
The Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation Services

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM USER GUIDE

JANUARY 1, 2016

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Supported Employment Program User Guide

The program User Guide was developed to provide practical and specific information to supplement the VR Letter of Agreement, Supported Employment attachment to the LOA, and VR Procedures Manual. Additionally, the User Guide is intended to provide supported employment CRPs and VR staff with guidance in:

- Providing individualized services that promote informed choice and participation.
- Understanding and complying with operational procedures.
- The need for collaboration, cooperation, and coordination in SE service delivery.
- The roles, responsibilities, and expectations for supported employment CRPs.
- Planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating supported employment programs

A. OVERVIEW

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federal-state program that works with people who have physical or mental disabilities to help them prepare for, gain or retain employment. In keeping with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the agency prioritizes the provision of services to eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment Program User Guide describes the agency policies, procedures and standards, as they pertain to community rehabilitation providers (CRP) and their relationship between VR Field staff, individuals and administrative personnel. The Program User Guide will serve as a direction for CRPs and VR staff, providing information about various aspects of the provision of Supported Employment services to VR clients. This handbook serves as a working document that will evolve and change as needs and circumstances dictate.

The provision of Supported Employment services requires the participation of many agencies and individuals, each providing funding or direct client services from their own perspective. The collaboration of each agency and practitioner is imperative to successfully serve individuals through the supported employment program. These agencies may include the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Department of Education, community mental health agencies, CRPs, Career Center, Benefits to Work (BTW), and VR.

LAWS GOVERNING VR

Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

Code of Federal Regulations (34 CFR 361)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Tennessee Rules, Chapter 1240-08-11(Supported Employment Services Program)

B. DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

Supported Employment. The term ‘supported employment’ means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which individuals are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment, that is individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals involved, for individuals with the most significant disabilities

- (A) (1) for whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; or
(2) for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
- (B) who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition in order to perform the work involved.

Supported Employment Services. The term ‘supported employment services’ means ongoing support services, including customized employment, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment, that

- a) are provided singly or in combination and are organized and made available in such a way as to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment;
- b) are based on a determination of the needs of eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment; and
- c) are provided by the designated State unit for period of not more than 24 months, except that period may be extended, if necessary, in order to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment.

Competitive Integrated Employment. The term ‘competitive integrated employment’ means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) for which an individual

- (A) is compensated at a rate that:
 - (1) shall be not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or the rate specified in the applicable State or local minimum wage law; and
 - (2) is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; or
 - (3) in the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
 - (4) is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and

- (B) that is at a location where the employee interacts with other persons who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with other persons; and
- (C) that, as appropriate, presents opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), developed by the client and the VR counselor, is a description of the specific rehabilitation services. All services provided must be needed for the individual to achieve an employment outcome. An IPE must be designed to achieve the specific employment outcome that is selected by the individual and is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. The IPE must, to the maximum extent appropriate, result in employment in an integrated setting.

Customized Employment means competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability, is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer, and is carried out through flexible strategies, such as –

- A. job exploration by the individuals;
- B. working with an employer to facilitate placement, including –
 - (1) customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;
 - (2) developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location;
 - (3) representation by a professional chosen by the individual, or self-representation of the individual, in working with an employer to facilitate placement; and
 - (4) providing services and supports at the job location.

Employment Outcome (Supported Employment) means full-time or part-time competitive employment in an integrated setting. Closure of a person successfully rehabilitated in a supported employment outcome occurs when the following criteria are met. The employment must be:

- a) Consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.
- b) Maintained for a period of at least ninety (90) continuous days with a single employer following a period of stabilization.
- c) Consistent with the goals and terms of the IPE.

Competitive Wages means federal and/or state minimum wage, currently at \$7.25 per hour, paid directly by the employer to the client.

Ongoing support services are routine job maintenance contact, assistance with current work skills, training in new work skills, work-related problem resolution, crisis management, and career advancement.

Natural Supports is a form of extended services. These may include family, friends, co-workers, employers, and others who usually or routinely interact with an individual to provide the support necessary for the individual to maintain employment.

Extended Services are services provided once the time-limited services sponsored by VR are completed and consist of specific ongoing services needed to maintain the supported employment placement. The CRP provides ongoing support services to the employed individual. Practices that emphasize the ongoing supports include: assisting individuals in discovering their career interests by working in a competitive integrated setting; maintaining direct supports to individuals and employers after obtaining work; and, assisting individuals with moving into new jobs as long term job interests are clarified. Extended ongoing support services must be provided at a minimum of at least twice monthly monitoring at the worksite. If under specific circumstances, especially at the request of the individual, ongoing services may be provided away from the worksite to maintain employment stability.

