

Employment Staff Training Requirements for All HCBS Programs

There are core requirements that all staff delivering employment services must meet, addressed in the first section below. There are additional requirements for training/certification depending on whether staff are serving in the capacity of Supported Employment Supervisor/Manager, Job Developer, Job Coach, or Benefits Counselor – all requirements are outlined below. All employment staff roles (with the exception of Benefits Counselor) must also complete all training required for the Direct Support Professional (DSP) role (found in TennCare Staff Training Protocol) in addition to requirements outlined below.

Providers of employment services (excluding providers who only provide Benefits Counseling) are required to have a designated Supported Employment (SE) Manager/Front Line Supervisor (FLS) on staff that is at least a 50% full-time equivalent position and that supervises Job Coaches and Job Developers. Providers are required to have a supervisor role on staff to manage employment services and/or in the case of only one employment role on staff.

Employment Staff Core Requirements: 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, CHOICES

For all staff delivering employment supports as part of supported employment services, regardless of job title.

All staff providing employment services must meet the following qualifications prior to delivering employment services:

- 18 years of age or older
- Can effectively read, write, and communicate verbally in English and in the person's first language if not English and the service recipient is not fluent in English
- Able to read and understand instructions, perform record-keeping, and write reports
- Has a General Equivalency Degree (GED) or high school diploma
- Passes criminal background checks, and is not listed on the TN Department of Health (TNDOH) Abuse Registry or TN Sexual Offenders Registry
- If driving is involved in job duties, has valid driver's license and automobile liability insurance. If using own vehicle to transport ECF or 1915(c) members is involved in job duties, appropriate insurance coverage for this purpose. Provider agency may contribute toward cost of appropriate insurance coverage to transport ECF members.
- Completion of required training for all DSPs – found in TennCare training protocol

- Has information/training specific to the person being served
- Has six months or more professional and/or lived experience working with individuals who have disabilities, complex needs, or who are aging, where the work involved teaching or supporting skill development related to employment or daily living tasks (experience in an employment setting preferred but not required)

Supported Employment (SE) Managers/Frontline Supervisors (FLS) of Job Coaches and Job Developers: 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, CHOICES

Required to manage employment services and/or in the case of only one employment role on staff. Providers of employment services (excluding providers who only provide Benefits Counseling) are required to have a designated SE Manager/FLS on staff that is at least a 50% full-time equivalent position and that supervises Job Coaches and Job Developers.

*Must also complete all required training for Direct Support Professional role – found in TennCare staff training protocol.

Employment Services Supported Employment (SE) Managers/Frontline Supervisors (FLS) of Job Coaches and Job Developers Can Deliver (not all services are available in all programs):

- Exploration (IIE/CIE), Exploration (Self-Employment), Discovery, Situational Observation and Assessment, Job Development Plan, Self-Employment Plan, Job Development Start-Up, Self-Employment Start-Up, Job Coaching for Individual Wage Employment/Self-Employment, Co-Worker Supports, Career Advancement, Integrated Employment Path Services, Supported Employment - Small Group

Timeframe for Meeting Minimum Qualifications / Successfully Completing Training:

- Qualifications must be met within twelve (12) months of hire or promotion into the role. If providing job coaching or job developer services, must follow timeframe for meeting minimum qualifications of the respective role prior to delivering employment services.

Complete one of the following certificate options:

- Job Developer level credentials (approved ACRE course or CESP - see approved options under Job Developer role)
 - PLUS: LTSS Employment Service Training with a contracted MCO Employment Specialist – contact your MCO Provider Relations team to get connected for this training
 - Job Developer level credentials, accompanied by Employment Service Training (new option for the supervisor role, effective October 1, 2025)

- ACRE Professional Employment Certificate earned through completion of “Work Works” on-line course offered by University of Georgia Institute on Human Development and Disability
 - The course consists of 9 units and a final exam – must pass all to get certified. The course is self-paced, typically completed over 20-40 weeks and takes on average 160 hours to complete (80 hours minimum); must complete within 52 weeks.
 - The cost is normally \$1,000 per person, but Tennessee registrants can qualify for a 50% reduction. You must contact the Work Works coordinator at UGA to ensure the 50% discount is applied to registration when it is made.
 - [ACRE Professional Certificate Link](#)
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) status with continuing education to maintain the designation
 - [CRC Training Link](#)
- ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services earned through University of Tennessee
 - Note: this certificate option is no longer available but some individuals in Tennessee may hold this certificate.

