

# **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Technical Specifications: Supported Employment Services and Employment Supports Planning (Effective July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010)**

## **Definition**

Supported employment means--

(i) Competitive employment in an integrated setting, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive employment, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities--

(A) For whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and

(B) Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services from the designated State unit and extended services after transition as described in paragraph (b)(20) of this section to perform this work; or

(ii) Transitional employment, as defined in paragraph (b)(54) of this section, for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. (34 CFR 361.7)

## **Employment and Support Planning**

Supported Employment includes the active engagement of the DVR consumer, DVR staff and the vendor and other team members. The process and planning for Supported Employment starts upon intake with DVR staff, is refined in the assessment of vocational rehabilitation needs which leads to the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and continues throughout the implementation of the IPE. This needs assessment applies to every DVR consumer. For those who require additional intensive and long-term assistance, the consumer and DVR will engage the services of a qualified agency to implement a Supported Employment IPE.

This is a joint effort of the consumer, DVR counselor and appropriate team members (e.g. spouse, parents, teachers, case managers, etc.) to identify employment barriers and the strategies to address them. The decision to engage a paid Vendor is part of the consumer's IPE.

Supported Employment operates on the place-train model of rehabilitation. That is, individuals do not need to engage in work readiness or adjustment training prior to working on real jobs integrated with non-disabled co-workers. Any needed training or adjustment is dealt with through the assistance of supported employment staff and

others, including the employer. The goal is to maximize natural supports so that consumers are more integrated in their community and resources are available to serve more consumers with the most significant disabilities.

DVR has committed to improving its rehabilitation success rate to 50% or better. Supported Employment vendors will partner with DVR in this effort.

## **Employment and Support Staffing**

Prior to the first Employment and Support staffing, DVR staff will provide pertinent information to the vendor from the DVR case file including the IPE long-term employment goal, work restrictions, work history and other placement considerations.

The purpose of referral information is to identify employment barriers in such a way as to provide the most current picture of consumer functioning to the Vendor that is based on mutually identified needs. Sample referral forms are available on DVR's website at: [http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/service\\_providers/default.htm](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/service_providers/default.htm). The information is to be discussed at a **required initial team meeting** of the consumer, DVR staff, the selected Vendor and other interested parties such as appropriate.

The search for likely sources of long-term employment supports following DVR involvement starts with the mandatory team meeting and is included in the Employment Supports Plan. The status of long-term supports will be updated during the DVR ongoing support phase. This Plan is mandatory and is due with the Supported Employment Assessment report, if an Assessment is purchased. Supported Employment Ongoing Support payments will not be authorized unless this milestone is paid out first. The report will include the type of supports needed (onsite coaching, offsite symptom management, transportation, etc), an estimate of the percentage of work time where supports will be needed, the sources of support, further steps needed to finalize support (e.g. development of a PASS plan or IRWE) and a target date for transition to long term support.

DVR staff may access additional policy guidance for long-term support planning on the DWD intranet.

Employment and Support Planning follows these steps:

1. First, identify the consumer's employment goal, desired wages and hours.
2. Ask, "What supports and accommodations are needed to enable the individual to do the essential functions of their job goal?"
3. Based on the individual's skills, abilities, interests, and labor market information, determine the kind of supports needed.
4. Look at all options to locate the supports and services necessary to obtain and maintain the employment goal of the individual.

The **Employment and Support Plan** will include:

- A list of specific jobs that will be developed.
- An initial list of employer contacts.
- A list of employment barriers and strategies to address them.
- A checklist of responsibilities for the consumer, DVR staff and vendor.
- A checklist of employment preparation needs.
- Conditions for the use of internships or work experiences.
- A list of initial employment preparation efforts, as needed.
- The sources of long-term support identified for the job site, transportation and off-site support needs, as appropriate (e.g. symptom management, medication regimen, ADL skills development and monitoring for the work environment, etc.)
- Initial plans to use PASS or IRWE work incentives (a Benefits Analysis may be needed to verify the viability of these supports).
- Any targets or special requirements applying to the availability of long-term support (e.g. anticipated waiting list time).
- Documentation that there is a reasonable expectation that these supports will actually be available upon cessation of DVR funding. For example:
  - Receipt of a letter of long-term support from the county after 2 months.
  - Completion of a PASS or IRWE after 1 month. Approval of the PASS or IRWE by SSA after 3 months.
  - Development of a budget for family self-pay demonstrating how payment will be made after 2 months.
  - Development of a written strategy by the employer as to how natural supports will be provided to ensure continued stability on the job.
- Anticipated date of transition to long-term supports.

At this time team members will discuss the need for subsidized internships or work experiences. Employment preparation services such as interview training, job-seeking skills training and resume development are part of the Employment and Supported Employment fees.

The plan must be signed by the consumer (or consumer's representative), vendor and DVR counselor. **The report is due within 30 days from the initial three-way meeting.**

**Milestone Payment:** See [Statewide Service Fee Schedule](#). The Employment and Support Plan must be updated within two months after hire into employment.

### **Supported Employment Assessment**

When needed, a formal Supported Employment Assessment may be authorized at the same time as the Employment and Support Plan. A formal assessment may not be needed in cases where there is adequate information based on prior work experiences.

The purpose of a Supported Employment Assessment is to provide sufficient observation of the consumer's functional strengths and limitations both on the job and in the community to develop specific strategies to support the consumer to retain a job structured to match their needs. A comprehensive Supported Employment Assessment report includes written recommendations for an individual to become successful as a supported employee.