C. ACRONYMS

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
CRP – Community Rehabilitation Provider
DIDD - Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
DMHSAS – Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
ENA – Employment Needs Assessment
ESP– Extended Support Plan
FFY – Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 – September 30)
IJS– Intensive Job Services
IPE – Individualized Plan for Employment
ISC– Independent Support Coordinator
LOA – Letter of Agreement
MSD–Most Significant Disability
PC1–Priority Category One
RSA – Rehabilitation Services Administration
SE – Supported Employment
SFY – State Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)
SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI – Supplemental Security Income
TRIMS – TN Rehabilitation Information Management System (VR client database)
TTW – Ticket to Work
VPO – Vendor Purchase Order
VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

D. ELIGIBILITY AND REFERRAL PROCESS FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The determination that a person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation is made by the VR Counselor alone. After the VR application and basic eligibility decision, the VR Counselor conducts a comprehensive Employment Needs Assessment (ENA) of the individual's interests, aptitudes, abilities, psycho-social needs and support, and assistive technology needs using a wide variety of assessments. These assessment tools may include: Trial Work Experience(s); Discovery; Integrated Work Site Assessments; Job Sampling; Basic Vocational Assessment; Standardized scales such as Vineland, Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised; review of existing VR case service records; and other appropriate assessment tools. The VR Counselor then determines the SE eligibility and need for Supported Employment services and develops the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with the client, CRP, and other appropriate individuals.

The VR Referral Form and records are sent to the Supported Employment CRP by the VR Counselor upon referral for services.

E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT DELIVERABLES AND RATES

Supported employment services will be provided based on an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for each individual referred for this service. This plan should be based on individual interest, referral information, interviews, comprehensive employment needs assessment, and other pertinent factors. This plan of services will be consistent with the services requested by the VR Counselor as specified in the IPE.

SE is a "payment for performance outcome" model that specifies points of payment based on the successful completion of the requirements defined for each milestone. The VR Counselor must pre-authorize in writing on the VPO, any and all services or components for which payment to the CRP is expected. When authorizing for Supported Employment services, the VR Counselor should issue an VPO at the beginning of each milestone process. CRPs agree to provide the comprehensive, full scope of services and components specified in the agreement.

This payment for performance approach emphasizes payment for outcomes rather than process. There is no guarantee of the number of VPOs to be provided by the VR Counselor. Continued use of the services will be dependent upon the CRP's success in assisting the client to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment.

Please note that VR has two fiscal years. The State Fiscal Year is July 1 – June 30 and the Federal Fiscal Year is October 1 – September 30. If an VPO was issued but the service was not initiated and is crossing over another fiscal year, the VPO has to be cancelled and reissued. If an VPO is 90 days old, the VR Counselor will cancel the VPO if no services are documented in the monthly reports.

In order to initiate Supported Employment services, the CRP must have received the Vendor Purchase Order (VPO) at the beginning of each milestone. Depending on the circumstances of the case and in consultation with the CRP, the VR Counselor may choose which milestone to begin and authorize for services.

Summary

Outcomes	Total Process: Up to \$6,700.
SE Consultation & Meeting	\$200.
Career Development & Placement	Up to \$1,500
Job Stabilization & Maintenance	Day 1 in Status 22, \$500. Day 30 in Status 22, \$750. Day 60 in Status 22, \$750.
Successful Employment Outcome	Up to \$3,000.
Financial Consequences	Payments under this SE Attachment, at each milestone, will not be approved for payment until all services are delivered and approved by the VR Counselor on the Vendor Purchase Order (VPO) and all Monthly progress Reports(s) and/or other required reports are submitted to the VR Counselor.

1. SE Consultation & Meeting Vendor Purchase Order code: SE001 Amount: \$200.

Once the CRP is selected based on informed choice, the individual, CRP, VR Counselor, and other appropriate individuals as approved by the individual, will participate in a consultation meeting. Considering the individual's interests, abilities, capabilities, and limitations, the team will agree on the supported employment services needed in order to achieve a successful employment outcome. The process involves maintaining a focus upon what is best to achieve the employment goal and the needs of the individual with disability through:

- Identification of the issue and need (including conditions of employment)
- Review of existing data and information
- Identification of strategies to address the issue and need
- Identification of benchmarks that demonstrates progress
- Recommendation of next steps, etc.

