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SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

POLICY

Authority - 34 CFR 361.5(b)(53); 34 CFR 361.48; 34 CFR 361.50; 34 CFR 363

1. Supported employment (SE) services may be provided for eligible individuals in accordance with the following guidelines and as described in the individual's IPE to contribute to the achievement of competitive integrated employment.
2. Supported employment is for eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities, including eligible youth with the most significant disabilities no older than age 24, for whom:
 - a. Competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred or has been interrupted or intermittent;
 - b. Intensive supported employment services and extended services are needed in order to perform the work involved, because of the nature and severity of the individual's disability. Extended services are ongoing support services identified during stabilization that are needed to maintain employment stability; and
 - c. Supported employment has been identified as the appropriate employment outcome based on a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs and an evaluation of rehabilitation, career and job needs that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, abilities, interests, informed choice, and ongoing support needs.
3. The provision of supported employment services is not based on financial need.
4. Prior to providing services, a determination must be made as to the availability of [comparable services and benefits](#) and the extent to which the comparable services or benefits can be utilized to provide or pay for the services.
5. SE services require both training and placement to accomplish the employment objective and therefore constitute multiple VR services requiring at least 6 months to complete.
6. Funding for supported employment services is provided in part by the VR services Federal grant and in part by the supported employment services Federal grant. The supported employment services Federal grant can only fund VR services provided after the client has obtained a supported employment outcome. Assessment and placement services are funded by the VR services Federal grant.
7. Supported employment includes Individual Placement & Support (IPS) Supported Employment for individuals with mental illness.
8. Prior to considering SE services, there must be documentation for PC1 and there must be a reasonable expectation that, based on the individual's functional limitations, the individual needs on-going supports to maintain employment. Conduct an ENA and complete an ENA Summary the same as is normally required for any client and determine the client's priority category. PC must be 1 to provide SE services.
9. SE services include:

- a. Prior to IPE development, the service provider must conduct a consultation meeting to determine the client's service needs and specific employment objective.
 - b. Following completion of the IPE, the service provider provides career development and placement services in status 18.
 - c. Career stabilization (training) and maintenance (ongoing supports) provided in status 18 and 22 by skilled employment specialists and job coaches;
 - d. Other services, beyond routine services, that are required because of the individual's intensive support needs;
 - e. Extended services funded by other sources or by VR under certain circumstances to maintain employment stability.
10. SE services may be provided for a period of time not to exceed 24 months until the individual transitions to extended services. An extension may be justified in order to achieve the employment objective identified in the IPE. Document the reason for and length of an extended time period in the case file.
11. OJT may be provided for supported employment when the employer insists on providing the training. Refer to the SE LOA for additional requirements and payment limitations.
12. Supported employment services must result in competitive integrated employment at a location typically found in the community (in the competitive labor market) where the client:
- a. Is compensated at not less than the legal minimum wage or at the customary rate for the same or similar work performed by employees who are not individuals with disabilities;
 - b. Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees who are not individuals with disabilities;
 - c. Interacts with fellow employees for the purpose of performing the job duties within the work unit who are not individuals with a disability; and
 - d. Has the opportunity for advancement that is similar for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.
13. An individual is considered to have achieved a successful supported employment outcome when:
- a. The individual has maintained supported employment for at least 90 days after the individual has:
 - 1) Completed all supported employment services and any other services listed on the Individualized Plan for Employment; and
 - 2) Begun extended services (stabilization); and
 - b. All other requirements for a 26 closure have been satisfied. See Case Closure policy and procedures.
 - c. See Procedures for Post-employment Services.
14. SE services must be provided by a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) with a current Letter of Agreement (LOA) and in accordance with the Supported Employment

Program User Guide (see VRRM). Go to <http://www.tn.gov/humanservices/article/dhs-vr-loa> for a list of current service providers. Click on the current year's LOAs and click on the current year's approved list. Verify that the CRP's LOA has the Supported Employment Services attachment. The SE Program User Guide and CRP Referral Form are under "Forms and Reports". See procedures for Change in CRP.

15. Conduct and document required staffings in accordance with the Supported Employment Program User Guide (obtain from the VR State Office SE Coordinator or go to <http://www.tn.gov/humanservices/article/dhs-vr-loa>).
16. An Extended Services Plan must be developed that identifies the client's support needs, the strategy to address the support needs and the responsible party that provides the extended services. See procedures for Extended Services.
17. Extended services may be funded by another state agency or other client resources, such as a Social Security PASS or IRWE; by natural supports; or by VR for a youth with a disability until the client turns 25 years of age provided there are no other means of funding or providing the extended services. If VR funds extended services for a youth with a disability, the case cannot be closed until the client turns 25. See procedures for Extended Services.
18. Employment settings established by CRPs specifically for the purpose of employing individuals with disabilities are not employment settings typically found in the competitive labor market and do not satisfy all requirements for competitive integrated employment.
19. Individuals who are unable to achieve a competitive integrated employment outcome but are employed in an integrated work setting and there is reasonable expectation that the individual can achieve competitive integrated employment within a short period of time may continue in supported employment services for a period of time not to exceed 6 months from the achievement of integrated supported employment. In limited circumstances, up to 12 months may be allowed if the individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information provided by the employer or CRP.