

2900 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

2901 General. Supported employment enables consumers with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to enter or retain competitive integrated employment. Individuals eligible for this program need intensive job site training/job coaching and ongoing support services in order to perform their work after job placement and case closure occurs. Supported employment services shall be purchased only from Division acknowledged service providers in accordance with the Division's fee schedule.

2902 Eligibility. A consumer shall be eligible to receive supported employment services if:

A. The consumer is eligible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services;

B. The consumer is determined to be an individual with a most significant disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities;

C. A comprehensive assessment of the consumer's rehabilitation needs documented in *Actions/Details*, including an evaluation of career and job needs identifying supported employment as an appropriate rehabilitation service for the individual; and,

D. A CRP funding source or natural supports have been identified to provide the needed on-going follow up services. The Counselor will address on-going follow up supports, funding sources, and service provision at the beginning of the supported employment case.

2903 Process

A. *Determining Vocational Goal and Services.* The Counselor will collect extensive information about the consumer's abilities, limitations, and interests in order to determine a vocational goal. Before developing an ***Individualized Plan for Employment*** (IPE) with a vocational goal that includes an intermediate objective of supported employment, the Counselor must have some understanding about the consumer's level of need for job coaching and job site support. If the consumer previously has been involved with an acknowledged vendor, this information may be acquired from existing sources. If there is

insufficient evidence for the consumer and Counselor to determine an appropriate vocational goal and the level of services needed, the Counselor may provide a community-based assessment from an acknowledged community rehabilitation program (CRP) or service provider (SP). Assessment information should specifically include the estimated weekly number of hours of job coaching the consumer needs. The assessment also may include strategies for determining the amount of job coaching support needed for the consumer to reach and maintain job stabilization.

B. *IPE*. An IPE for supported employment will be developed that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, needs, concerns, abilities, interests, capabilities, and informed choice that will assist the consumer to achieve a rehabilitation goal for employment.

C. *Supported Employment Plan/Job Development*. Upon written referral from the Counselor, the service provider will develop a placement site consistent with the consumer's vocational goal, identified needs, and informed choice. Prior to placement and with input from the consumer and Counselor, the service provider will complete an intake interview when needed, *CRP Service Plan*, and *Job Placement Plan*. The placement must occur within an agreed upon timeframe and result in a competitive integrated employment outcome.

D. *Placement*. Once placed on a job, the consumer will receive intensive job site instruction and support from a job coach provided by a Division acknowledged CRP/SP. The Counselor will move the case into Status 22 immediately upon placement at the job site. The Counselor will maintain close communication with the consumer and the CRP/SP to monitor the individual's progress. The CRP/SP will complete the *Job Placement Follow Up* form to keep the Counselor informed. This progress will be documented in the *Actions/Details* of the consumer's case record. If Extended Supported Employment Services funding is required from the Division, the Counselor will request it from the CRP Programs Unit Manager.

1. *Job Coaching Time Limits*. Job coaching is limited to a maximum of 200 hours within a 24-month period. Exceptions may be granted only with approval from the District Manager. If exceptions are requested, the Counselor will document the justification and specify the number of additional hours or time limit extensions that will be necessary to meet the consumer's employment objective.

2. *Billable Hours.* Job coaching fees will be paid to train an employee by an acknowledged vendor who uses structured intervention techniques to help the employee learn to perform job tasks to the employer's specifications and to learn the interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the job site and in related community contacts. In addition to job site training, job coaching includes counseling, advocacy, and other services needed to maintain the consumer's employment. These interventions are face-to-face with the consumer and may be done on and off the work site depending upon consumer and employer needs.

3. *Customized Employment.* This is a specialized method of seeking competitive integrated employment in ways that meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. Through a discovery process, the consumer's interests and skills and employer needs are explored and based on this exploration, job requirements are negotiated and customized. Customized Employment can be achieved with both Supported Employment and Non-Supported Employment cases, utilizing existing CRP services. While there is not a specific fee structure for Customized Employment, the discovery and placement process can be funded utilizing a combination of existing CRP services, such as, Community Based Assessment, Work Skills Assessment, Work Adjustment Training, and Supported Placement Services. See CSM 4100 for more information on Community Rehabilitation Programs and Service Providers. The Counselor will document all efforts at customization in *Actions/Details*.

4. *Short-Term Basis.* For an individual with a most significant disability, whose supported employment in an integrated setting does not satisfy the criteria of competitive integrated employment (such as sub-minimum wage). The individual may be working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment so long as the individual can reasonably anticipate achieving competitive integrated employment.

a. Within six months of achieving a supported employment outcome; or,

b. In limited circumstances, within a period not to exceed 12 months from the achievement of the supported employment outcome, if a longer period is necessary based on the needs of the individual, and the

individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information contained in the service record.