The CRP will thoroughly complete and submit the signed VPO along with the SE Consultation and Services Plan Report, to document that the process and plan for SE services have been completed within 10 working days from the meeting. The VR Counselor will approve the report and process the VPO for payment.

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) will be developed as a result of the information from the comprehensive ENA and from the results of the Consultation and Meeting. This IPE must also address how on-going support services will be delivered. The individual and/or guardian will demonstrate agreement with the IPE by their signature. A copy of the IPE is to be shared with the CRP and others involved in the development and/or implementation of the IPE as approved by the individual. The VR case should be

moved into Status 12 (Plan Development) after all necessary signatures on the IPE are obtained.

2. **Supported Employment: Career Development and Placement Vendor**
Purchase Order code: SE002 Amount: See Payment Structure

Preferred Work Outcome Payment:

\$1,500	Must have 30+ hours per week <u>and</u> employer provided health insurance benefits (not supplemental) <u>OR</u> 30+ hours per week and \$8.00+ per hour. Individual Community Placement at a business <u>other</u> than the CRP or any business entity owned or operated by the CRP. (Tier 1)
\$ 1,000	Must have 15+ hours per week and \$7.25+per hour. Individual Community Placement at a business <u>other</u> than the CRP or any business entity owned or operated by the CRP. (Tier 2)
\$ 500	Must have 14 hours or less per week and \$7.25 per hour. Individual community placement, CRP, and scattered site placement. (Tier 3)
	Hire offer for 10 hours or less per week whether Individual Community Placement or within the CRP will need VR approval in advance. If approved, \$500.

The VR Counselor will initially issue the VPO based on targeted number of work hours per week as discussed during the Consultation and Meeting. The VR Counselor will supplement or adjust according to the employment outcome when wage verification is submitted (copy of first pay stub).

Upon commencement of the job development and placement activities by the CRP, the VR Counselor should move the case into Status 18 (status indicating service provision) and issue Vendor Purchase Order (VPO) SE 002.

These services and activities are designed to equip the individual with the necessary skills to participate, to the greatest degree possible, with the job search process. It may include, but not be limited to the following activities:

- Evaluation of the labor market
- Career planning
- Job development
- Job placement
- Job and task analyses
- Job and soft skills counseling
- Job seeking skills, resume' preparation and interviewing skills
- Identification of rehabilitation assistive technology needs, if not addressed in the SE: Consultation and Meeting, or additional needs are identified
- Identification of natural support and long-term support providers
- Exploration of Social Security work incentives and other funding sources
- Incentive to Businesses
- Customized Employment
- Assist employers in identifying, modifying, and eliminating barriers and coordinate for a rehabilitation engineering consultation

Each individual is to receive services in a continuous process leading to obtaining and maintaining competitive, integrated placement.

The outcome of Supported Employment: Career Development and Placement must be a job that meets the definition of supported employment under federal and state regulations. Integration at the work site and working toward maximum potential should be considerations at this point.

When a job has been located for an individual, it is the responsibility of the VR counselor, with input from the individual and the CRP, to assure that the job is a suitable match. A suitable job match would correspond to the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interest, informed choice and the number of hours the individual is capable of working and meet competitive integrated employment definition.

At the time of entry into employment, a team meeting should be held if the job differs from the vocational objective on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This meeting should include the VR Counselor, CRP, the individual and other applicable individuals. The VR Counselor will amend the vocational goal, and copies of the amended plan will be given to all appropriate individuals.

The CRP will complete the SE: Hire Report and submit it to the VR Counselor along with properly signed and dated A & I, and wage verification documentation (copy of pay stub) for payment of this outcome. The VPO for SE: Career Development and Placement covers those activities leading up to and including job placement.

Payment will not be made for placement under this SE Attachment unless the job is with an employer with which the CRP has conducted job development activities for that particular individual. No payment will be made to the CRP in an instance where the client, or party other than the CRP, secures the job.

There will be no payment for placement of individuals into sheltered employment or any jobs that do not meet the federal definition of competitive integrated employment.

The Client Monthly Progress Report should be completed thoroughly and submitted to the VR Counselor each month that the individual (due on the 5th of each month) is in the SE: Career Development and Placement phase. The monthly reports should document activities to include individual's participation in doing job development and placement activities. The Job Development Contact(s) form being coordinated by the CRP with the individual must be included in the Client Monthly Progress Report.

Guidelines for placement outcomes within the CRP's business or Individual Community Placement with work hours of Ten (10) or less.