The **Supported Employment Assessment** must include:

- Work skills, money management, learning modality, transportation, mobility, work tolerance, social skills, employment disincentives, strengths, supports, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills as it relates to the consumer's ability to maintain employment in the community.
- At a minimum, 80% must occur in the community. **The assessment should not exceed 60 days.** This Assessment does NOT include observations or evaluations conducted in simulated or congregate work environments. Examples of community observations include going to lunch, shopping or visiting community work sites with the consumer.
- Interviews with the consumer and significant others.
- Short-term job tryouts - these are paid (subsidized by DVR as needed) brief periods of direct observation and coaching. **A minimum of 8 hours direct observation at one or more job sites is required during the assessment.**
- Job coaching required for the short-term job tryouts is included in the Supported Employment Assessment.

**Comprehensive Supported Employment Assessment reporting requirements include:**

- Individual vocational goals
- Short-term employment objectives.
- Description of the individual's strengths.
- Description of needs for employment supports and the anticipated percentage of work time that direct supports are needed.
- Specific strategies needed to support the consumer in their goal job.

A sample report outline is available at:

[http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/service\\_providers/default.htm](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/service_providers/default.htm).

**The report is due within five (5) work days of completion of the service, not to exceed 60 days from initiation of the assessment.** The consumer, DVR staff and the vendor will agree to the start of the assessment at their initial meeting.

**Milestone Payment:** See [Statewide Service Fee Schedule](#). Payable upon electronic receipt of the assessment report and a staffing with the consumer's team including DVR staff and the vendor. The report is to include a revised plan for Job Development and Employment Supports.

## Supported Employment Job Development

Supported Employment Job Development is intended to result in a hire in a job meeting the consumer's IPE employment goals in terms of duties, working conditions, support needs, desired hours and desired pay. The hire may be a result of a job carving proposal where the consumer is assigned restructured or limited job duties consistent with their individual capabilities, strengths and interests.

Supported Employment Job Development must meet the following standards:

- General marketing of supported employment to gain employer commitments to hire supported employees
- Targeted job development on behalf of a specific individual.
- Job development includes the preparation of an employment proposal to a specific employer, including descriptions for job restructuring (job carving), where necessary, and/or strategies to address job accommodations, which is intended to result in an offer of employment to the consumer.
- Supported Employment Job services are delivered per the Job Development and Employment Supports Plan. **The Plan is to be reviewed and revised every 60 days at a team meeting.**

### Reporting Requirements include:

- A brief written plan encompassing: the consumer's job objective desired weekly hours of work and earnings, and the identification of roles and responsibilities of the job developer, the consumer, the DVR staff, and others from the consumer's support network.
- It should also include specific employers to be contacted and specific strategies to be employed.
- **Within five (5) work days of end of month, a brief progress report that has been shared with the consumer will be mailed to the DVR staff. Hire fee will not be paid until all monthly reports are received.**

**Supported Employment Hire: Report is due within five (5) work days of hire to include employer, contact information, start date, wages, hours and supports anticipated including plan for job coaching - what initial percentage and plan to fade.**

**Milestone Payment:** See [Statewide Service Fee Schedule](#). Payable upon hire in a job meeting the consumer's employment goal.

## Supported Employment Ongoing Support

Supported Employment Ongoing Support is the systematic process of providing time-limited vocational services, at least twice a month face to face with the consumer and once a month with the employer. This design ensures that a supported employee acquires the skills necessary for successful job performance and that appropriate

ongoing support is available to the supported employee and to the employer. Supported Employment Ongoing Support is an intensive service which is intended to fade to an appropriate long-term support level for the individual consumer. Less intensive or shorter periods of employment supports may be covered under On-Site Job Coaching.

The scope of Supported Employment Ongoing Support includes:

- Job skill training/coaching techniques that can be provided by coach or coworker, whichever is most appropriate.
- Sensitivity training to enhance natural supports and physical/social integration of the supported employee.
- Identifying and meeting the expectations of the employer.
- Strategies to foster job expansion/promotion.
- Update of the Employment Supports plan within two months of hire.

DVR will authorize for a minimum **six-month period**. This approach encourages providers to fade supports as efficiently as possible.

Supported Employment Ongoing Support is **not to exceed 18 months** before the transition to long-term support resources. Transition to long-term support resources should occur when the individual can maintain employment with ongoing support. This level of stabilization is generally achieved with 6 to 12 months of job coaching support. **The consumer's team (including the consumer, DVR staff and vendor at a minimum) will meet at least every 90 days to review progress in maintaining employment.**

**Monthly reports will include:**

- A description of services and strategies used to address the individual's job performance needs. This description should include hours worked, expansion opportunities, nature and source of supports, and needed assistive technology.
- A description of the employment setting, including degree of integration.
- A description of the specific barriers such as: transportation, recreation/leisure, family and significant others and the impact of earnings on disability benefits.
- Updates to the plan for long-term support including natural supports, PASS/IRWE, private payments or other sources of public funding.
- An estimation of the time required for successful job stabilization and fading of supports to a long-term level.

**Reports are due to the DVR staff within five (5) work days of end of the month.**

**Milestone Payments:** Billable for each month of service provided upon receipt of an adequate monthly report. Authorization may be for three to six-month periods to reduce purchase order processing.

**Monitoring**

DVR Workforce Development Area directors will monitor vendor performance using data from DVR's information system. The performance standard will be a 50% rehabilitation rate for all consumers referred for Supported Employment services. DVR managers will also review data regarding the quality of jobs obtained and the time it takes to obtain them.