Self-Employment:

- If providing self-employment services, complete Relias modules on Customized Self-Employment by Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA).

Continuing Education Requirements (required via training provider):

- ACRE: no continuing education required; once certificate is obtained, it does not expire.
- CESP: 36 continuing education units required every three years.
- CRC: 100 hours of continuing education required every 5 years.

Job Developer: 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, CHOICES

For all staff delivering employment supports as part of supported employment services requiring the Job Developer credential. All staff providing job developer services must meet all qualifications prior to delivering employment services.

*Must also complete all required training for Direct Support Professional role – found in TennCare staff training protocol.

Employment Services Job Developer Can Deliver (not all services are available in all programs):

- Exploration (IIE/CIE), Exploration (Self-Employment), Discovery, Situational Observation and Assessment, Job Development Plan, Self-Employment Plan, Job Development Start-Up, Self-Employment Start-Up, Job Coaching for Individual Wage Employment/Self-Employment, Co-Worker Supports, Career Advancement, Integrated Employment Path Services, Supported Employment - Small Group

Timeframe for Meeting Minimum Qualifications / Successfully Completing Training:

- If taking the APSE CESP exam, CESP certification must be obtained prior to providing employment services.
- If obtaining ACRE certification, the first four (4) weeks of the ACRE course must be completed prior to providing employment services. Until the entire ACRE course has been successfully completed, all work done with members must be monitored and written reports must be approved via co-signature by a qualified Job Developer or Supported Employment Program Manager/Supervisor. In order to continue providing employment services, ACRE certification must be obtained.

Complete one of the following ACRE or CESP Certificate options:

- SHIFT Employment First Job Developer Certification Course with ACRE Basic Certificate – available October 1, 2025
 - The approx. 40-hour online course, self-paced course is available on demand with rolling registration
 - Registration and pricing information: [Employment First Education Training Link; admin@techfirstshift.com](mailto:admin@techfirstshift.com)
 - Reach out to DDA Employment staff for information about potentially available grants: DDA.Employment1st@tn.gov
- Association of People Supporting Employment (APSE) Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) Certificate
 - Received through passing an exam in person or online (no prior course).
 - Application fee \$40; exam \$159
 - [ASPE Certificate Link](#)
- Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Basic Employment Certificate – The Employment Specialist Training offered by Utah State University
 - The 40-hour hybrid (online and field work) training course is completed over the course of one month. Course is offered every month.
 - \$200 per person
 - [Utah State ACRE Basic Employment Specialist Training Link](#)
- ACRE Basic Employment Certificate – The Supported Employment Online Certificate Series earned through Virginia Commonwealth University

- The certificate program is 40 hours long over 12 weeks and consists of six lessons which includes required reading, practical assignments and on-line discussion. Course is offered twice a year.
 - \$375 per person or \$300 per person for five or more individuals
 - [Virginia Commonwealth ACRE Basic Supported Employment Certificate Link](#)
- ACRE Basic Employment Certificate in Community Employment with Emphasis on Customized Employment offered by Griffin-Hammis Associates
 - The training is a 40-hour web-based course over 12 weeks which consists of seven classes with a quiz after each, six webinars, and required reading and homework assignments.
 - \$400/person. Each course limited to 40 people.
 - [Griffin-Hammis ACRE Basic Employment Certificate Link](#)
- ACRE Basic Employment Certificate – Employment Consultant Training with an Emphasis on Customized Employment offered by Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University Bloomington
 - The 65-hour online training course is completed over the course of two months. Course is offered quarterly.
 - \$325 per person
 - [Indiana University ACRE Basic Employment Consultant Training Link](#)
- ACRE Basic Employment Certificate – College of Employment Services (CES) Plus offered by University of Massachusetts Institute for Community Inclusion
 - The training consists of 11 courses with 4 – 6 lessons in each course, three webinars and field assignments, and takes approximately 50 hours to complete.
 - See website for pricing and availability.
 - [University of Massachusetts ACRE Basic Employment Certificate Link](#)
- ACRE Basic Employment Certificate in Employment Services with an Emphasis on Customized Employment through the WISE Online Academy 100 Series offered by WISE: Washington Initiative for Supported Employment
 - The (approx.) 45-hour hybrid (online and field work) training course is completed over the course of three months. Course is offered quarterly.
 - \$600 per person
 - [WISE ACRE Basic Employment Services Certificate Link](#)
- ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services earned through University of Tennessee
 - The course is 40 hours plus an exam.
 - Note: this certificate program is no longer offered but some individuals in Tennessee may hold this certificate.
- ACRE Professional Employment Certificate earned through completion of “Work Works” online course offered by University of Georgia Institute on Human Development and Disability