In some limited or extenuating circumstances it may be appropriate to place an individual within the CRP's work place. The following will apply to placement of a VR client with the CRP business:

The CRP will be paid according to the established fee component of the SE Attachment if all of the following conditions are met:

- 1) Employment must be appropriate and suitable in terms of job tasks, job interest, salary and benefits, and meets the client's vocational objective.
- 2) The job must not be created within the CRP for purposes of hiring a VR client being served under this SE Attachment. The client is to be employed in a type of job available and open to the general public.
- 3) **The job meets the federal guidelines of competitive employment in an integrated setting.**
- 4) The individual is to be employed under the same working conditions as others without a disability in similar positions.
- 5) The individual will have ongoing interaction with other workers, supervisors and the general public to the same degree as workers without disabilities in comparable positions. The general working conditions reflect integration with other workers rather than separation or segregation.
- 6) The VR District Field Supervisor must approve the placement before the hire date and that approval must be in writing, and made a part of the client's VR and CRP case file. The State Office Supported Employment liaison will be informed of the hire prior to payment of the Vendor Purchase Order (VPO).

The District Field Supervisor will approve all work outcomes of work hours of ten (10) hours or less per week.

In supported employment, job placement occurs at the time the client is placed and has started the job, at which time the VR month time-limited ongoing support services begin.

In some instances, **Scattered Site** placement is a placement strategy that the CRP may use. The employer of record is the business and not the CRP. By definition, scattered site is placement in a large company or close geographic area that has multiple competitive, integrated employment opportunities and is open to the provision of supported employment services or customized employment arrangements to ensure that workers with disabilities can be successful. If needed, a job coach is assigned to a business site where multiple individuals with disabilities will be working in various areas of the business in integrated settings. The job coach is available to check in as needed with individual workers with disabilities throughout the organization and to provide supports to individual workers with disabilities at varying levels.

This approach works well in (a) scenarios where individuals require some but not a great deal of onsite supports; and also (b) in scenarios where individuals with disabilities are being transitioned from facility-based work placements to supported employment because it allows for more support initially that can easily be decreased over time as the person develops additional skills and becomes more self-sufficient in the workplace. This is a model that works particularly well in large businesses or organizations, or with several companies that are co-located in one physical space.

Oftentimes when there is an excellent relationship between the business/employer and CRP, the business may request assistance from the CRP to fulfill their manpower needs. The VR Counselor needs to ensure that the placement in an existing scattered site placement is in the best interest of the individual based on informed choice, vocational goal, interests, and support needs. The VR Counselor will review the job development and placement activities prior to the actual agreement that placement of the individual in a scattered site is appropriate.

Training once employed:

When the individual has started employment, the VR case status is Status 18 (Service Provision). Although the individual is employed, Status 22 (In Employment) does not occur until job stabilization has ended using the criteria set forth in Item d below.

- a. The CRP will provide skilled job trainer(s) to the individual at the work site. This on-site job skills training may include job orientation, development and maintenance of production levels as expected by the employer, periodic reassessment and alternation of strategies, task analysis, transportation training, how to work with co-workers and supervisors, etc.

The training is individualized and personalized to meet the support needs of the individual. Job coaching may also include teaching the employer or co-workers strategies of working with the individual. Exploration of natural/work place supports should occur during this time if it has not been considered earlier. The individual as well as the employer and VR Counselor is expected to be involved in the planning, directing and evaluating of these services to help ensure that the individual will get stabilized on the job.

Job coaching services are inclusive in the Supported Employment established fee schedule.

- b. In some instances the individual, based on informed choice and disclosure, may choose not to receive on site job skills support from the CRP. The CRP is expected to provide off site job counseling to ensure job transition and maintenance. These contacts must be individualized and documented based on the need of the individual.
- c. The Client Monthly Progress Report should be submitted each month to the VR Counselor that the individual (due on the 5th of each month) is in the training phase. The monthly reports should sufficiently document activities being provided and coordinated by the CRP with the individual.

The monthly report must provide a description of the type of support needed on the job and strategies to address including worker traits, time management, and ability to follow directions. Employer feedback regarding the individual's work performance must be included on the report. Target goal date in moving the case into Stabilization (Status 22) must be addressed.

Note: Document the time spent with the individual and employer along with the report that outlines the number of hours devoted to job coaching and training. This is necessary if Intensive Job Services will be requested.

