WBL experiences and ensure that participants are educated about the value of professional networks to their future careers.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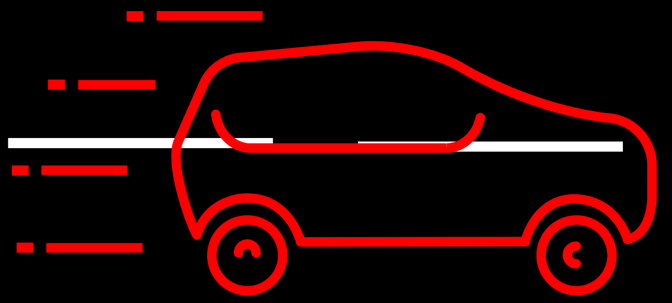
What you need to know as a worker with a disability

Understanding WBL



Types of WBL Programs

- Internships: Short-term work experiences related to your field of study Development
- Apprenticeships: Structured programs combining on-the-job training with classroom instruction

Understanding WBL

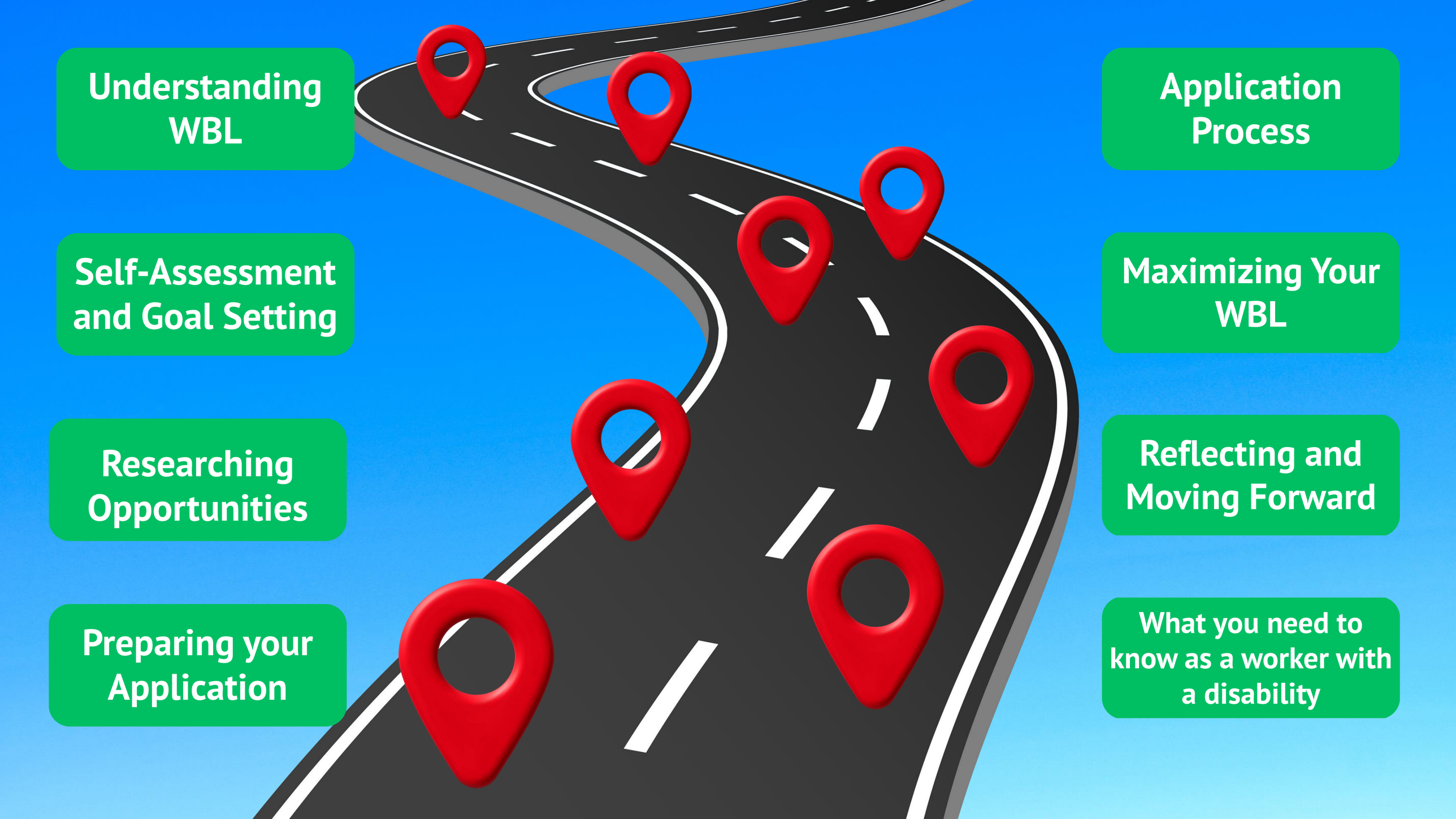
Types of WBL Programs

- Job Shadowing: Observing professionals in their work environment to gain insights
- Cooperative Education (Co-ops): Alternating periods of academic study and work experience