- The course consists of 9 units and a final exam – must pass all to get certified. The course is self-paced, typically completed over 20-40 weeks, and takes on average 160 hours to complete (80 hours minimum); must complete within 52 weeks.
- Normally \$1,000 per person, but Tennessee registrants can qualify for a 50% reduction. You must contact the Work Works coordinator at UGA to ensure the 50% discount is applied to registration when it is made.
- [University of Georgia "Work Works" ACRE Pro Employment Certificate Link](#)

Self-Employment:

- If providing self-employment services, complete Relias modules on Customized Self-Employment by Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA).

Continuing Education Requirements (required via training provider):

- ACRE: no continuing education required; once certificate is obtained, it does not expire.
- CESP: 36 continuing education units required every three years.

Job Coach: ECF CHOICES, CHOICES

All staff delivering employment supports as part of supported employment services requiring the Job Coach credential. All staff providing job coaching services must meet all qualifications prior to delivering employment services.

*Must also complete all required training for Direct Support Professional role – found in TennCare staff training protocol.

Employment Services Job Coach Can Deliver:

- Exploration (IIE/CIE only), Situational Observation and Assessment, Job Coaching for Individual Wage Employment/Self-Employment, Co-Worker Supports, Integrated Employment Path Services, Supported Employment - Small Group (Supported Employment - Small Group service is not available in CHOICES)

May have Job Developer qualifications OR must complete the following:

- SHIFT Employment First Job Coach Certification Course – available October 1, 2025
 - The approx. 20-hour online, self-paced course is available on demand with rolling registration
 - Registration and pricing information: [Employment First Education Training Link; admin@techfirstshift.com](mailto:admin@techfirstshift.com)

- Reach out to DDA Employment staff for information about potentially available grants: DDA.Employment1st@tn.gov
- **PLUS:** at least 12 hours of shadowing of existing trained/qualified Job Coach/Job Developer in at least 3 different employment situations (at least 4 hours at each one). Shadowing only required if staff completes SHIFT Employment First Job Coach course and does not meet Job Developer qualifications.
- Training Resource Network, Inc. (TRN) Job Coaching and Consulting: Design, Training and Natural Support on-line web course.
 - There is special on-demand access for Tennessee (upon registration, course access is opened, lasts for 2 weeks and is open 24 hours a day). The average time to complete the course is 16 hours and ranges between 12 and 20 hours. The cost is \$146 per person (\$13.00 discount off regular price of \$159 is applied at checkout), \$145 per person for registering a group of 3-5, or \$135 per person for a group of 6 or more. Note: One organization can register a group of staff to receive the group discount, even if all of the individual staff do not work for that organization.
 - **PLUS:** at least 12 hours of shadowing of existing trained/qualified Job Coach/Job Developer in at least 3 different employment situations (at least 4 hours at each one). Shadowing only required if staff completes TRN online course and does not meet Job Developer qualifications.
 - [TRN Job Coaching and Consultant Training Link](#)

Self-Employment:

- If providing self-employment services, complete Relias modules on Customized Self-Employment by Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA).

Continuing Education Requirements (required via training provider):

- ACRE: no continuing education required; once certificate is obtained, it does not expire.
- CESP: 36 continuing education units required every three years.
- TRN: no continuing education required; once certification is obtained, it does not expire.

Job Coach: 1915(c)

All staff delivering employment supports as part of supported employment services requiring the Job Coach credential. **1915(c) Job Coach Training Options:** can be qualified to provide employment services through ECF CHOICES or CHOICES, strongly encouraged (Job Coach, Job Developer, or Supervisor role), OR must complete the following Relias courses.