- d. It is anticipated that individuals in Supported Employment will reach a stabilization of support needs and will be transferred to the SE: Career Stabilization & Maintenance. With the input from the CRP, individual, and other appropriate individuals such as conservator, employer, the VR Counselor has the ultimate responsibility in deciding if the individual has met the stabilization guidelines as set forth by the guidelines, before moving the

case into Status 22 (in employment). **A guideline for determining employment stabilization is:**

- 1) The job site is not in jeopardy of ending; **AND,**
 - 2) The individual is maintaining work performance which is acceptable to the employer; **AND,**
 - 3) Job coach intervention has stabilized to an expected minimum level of intervention necessary for the individual to maintain employment, and must have leveled (faded) to the same number of job coach hours per day for a period of not less than ten (10) consecutive work days; **AND,**
 - 4) Natural supports have been fostered to the satisfaction of the employer and supported employee, **AND**
 - 5) On-going support services have been established and will continue at a minimum of two contacts per month at the work site. Job site contacts are strongly encouraged. However, if it is the individual's choice not to have job site visits, the contacts can be made off site. **In cases such as this, the individual and/or legal guardian must sign a statement verifying that off work site monitoring visits are being made at the individual's request.** A copy of the signed statement will be maintained by the CRP and a copy sent to the VR Counselor for case documentation.
- e. Stabilization will occur differently in each individual depending on their employment needs, limitations, support, and vocational goal. While there is no timeline as to how many days of employment before the job can be considered stabilized, the VR Counselor must use his or her professional judgment in making the decision based on documented information.
- For example, **if the individual moves to another job during stabilization, the re-stabilization period shall begin again. If the individual moves to another job after stabilization is completed and before the VR case is closed, re-stabilization should begin again on the first day of the new job.**
- The VR Counselor will pay applicable outcome fees based on where the client was in each milestone. For example, if CRP was paid for \$500 for Day 1 in Status 22 and for some reason the client lost his job at Day 40. The CRP is liable to assist the client for job replacement and training on the job. VR will not pay another \$500 for Day 1 in Status 22 or another Placement fee (Tier Payment), instead VR will pay \$750 at the next milestone achievement - at Day 30 in Status 22.**
- f. There would be cases that job interventions are required on 1:1 basis particularly those who are receiving DIDD court-appointed employment-based "special needs" individuals. Decisions regarding stabilization should be made jointly by the individual, the employer, CRP, and the VR counselor.

3. Supported Employment: Career Stabilization & Maintenance Vendor Purchase Order code: SE003

\$500	Payable at Day 1 in VR Status 22 (In Employment)
\$750	Payable at Day 30 in VR Status 22 (In Employment)
\$750	Payable at Day 60 in VR Status 22 (In Employment)

A team meeting involving the individual, legal guardian or conservator, a CRP representative, and the VR Counselor must be held prior to transition to the SE: Career Stabilization & Maintenance. If all members of the team are in agreement, payment of the Vendor Purchase Order (VPO) SE003 \$500 will be processed, provided that the CRP has completed and submitted the Monthly Progress Report indicating that employment information and stabilization criteria has been met along with the completed Extended Support Plan. At the conclusion of the meeting, the VR Counselor will move the case into Status 22 (In Employment).

It should be noted that VR is not paying for on-going support services; but for the completion of the required contact reports with specific information. It is expected that the CRP will comply with the federal regulations of providing on-going support to the individual to ensure job maintenance.

The VR Counselor will prepare a letter to the DIDD Independent Support Coordinator (ISC) requesting possible funding of on-going support services for the DIDD Medicaid Waiver recipient. (Please see attached sample letter).

The CRP will continue to submit monthly reports during this period. The VR Counselor will issue two Vendor Purchase Orders (SE003) amounting to \$750 each and will process payment at 30 days and at 60 days that the individual is in Status 22, upon receipt of appropriate reports along with the signed VPO.

4. Supported Employment: Successful Employment Outcome Vendor Purchase Order code: SE 004 Amount: See payment structure

Upon receipt of the 60 day report in Status 22 report and signed VPO from the CRP, the VR Counselor will issue the final VPO according to the employment outcome fee schedule.

Processing of the SE: Successful Employment Outcome VPO will be based on the individual maintaining a minimum of ninety (90) day employment as verified and reported by the CRP using the final monthly report, submission of individual's pay stub documentation (within the last 30 days) or other wage verification as approved by the VR Counselor. If there is a need to update the Extended Support Plan, the CRP must provide an addendum to the ESP. The VR Counselor will process the final VPO (SE 004) and supplement, if needed, at the completion of 90 days employment in Status 22.