Understanding WBL

Types of WBL Programs

- Project-Based Learning: Real-world projects provided by employers that solve actual business problems
- And MANY more!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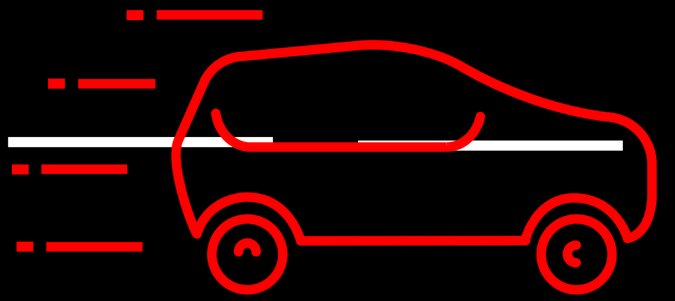
Self Assessment and Goal Setting



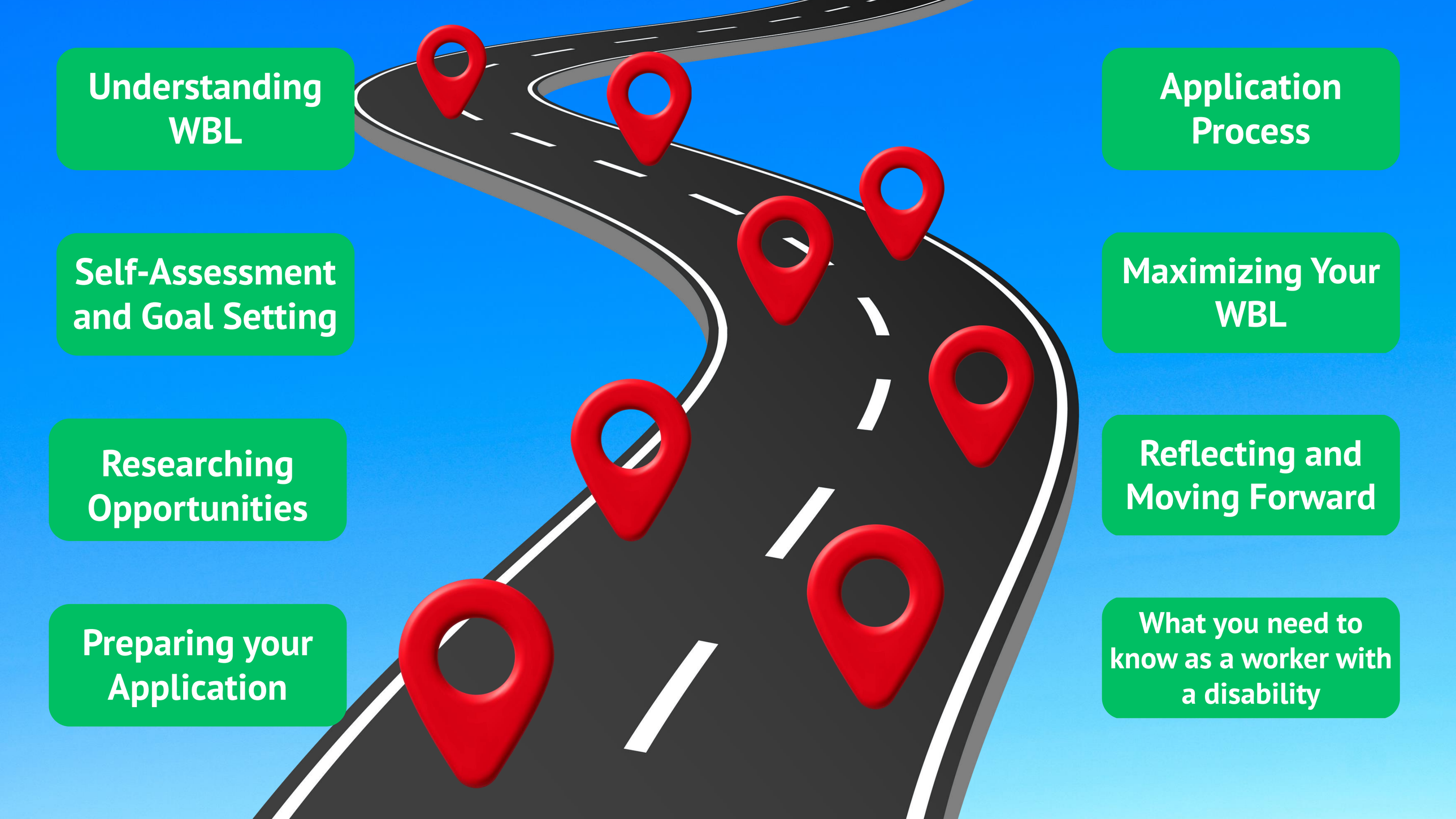
Identify Interests and Strengths:

- Reflect on your academic interests, skills, and career aspirations
- Use career assessment tools to identify potential fields and roles

Self Assessment and Goal Setting

Set Clear Goals:

- Determine what you hope to achieve through a WBL opportunity (e.g., specific skills, industry experience, professional connections)
- Set short-term and long-term career goals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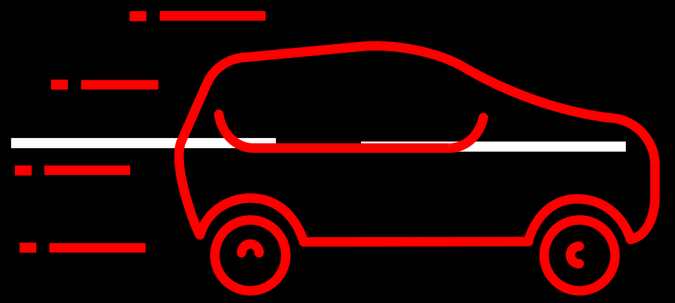
Researching Opportunities