*Must also complete all required training for Direct Support Professional role – found in TennCare staff training protocol.

Employment Services Job Coach Can Deliver:

- Exploration (IIE/CIE only), Job Coaching for Individual Wage Employment/Self-Employment, Supported Employment - Small Group

Complete one of following two options:

SHIFT Employment First Job Coach Certification Course, which must be *complete prior to delivering employment services* – available October 1, 2025

- The approx. 20-hour online, self-paced course is available on demand with rolling registration
- Registration and pricing information: [Employment First Education Training Link; admin@techfirstshift.com](mailto:admin@techfirstshift.com)
- Reach out to DDA Employment staff for information about potentially available grants: DDA.Employment1st@tn.gov

OR complete the following Relias courses:

Relias Courses:

- TNDIDD Job Coach Training 2013, TNDIDD_1306 – due 30 days from hire
 - Previous course/grandfathered: TNDIDD Job Coach Training
- TNDIDD Supports for Success, TNDIDD_1307 – due 30 days from hire
- Supported Employment: Individual Placement and Supports, REL-BHC-0-SEIPS – due 30 days from hire
 - Previous courses/grandfathered: Evidence-Based Practices in Supported Employment Part 1: Principles and Practices for Job Finding; Evidence-Based Practices in Supported Employment Part 1; Evidence-Based Practices in Supported Employment Part 2: Supporting Employed Consumers; Evidence-Based Practices in Supported Employment Part 2
- Communicating Effectively, REL-ALL-0-COMME – due 60 days from hire
 - Previous courses/grandfathered: Effective Communication in the Workplace; Effective Communication
- Customized Community Careers Pt. 1: An Overview of Customized Employment, REL-IDD-GHA-CCCP1AOCE – due 60 days from hire
 - Previous courses/grandfathered: Creating Community Careers Part 1: Overview of Customized Employment V2; Introduction to Customized Employment; Customized Community Careers Part 1: Overview of Customized employment V3
- Customized Community Careers Pt. 2: Discovering Personal Genius Process, REL-IDD-GHA-CCCP2DPGP – due 60 days from hire

- Previous courses/grandfathered: Creating Community Careers Part 2: Understanding the Discovering Personal Genius Process V2 and Discovering Personal Genius; Customized Community Careers Part 2: Understanding the Discovering Personal Genius Process V3
- Customized Community Careers Pt 5: Job Training, REL-IDD-GHA-CCCP5JT – due 60 days from hire
 - Previous courses/grandfathered: Creating Community Careers Part 5: Systematic Instruction and Job Training V2; Systematic Instruction; Customized Community Careers Part 5: Systematic Instruction and Job Training V3

Continuing Education Requirements (required via training provider):

- ACRE: no continuing education required; once certificate is obtained, it does not expire.
- CESP: 36 continuing education units required every three years.
- TRN: no continuing education required; once certification is obtained, it does not expire.

Benefits Counseling: 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, CHOICES

This service is provided by a certified Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC), Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor (CPWIC), or Certified Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP-C). Medicaid Patient Liability Training and one of the following completed certifications is **required** for a staff member prior to providing Benefits Counseling services.

Medicaid Patient Liability Training (required):

- [Patient Liability Training Link](#)

And complete one of the following certificate options:

- Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) Certification through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)
 - PLUS: Level 5 Suitability Clearance (security clearance required for Social Security representatives who work with beneficiaries and handle sensitive identifying/financial information) - required for CWIC certification only and is obtained through the CWIC certification process.
 - [VCU CWIC Certification Link](#)
- Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor (CPWIC) through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)
 - [VCU CPWIC Certification Link](#)
- Work Incentive Practitioner Credential (WIP-C) through Cornell University

- [Cornell University WIP-C Training Link](#)

Continuing Education Requirements (required via training provider):

- CWIC: Eighteen (18) Continuing Certification Credits (CCCs) each year (every 365 days); submission of Benefits Summary and Analysis (BS&A) report every three (3) years.
- CPWIC: Eighteen (18) Continuing Certification Credits (CCCs) each year (every 365 days).
- WIP-C: Sixty (60) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) over five (5) years.

Training Requirements effective 3.1.2024

Revised: 10.02.25