Preferred Work Outcome Payment

\$3,000	Must have 30+ hours per week <u>and</u> employer provided health insurance benefits (not supplemental) <u>OR</u> 30+hours per week and \$8.00+ per hour. Individual Community Placement at a business other than the CRP or any business entity owned or operated by the CRP. (Tier 1)
\$ 2,000	Must have 15+ hours per week and \$7.25+ per hour. Individual Community Placement at a business other than the CRP or any business entity owned or operated by the CRP. (Tier 2)
\$1,500	Payment all other (Tier 3)

If the individual's work hours and wages increase before case closure; an additional payment can be made as itemized in the SE: Career Matching & Hire section.

For example: If at placement, CRP got paid for \$1,000 (placement at 15 hours per week at minimum wage) but after 90 days on the job, the individual's work hours increased to 30 hours per week at \$8.50/hour. The CRP will get an additional \$500 for placement fee when wage verification is provided. The VR Counselor will issue and pay the additional fee using VPO code SE002. This is a separate VPO from the final VPO SE004.

The CRP must follow federal guidelines for ongoing support contacts at all times. The CRP must keep timely and appropriate records to substantiate that ongoing support is being provided. These records must be available to VR staff upon request for review and monitoring.

OTHER: Supported Employment: Intensive Job Services (IJS) Vendor Purchase
Order code: SE 008 Amount: \$18 per hour

Intensive Job Services may be requested when appropriate to achieve a successful outcome. Approval must be given for the provision of Intensive Job Services of more than 100 hours during the lifetime of the VR case. This approval must be given by the VR District Field Supervisor and the Supported Employment State Office liaison. The Counselor and the CRP will discuss the need for Intensive Job Services at such time when it becomes evident that there is a need.

Intensive Job Services are those services that are necessary due to unusual and extraordinary circumstances which:

- a. May arise at any time during the Supported Employment process;
- b. Is/are attributable to the individual's severity of disability and intensive need for support, and;
- c. Which are absolutely necessary to obtain and/or maintain employment.

Example of Intensive Job Services: Based on the need of the individual, appropriate when the SE CRP is training staff who will carry out additional extended ongoing support services, if that staff is different from the CRP that provided the SE services. Note: The

CRP is still required to coordinate and maintain the minimum two ongoing contacts per month.

The need for Intensive Job Services must be explained in a memorandum to the VR Counselor, which will be submitted for approval signatures. At minimum, the memo must describe the intensive job services that will be provided to assist the individual in obtaining and/or maintaining community based employment and the anticipated number of hours of IJS.

SE: Intensive Job Services activities must be documented and submitted periodically using the Monthly Report form per negotiated agreement with the VR Counselor. The number of hours of intensive job services, activities, intervention and strategies, progress, and goals must be addressed on the monthly reporting form. The VPO cannot be processed for payment without the completed reports and intensive job services hours documented.

F. CONTINUATION OF ONGOING SUPPORT SERVICES UNDER EXTENDED SERVICES

The purpose of extended services is to provide those ongoing support services that are necessary to maintain the individual in the job, to restore stability as necessary, and to place the individual in a new job when a job is lost, or when appropriate, conduct career development. Ongoing meetings with the individual and monthly contact with the employer are required for routine support, to monitor the individual's work performance and adjustment, and to determine at the earliest time when destabilization appears to be occurring.

The Extended Support Plan is a tool for the CRP to use when providing ongoing support services. The employment specialist will further develop formal records that describe past, present, and future areas of the individual's needs as well as strategies for supports. The records must be maintained throughout the individual's employment tenure. These documents provide a record of individual preferences and successful support strategies. These records must be available to VR upon request for review and monitoring. Other state agency funding sources may need access to these records to verify funding allocation for ongoing services that are not funded by VR.

Reopening a Case / Post-Employment Services

Routine Job Replacement: After an individual's successfully rehabilitated case is closed in supported employment, there may be occasions which necessitate routine job replacement. Occasions such as:

- If the individual receiving ongoing support services from a CRP loses the job after case closure and needs routine job replacement, the CRP is responsible to provide suitable job replacement.
- An individual and his or her ongoing support service provider may request a meeting with a VR counselor to discuss the need for vocational rehabilitation services when the scope of the placement goes beyond routine job replacement.

Extensive Retraining or Underemployment: Post-employment services are not provided in situations where extensive retraining is needed or where extensive services are needed to assist the individual to advance in employment. If an individual in supported employment

requires extensive substantial services to regain or advance in employment, the VR counselor explains the procedures for reapplying for VR services and provides assistance when an individual chooses to reapply. The VR Counselor will review on-going support documentation and the Job/Tasks Analyses Form as part of the comprehensive employment needs assessment of the individual.

G. BEST PRACTICES

Benefits Counseling: Many individuals with most significant disabilities receive disability benefits such as Supplementary Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). They may also receive benefits related to health care, housing and/or food assistance. Benefits planning services are an important employment support. The VR counselor will coordinate the referral to the Benefits to Work Analyst.