Online Resources:

- Use job search engines, company websites, and professional networks like LinkedIn
- Explore online platforms dedicated to internships and apprenticeships

Researching Opportunities

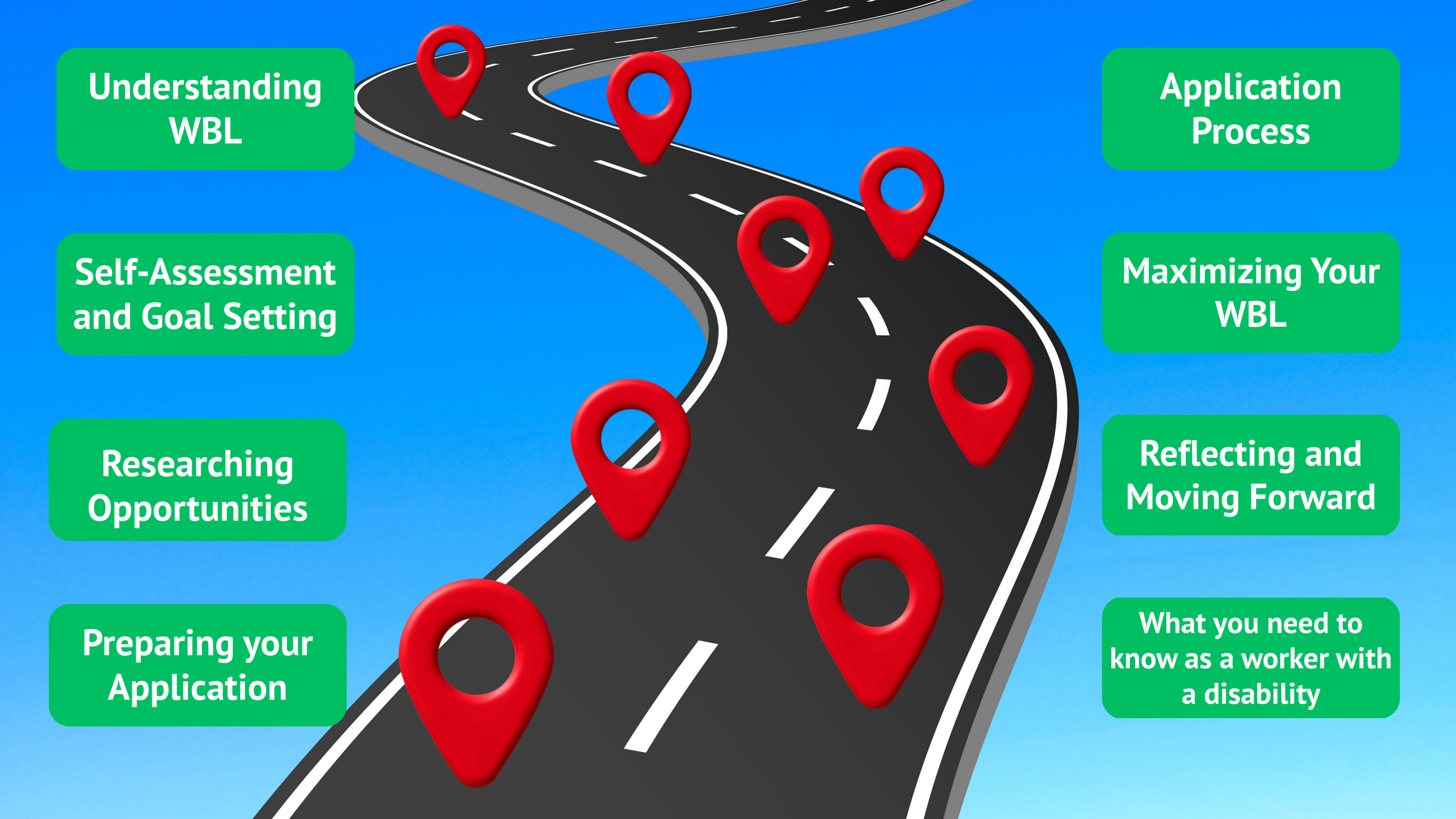
School Resources:

- Visit your school’s career services office for assistance
- Attend career fairs, workshops, and networking events organized by your institution

Researching Opportunities

Networking:

- Connect with professors, alumni, and industry professionals
- Join relevant student organizations and professional associations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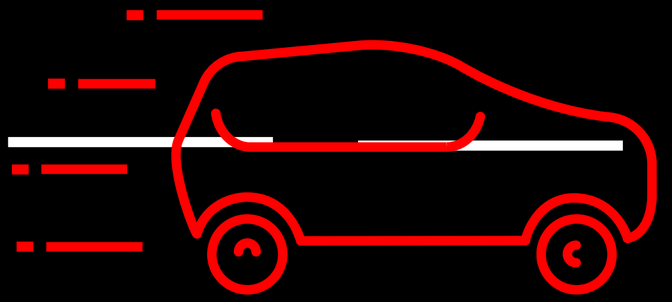
Preparing Your Application