E. *Job Stabilization.* Job stabilization occurs during supported employment job coaching when a consumer's work performance plateaus and the job coaching and related interventions have faded to the lowest level necessary to maintain the consumer's employment. The placement must be maintained for a minimum of 90 days prior to making the transition to extended services. Determining that stabilization has been attained is a mutual decision that should involve agreement between the service provider, consumer, employer, and Counselor using the following guidelines:

- 1) Have the initial services identified on the IPE resulted in the consumer demonstrating acceptable job performance?
- 2) Has the consumer demonstrated job performance improvement, meeting the expectations of the employer, and with the lowest possible level of job coaching required?
- 3) Have natural supports been identified and utilized at the job site? Are the natural supports expected to continue? Are home and environmental natural supports also utilized and expected to continue?
- 4) Have identified deficiencies or performance problems been resolved? If not, can the deficiencies be mitigated through additional training or behavioral intervention?
- 5) Has a plan for behavioral or skill regression, or lapses in natural support been discussed?

F. *Case Closure.* The case may not be considered successfully rehabilitated until job stabilization has occurred. Once stabilization has been determined, the Counselor shall consider a consumer to be successfully rehabilitated when:

1. The consumer meets basic requirements of competitive integrated employment;
2. The consumer is working the agreed upon work hours identified in the IPE. If the consumer is stabilized in employment at a level of hourly work less than the goal established on the IPE and the individual and Counselor agree that the job represents substantial and suitable employment, the

Counselor shall amend the IPE noting the actual hours of employment achieved prior to the Status 26 closure;

3. The job is stable and is expected to continue; and,

4. The Counselor should determine whether the placement meets the eligibility criteria for supported employment incentive payments and, if so, authorize to the CRP prior to closure.

G. Extended Supported Employment Services (ESES). Prior to moving the case into Status 26, the Counselor will schedule a face-to-face meeting with the consumer and service provider to complete an *ESES Plan* to guide the provision of extended services regardless of the ESES funding source. The Division receives state funds earmarked to provide Extended Supported Employment Services (ESES) for consumers closed as successfully rehabilitated who require ongoing job coaching to maintain employment and who are not eligible for services through other funding sources.

a. For DRS to provide ESES, the *ESES Plan* (CRP-1) must include a minimum of twice monthly monitoring at the job site by the service provider (unless off-site monitoring has been determined to be in the consumer's best interests) and be signed by the consumer and Counselor. Copies of the *ESES Plan* must be given to the consumer, the service provider who will furnish the follow along services and filed in the case record.

b. Upon receipt of the *ESES Plan* the service provider will complete an *Application for ESES Funding*, if needed, and mail both forms to the CRP Program Manager. If funds are available, an authorization number will be entered on the *Application for ESES Funding* with copies forwarded to the service provider and Counselor.

c. To be eligible for DRS funded ESES, the consumer must:

i. Have received supported employment services;

ii. Have stabilized in the employment situation;

iii. Require ESES to maintain employment after closure;

iv. Be ineligible for ongoing support services from any other funding source; and,

v. Employer must be entity other than the Community Rehabilitation Program.

d. After closure, the service provider annually completes the *ESES Plan* and an *Application for ESES Funding* and submits both forms to the CRP Program Manager. With a signed *Release of Information*, a copy of the consumer's *ESES Plan* may be provided to the Counselor of Record.

H. *Extended Services for Youth (ESY)*. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a youth with the most significant disabilities, under an IPE for supported employment, who has achieved stability in supported employment (up to 24 months), may receive ESY. These extended services may last up to 48 months or until the individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability, whichever occurs first. The Branch Office Manager will be alerted once the ESY option is initially selected. On a yearly basis, the Counselor and the Branch Office Manager will be alerted for annual review of ESY. ESY, while identical in function to ESES, are different in that:

a. They involve the use of federal funds and

b. They are exclusively provided to youth in an open case status. ESY may be provided to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, or at such time that a youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability, whichever occurs first. For these individuals, the case will remain open until the individual reaches age 25 or has received Extended Services for 48 months, whichever occurs first. The Rehabilitation Counselor will document in the *Actions/Details* alternative sources of provision and/or funding of extended supports, including Medicaid Waiver and natural supports (e.g., employer support, co-workers, family members, teachers, mentors). The provision of ESY will require administrative approval through supervisory channels to the Assistant Director, Client Services, initially and on a yearly basis. If, after four years of Extended Services, or upon reaching the age of 25, the individual has not achieved stability in competitive, integrated employment, the case must either be moved to State-funded ESES or exited from the VR program.

2904 Post-Employment Services. The Counselor may authorize up to an additional 50 hours of supported assistance as a post-employment service, in Status 22, for a consumer who has achieved a supported employment outcome. The supported assistance may be provided only if aspects in the work environment change (e.g., supervisor, job tasks, or job location) that create a need for further job coaching or other service in order for the consumer to maintain employment.