Individual and/or appropriate individuals must be referred to the Benefits to Work Analyst. This will assure individuals and/or appropriate individuals involved in individual's benefits, have access to professional benefits counselors and understand the interaction between work earnings and disability-related benefits. Benefits counseling can help the individual to make informed choices regarding working and earnings; apply work incentives to manage benefits and the costs associated with going to work; and develop a plan that leads to greater economic self-sufficiency.

Funding source for Extended Services: Nationwide, practitioners of Supported Employment are utilizing diversified funding sources to provide financial support for extended services. Examples or potential sources may be as follows:

- Social Security Incentives: Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) and Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE).
- CRPs becoming Employment Networks
- Medicaid Waiver through DIDD
- Behavioral Health through DMHS
- Private Insurance carrier reimbursement
- Charitable/Foundations funds (i.e., United Way)
- Individual, Family contributions
- Natural Supports (for example, parents, supervisors, co-workers) provide the needed and appropriate supports. The employment specialist often interacts in more of a consultant role by teaching others appropriate and sensitive intervention, support functions, and monitoring of those supports.

Coordination of VR services with other State or Federal Program Services:

- When an individual is receiving services from another state or federal program, supported employment services to be included on the IPE are coordinated by the VR counselor along with a representative from the state or federal service. Examples of state or federal programs may include an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for student in Special Education, an

Individual Support Plan (ISP) for DIDD individual, or a Treatment Plan (TP) for an individual in a mental health program.

- The IPE includes a description of how the services on the IPE are coordinated with other state or federal services.

SE Providers Forums: Regional provider forums are being held for Supported Employment practitioners to network, to receive and exchange information, and to develop skills in improving service delivery. These forums will allow the practitioners to assess their training needs, and to provide training on best practices and issues, VR procedures and policies, and methods of monitoring the SE program. Attendance at the provider forums is strongly encouraged.

H. SUMMARY OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND FORMS:

In addition to the customary individual monthly reports and other pertinent reports submitted directly to the VR Counselor that should provide sufficient detail to validate the services that were delivered during the report month, each CRP must submit the following:

In order to monitor the progress being made with each individual receiving Supported Employment services within a CRP, a tracking report titled Supported Employment Services Monthly Program Report will be utilized. This is the listing of all individuals that have been authorized for SE services through the CRP.

The Supported Employment: Monthly Program Ongoing Support Report should be used to document ongoing support contacts once cases have been moved to SE: Career Stabilization & Maintenance (Status 22) and after VR has successfully closed the individual's case. All individuals receiving ongoing support after completing VR supported employment services during the calendar year (January 1 thru December 31) must be included on the report.

The following acronyms will be reflected on the monthly ongoing support report.

- RC – Routine contacts with the individual, supervisor, and others to assess the client's job performance, job satisfaction, and other general issues.
- AC – Assistance with current job duties, either in the form of additional training or physically assisting the client performs the work.
- TC – Training the client in new job duties assigned to the client post-closure.
- WR – Work related problem resolution, which may include low productivity, slow work, inappropriate work behaviors, poor hygiene, and other problems.
- NWR - Non-work related problem resolution, which include areas outside of the work environment but indirectly interfere on the client's job such as problems with transportation, medication or health issues, housing, clothing, etc.
- CM - Crisis management when client was in immediate danger of job loss due to extreme circumstances such as fighting, leaving the job, active psychosis, hospitalization, legal, etc.
- CA - Career advancement services such as assisting the client access additional training, increase work hours or wages, locate another position within the same or different employer.

The SE: Monthly Services Program Report and the SE: Monthly Ongoing Support Report is due by the 15th of each month and should be sent to mailbox VRreports.DHS@tn.gov.

SUMMARY OF CLIENT REPORTING FORMS

The following reports must be completed thoroughly and submitted to the VR Counselor timely:

SE CRP Consultation Meeting (SE001)

SE Consultation and Services Plan Report

SE: Career Development and Placement (SE002)

SE Client Monthly Progress Report

Job Development Contact(s)

SE Hire Report

SE: Career Stabilization & Maintenance (SE003)

SE Client Monthly Progress Report

Extended Support Plan

SE: Successful Employment Outcome (SE004)

SE Client Monthly Progress Report

OTHERS:

SE: Intensive Job Services (SE008)

Request for Intensive Job Services Form

SE Client Monthly Progress Report

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

The VR Counselor is the initial point of contact for communication regarding those clients, VPOs, and VR policies and procedures. The District Field Supervisor may be contacted when the counselor is not available or if facilitation is required regarding an individual's case.