Resume and Cover Letter:

- Tailor your resume to highlight relevant skills, coursework, and experiences
- Write a compelling cover letter that explains your interest in the position and how you can contribute

Preparing Your Application

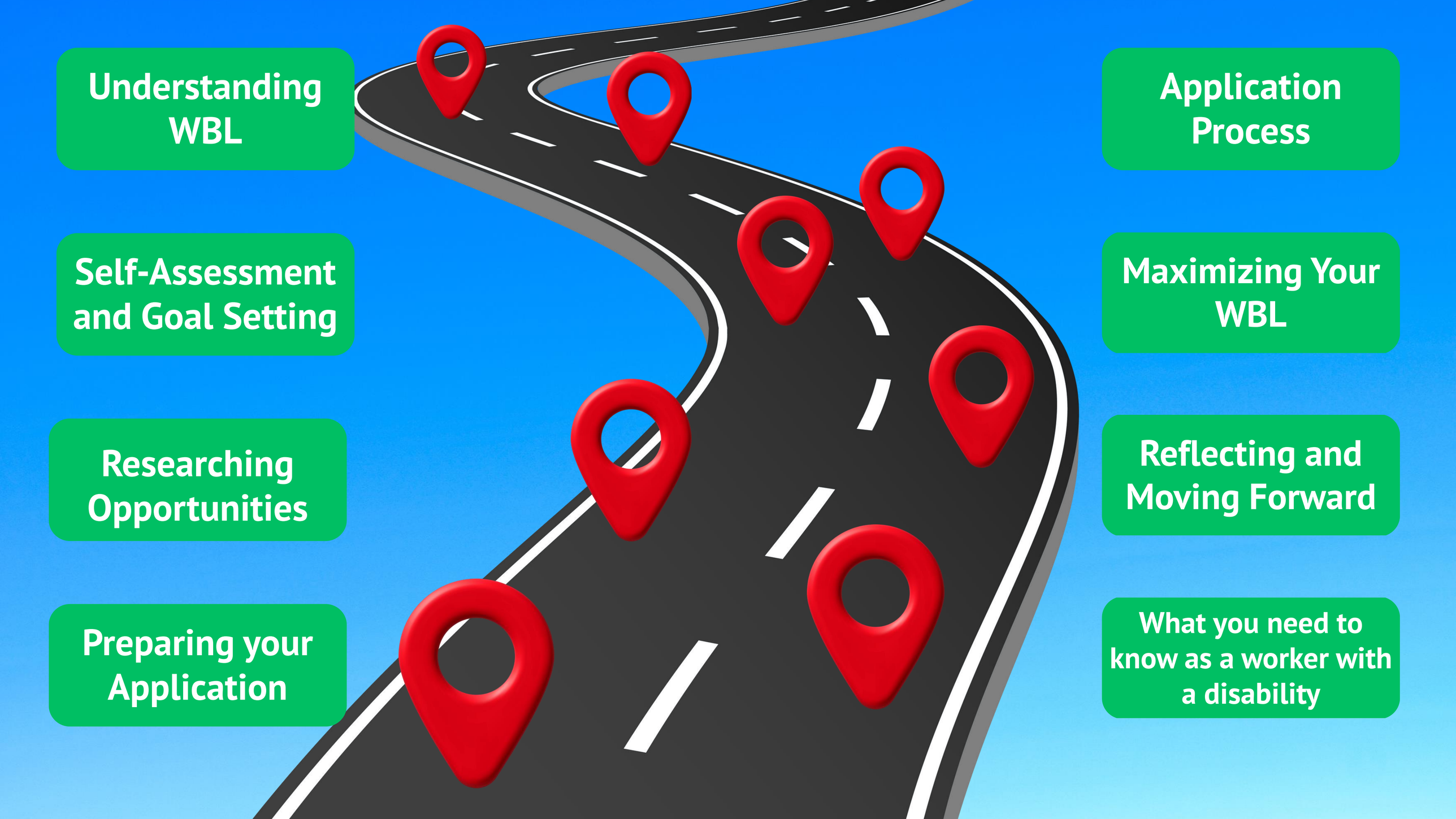
Portfolio:

- Create a portfolio showcasing your work, projects, and achievements
- Include samples relevant to the industry you are targeting

Preparing Your Application

References:

- Request recommendations from professors, previous employers, or mentors
- Choose references who can speak to your skills and work ethic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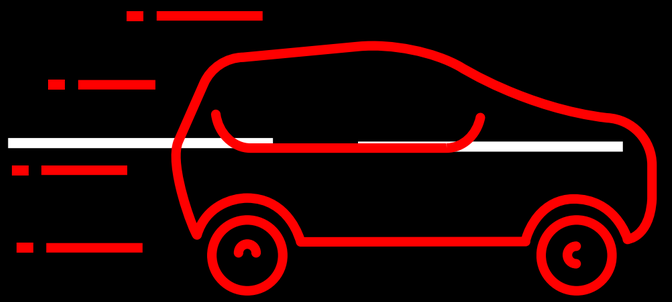
Application Process



Job Search:

- Apply for multiple positions to increase your chances of success
- Keep track of application deadlines and requirements

Application Process

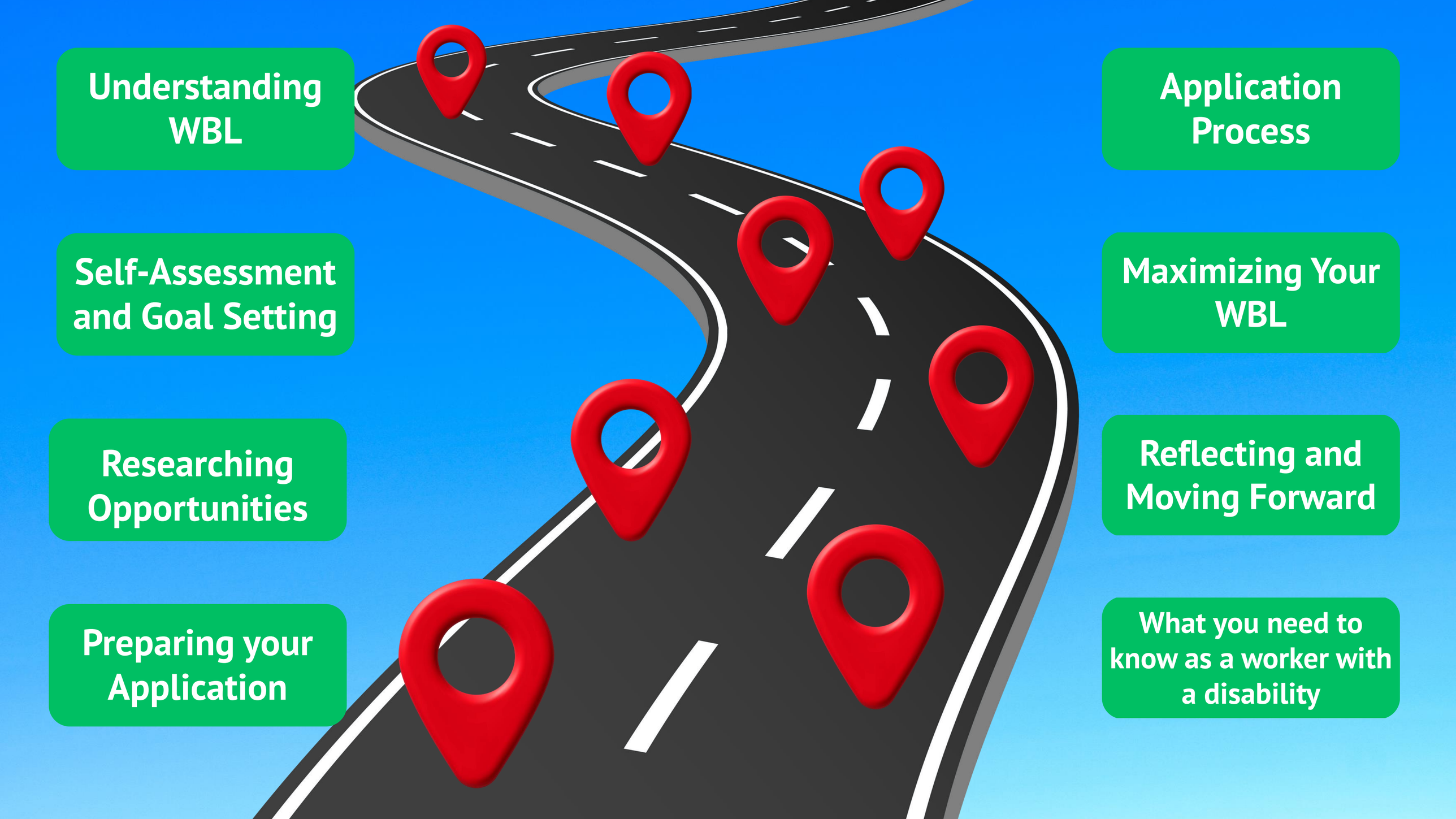
Interview Preparation:

- Research the company and understand its culture, products, and services
- Practice common interview questions and prepare your responses
- Dress professionally and arrive early for the interview

Application Process

Follow-Up:

- Send a thank-you email after your interview to express appreciation and reiterate your interest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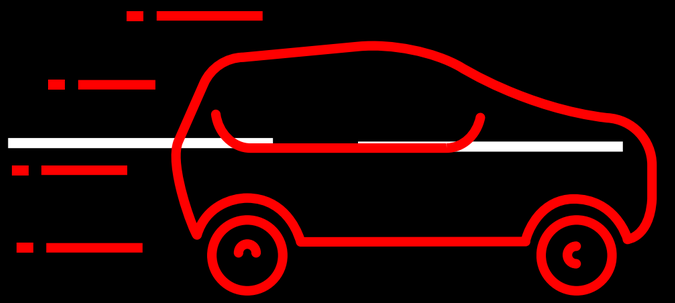
Maximizing the WBL Experience



Onboarding and Orientation:

- Attend orientation sessions to understand company policies and procedures
- Meet your colleagues and familiarize yourself with the work environment

Maximizing the WBL Experience

Set Expectations:

- Clarify your role, responsibilities, and expectations with your supervisor
- Establish clear goals and objectives for your WBL experience

Maximizing the WBL Experience

Active Engagement:

- Take initiative and seek out opportunities to learn and contribute
- Ask questions, seek feedback, and be open to new experiences

Maximizing the WBL Experience

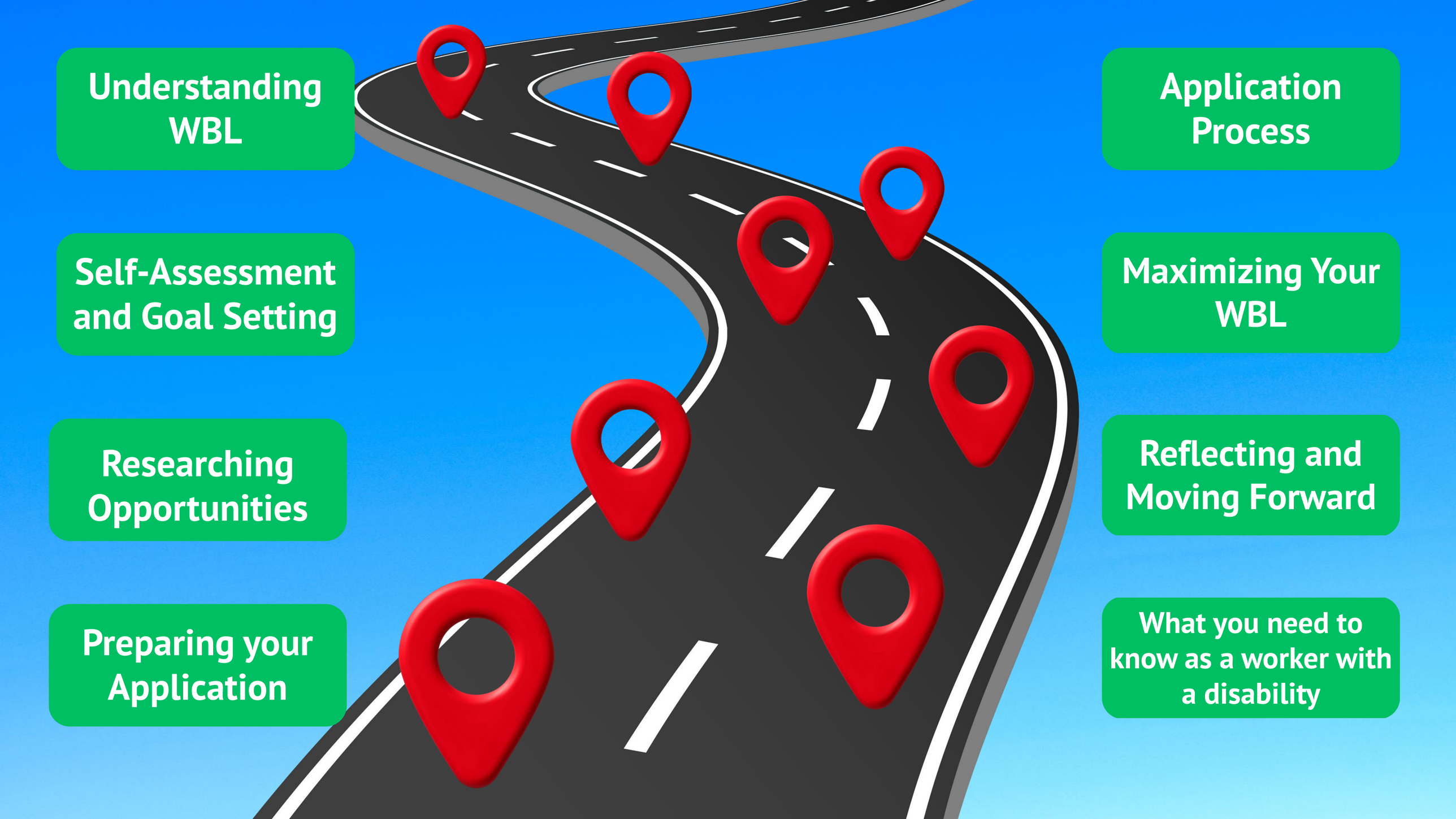
Skill Development:

- Focus on developing both technical and soft skills
- Participate in training sessions, workshops, and other learning opportunities

Maximizing the WBL Experience

Networking:

- Build relationships with colleagues, mentors, and other professionals
- Attend company events, meetings, and networking functions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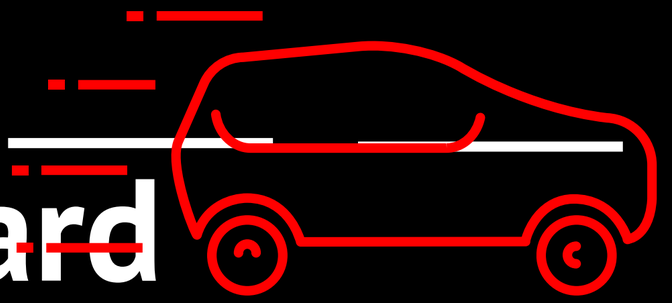


Evaluation and Feedback:

- Regularly assess your progress and seek feedback from your supervisor
- Reflect on what you have learned and how it aligns with your career goals

Reflecting and Moving Forward

Documentation:

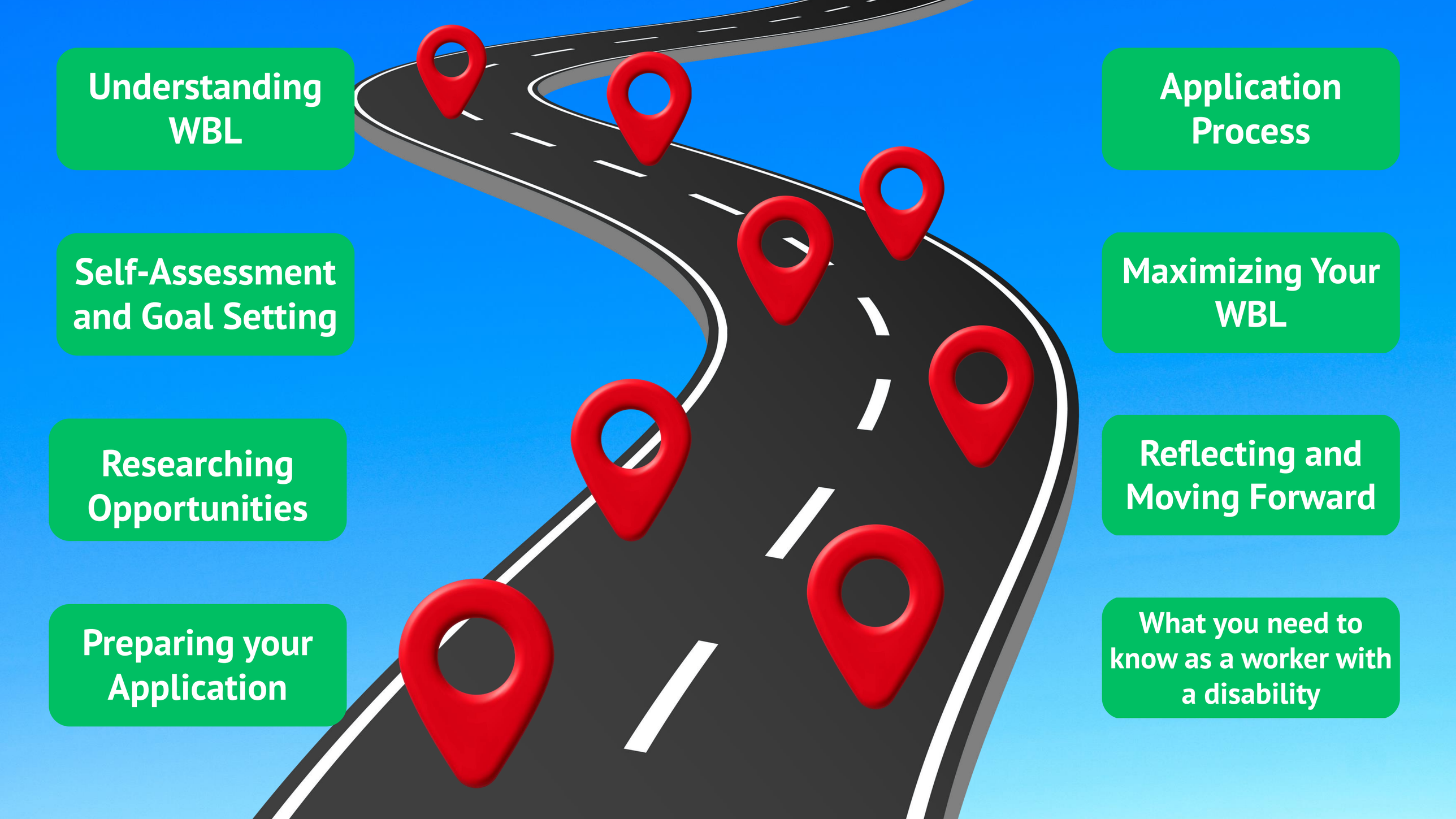
- Keep records of your projects, accomplishments, and any feedback received

- Update your resume and LinkedIn profile to include your WBL experience

Transitions and Retention

Career Planning

- Use your WBL experience to refine your career goals and plans
- Explore next steps, such as additional WBL opportunities, further education, or job search strategies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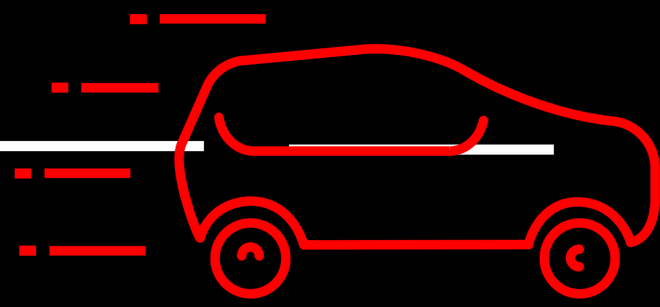


Students with disabilities participating in work-based learning activities should understand and follow these key components:

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Understand Your Rights and Responsibilities:

- Know Your Rights: Understand your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other relevant laws. This includes the right to reasonable accommodations and non-discrimination

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Understand Your Rights and Responsibilities:

- Responsibilities: Be aware of your responsibilities as an employee, such as following company policies, completing tasks on time, and maintaining professional behavior.