The Regional Supervisor for the appropriate area may be contacted if there is a question regarding requirements of the LOA. For issues in which a CRP is dissatisfied with a decision made by VR Field staff, please contact Supported Employment state office liaison for information on the dispute resolution process.

Regional Offices

Region 1

Vacant Regional Supervisor
905 Buffalo Street (zip, 37604-6719)
Post Office Box 2120 (mailing address)
Johnson City, Tennessee 37605-2120
Telephone: (423) 434-6934
Fax: (423) 434-6963
Counties & TRCs Served: Carter, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington
Email:

Region 2

Amy Rader, Regional Supervisor
520 West Summit Hill Drive, Suite 301
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902
Telephone/TTY: (865) 594-6367
Fax: (865) 523-7852 or (865) 594-6535
Counties & TRCs Served: Anderson, Blount, Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Union
Email: Amy.Rader@tn.gov

Region 3

Tiffany Ramsey, Regional Supervisor
Eastgate Center, Suite 602-B
5600 Brainerd Rd, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411
Telephone: (423) 634-6700
Fax: (423) 634-6712
Counties & TRCs Served: Bledsoe, Bradley, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Moore, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie
Email: Tiffany.Ramsey@tn.gov

Region 4

Linda Suddarth, Interim Regional Supervisor
955 E. 20th Street
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501
Telephone/TTY: (931) 526-9783
Fax: (931) 525-1614
Counties & TRCs Served: Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren, White
Email: Linda.Suddarth@tn.gov

Region 5

Virginia Talley, Regional Supervisor
88 Hermitage Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37210
Telephone: (615) 741-1606
Fax: (615) 741-8180
Counties Served: Davidson; Robertson
Email: Virginia.Talley@tn.gov

Region 6

Mary Gordon, Regional Supervisor
6000 Trotwood Avenue
Columbia, Tennessee 38401
Telephone: (931) 380-2563
Fax: (931) 380-2567
Counties & TRCs Served: Bedford, Dickson, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Perry, Rutherford, Wayne, Williamson, Wilson
Email: Mary.Gordon@tn.gov

Region 7

Linda Randolph, Regional Supervisor
Lowell Thomas State Office Building,
225 Martin Luther King Boulevard
Jackson, Tennessee 38301
Telephone: (731) 423-5620
Fax: (731) 426-0563
Counties & TRCs Served: Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Fayette, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Lauderdale, Madison, McNairy, Tipton
Email: Linda.M.Randolph@tn.gov

Region 8

Virginia Talley, Interim Regional Supervisor
560 Benton Industrial Road
Camden, Tennessee 38320
Telephone: (731) 584-2147
Fax: (731) 584-6795
Counties & TRCs Served: Benton, Carroll, Cheatham, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Houston, Humphreys, Lake, Montgomery, Obion, Stewart, Weakley
Email: Virginia.Talley@tn.gov

Region 9

Greg Wright, Regional Supervisor
One Commerce Square
40 South Main Street, Suite 1000
Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1820
Telephone/TDD: (901) 528-5305
Fax: (901) 543-6036
Counties & Served: Shelby
Email: Greg.Wright@tn.gov

Region 10 & Region 11

Paula Knisley, Director, Field Operations
Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (10)
Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (11)
Knoxville, Tennessee 37167
Telephone: (865) 594-6860
Fax: (865) (865) 523-7852 or (865) 594-6535
All Counties Served
Email: Paula.Knisley@tn.gov



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

Telephone: FAX:
TTY:
www.state.tn.us/humanserv/

BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR

RAQUEL HATTER, MSW, Ed.D.
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

TO: , Independent Support Coordinator
FROM: , Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
DATE:
SUBJECT: Supported Employment Services for

 has been receiving supported employment services funded by the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) under a Supported Employment attachment to the Letter of Agreement (LOA) with . is currently employed at working hours a week as . will be considered stable in this employment effective . When stabilization is achieved, VR can no longer fund any services under the LOA and cannot fund ongoing services needed to help maintain in employment. It is anticipated that will be eligible to receive Medicaid Waiver funding for extended ongoing services.

In the event additional services provided under the LOA are needed for placement, training or stabilization, please contact me to discuss the circumstances. If additional services are approved, Medicaid Waiver funding must stop temporarily until stabilization and ongoing services are reestablished.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at tn.gov and/or at () ext. .

Thank you for your assistance and support in this case.

cc: , Community Rehabilitation Provider