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Communicate Effectively:

- Ask Questions: Ask questions if you do not understand something. It is better to ask for clarification than to make mistakes.
- Communicate Needs/ Self-Advocacy: If you need accommodations, communicate your needs to your employer or job coach in a clear and concise manner

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Communicate Effectively:

- Active Listening: Practice active listening skills to understand instructions and feedback

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Develop Workplace Skills:

- Time Management: Learn how to manage your time effectively to meet deadlines
- Problem-Solving: Develop skills to handle challenges that may arise in the workplace

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Develop Workplace Skills:

- Teamwork: Learn to work collaboratively with colleagues and supervisors
- Professionalism: Maintain a professional demeanor at all times, including appropriate dress, language, and behavior

What you need to know as a ____ ____ worker with a disability

Utilize Support Services:

- Job Coach: If you have a job coach, work with that person for to develop your independence on the job
- School Special Services Support: Utilize the teachers at your school for additional support

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

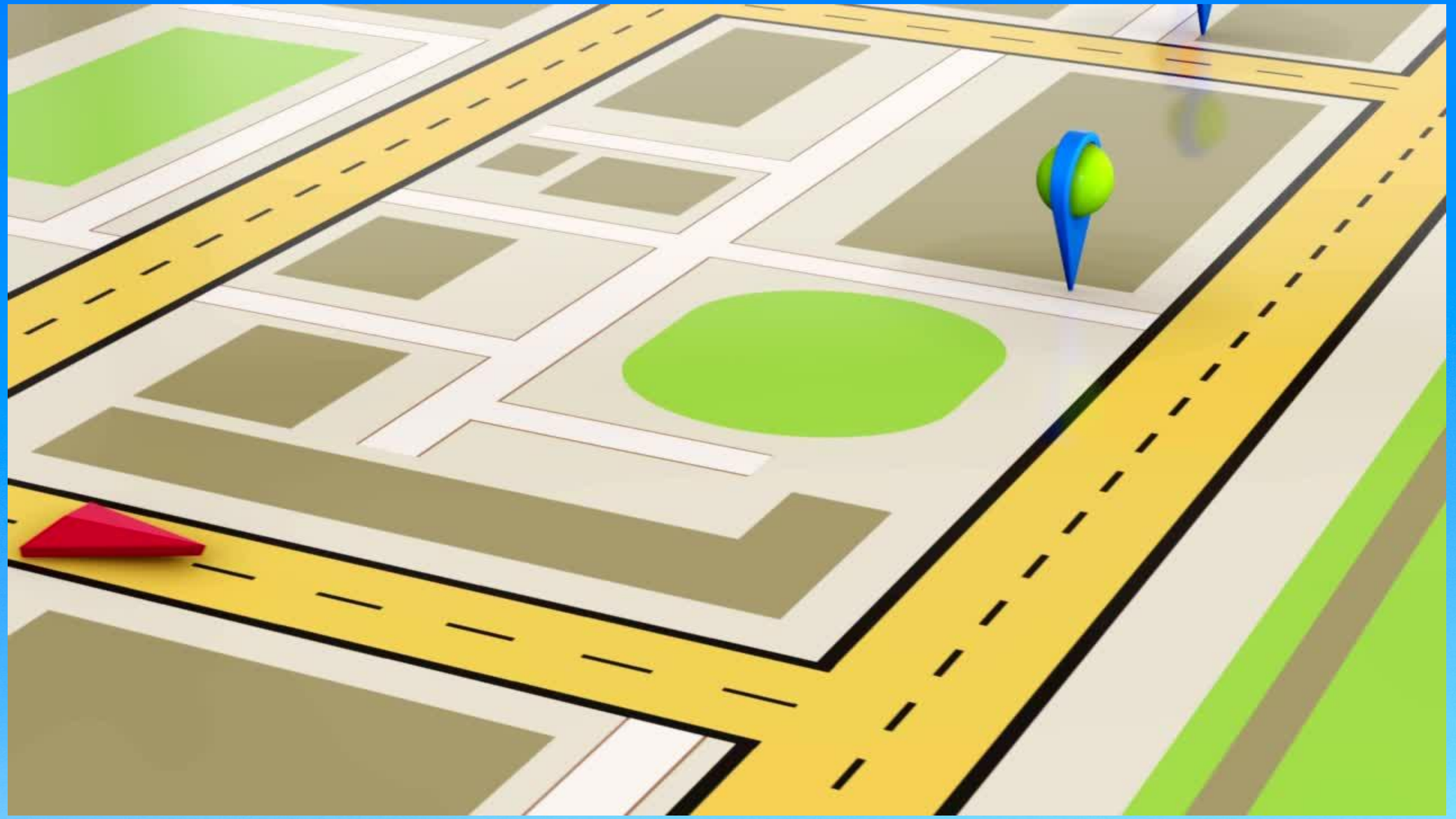
Seek Feedback:

- Ask for Feedback: Regularly ask your supervisor, teacher, or job coach for feedback on your performance
- Use Feedback: Use the feedback given to improve your skills and performance

What you need to know as a ___ ___ worker with a disability

Set Goals and Track Progress:

- Set Goals: Set realistic goals for your work-based learning experience
- Track Progress: Monitor your progress towards your goals and make adjustments as needed



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