

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Supported employment offers more than just the assistance needed to find and learn a job. It provides the necessary ongoing support to help an individual maintain employment. Kentucky has identified 93 supported employment providers throughout the state. Individualized strategies are also utilized to arrange for supported employment services outside of "organized programs" when necessary (i.e., coworkers at the job site may provide support paid for with various resources; independent supported employment specialists may be hired, etc.). More than three-fourths of Kentucky's 120 counties have access to supported employment programs. The lack of accessible and dependable transportation often limits access to supported job opportunities.

Extended services are provided by each local supported employment program utilizing funds from a myriad of sources, including the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID), the Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities, city and county governments, United Way, fund-raising campaigns, PASS funding, Medicaid, Supports for Community Living Waiver funds, Michelle P waiver funds and other resources. Most programs utilize a combination of funding sources for the provision of extended services. Natural supports are encouraged (such as co-workers, peers, etc.) and are carefully monitored by the supported employment provider.

Kentucky OVR's partner, the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID), has developed a new Medicaid Waiver that would more adequately fund supported employment services for people with developmental disabilities. The Supports for Community Living Waiver 2 (SCL2) effective in 2014 calendar year increased the fee structure and modified the service definitions for supported employment.

Kentucky's supported employment programs have primarily served individuals with intellectual disability and individuals with chronic mental illness. This is largely due to greater availability of funding for extended services for these two groups. Individuals with other disabilities are served if funding for extended services is available and if the supported employment provider has the expertise to meet that individual's needs for employment training and support.

Kentucky has become the 12th state to participate in the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment, which is an evidenced-based practice. The goal is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the IPS model for supported employment for people with serious mental illness throughout Kentucky. In July 2011, four sites in Kentucky began pilot site implementation. In 2012, two sites were added. In 2013, three sites were added. In 2014 BHDDID required that all Community Mental Health Centers implement the IPS program as one of the four evidence-based practices required in their state plan. A Statewide Coordinator, employed through the University of Kentucky, Human Development Institute, oversees the pilot sites.

Currently there are 18 providers in KY that provide IPS supported employment services, which serves 70 of the 120 counties in Kentucky. OVR has implemented an agreement with the University of Kentucky for the purpose of increasing technical and fidelity monitoring to support new IPS

providers. OVR is planning establishment projects for prospective expansion initiatives with community rehabilitation providers.

A second coordinator was hired in late 2013. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Kentucky Division of Behavioral Health collaborate as Team Leading agencies for the project. The Kentucky Association for Persons in Supported Employment (KY APSE) has been successful in creating greater supported employment awareness among the legislators in Kentucky's General Assembly. These awareness/advocacy efforts will continue with the goal of increased statewide funding allocations and possible supported employment legislation to create a more solid funding base for extended services.

QUALITY

Pursuant to federal regulations, supported employment services provided by approved vendors must contain these elements: 1) competitive work; 2) integrated work settings; and 3) provision of extended services. In order to ensure that supported employment services are provided according to regulation, the following guidelines must be met:

1. Services will be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who have a documented need for supported employment services, including extended services.
2. Work will be performed on a full-time or part-time basis. Each individual in supported employment and his/her OVR counselor shall jointly establish in the IPE an appropriate goal for the number of hours per week that will maximize the individual's vocational potential.
3. Work must take place in integrated settings where most workers do not have disabilities.
4. Wages must be in compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act. Each supported employee will have a goal of earning at least minimum wage. Kentucky's supported employment providers adhere to the following principles:

The supported employment concept assumes that all persons, regardless of degree of disability, have the capacity and should be afforded the opportunity to participate in real employment with appropriate support.

Emphasis is placed on recognizing and maximizing opportunities in the workplace rather than just providing skills training.

The purpose of the program is employment with all of the general expectations of a job such as wages, job security, and performing meaningful work. Job Development rather than Job Placement is the focus.

Ongoing, extended services are tailored to meet each individual's needs.

Individuals are offered choices in the selection and maintenance of jobs. Decisions about appropriate services are made jointly with the individual and/or the family, the supported employment provider, and the VR counselor.

Integration on the job site is recognized as necessary and important. Opportunities are available for non-work interactions with non-disabled workers. Interactions with non-disabled co-workers are

a part of regular job responsibilities. "Natural supports" are developed and emphasized.

Extended services are proactive, not merely reactive. For example, plans are developed with individuals in anticipation of career advancement rather than merely waiting for a job loss, lay off, company closing, etc., before seeking other opportunities.

The primary staff responsible for providing supported employment services are "job coaches," "job trainers," and/or "supported employment specialists." Positions are both full and part-time, depending on the size and service territory of the local provider. Training and Consultation for staff is provided by the Supported Employment Branch according to the needs of the provider.

Supported Employment Training Project core values training is required for all vendors in the SE Outcome-based Reimbursement System. This is funded collaboratively using Department of Behavioral Health Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities/OVR dollars and is implemented by the Supported Employment Training Project at the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute.

Technical assistance is also provided by the OVR CRP Branch staff. A resource manual and other policies and guidelines memorandum were developed for vocational rehabilitation counselors. These are periodically revised and updated so that staff may better understand the rehabilitation process in regard to supported employment. This is a useful tool for supported employment providers as well.

Seminars, workshops, and training/awareness sessions are arranged and/or participated in throughout the state with various agencies and organizations that can assist with funding, conversion, employment, and other related supported employment issues. Meetings of this nature are regularly held with such groups as The Arc of Kentucky, the Kentucky Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities, Community Mental Health Centers, Kentucky Consortium for Values Based Training, KY APSE, Kentucky Rehabilitation Association and others.

The quality of supported employment outcomes is assessed individually. Such issues as Consumer satisfaction, earnings, benefits, employee and employer satisfaction, the degree of integration, availability of dependable transportation, co-worker support, socialization, work environment, and provision of support services are important. On a regular basis, the CRP Branch staff conducts technical assistance visits with each provider for quality assurance purposes. As well, each supported employment provider has established on-going strategies to measure customer satisfaction.

EXTENT

As a part of the eligibility determination process for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation services, supported employment will be considered as a possible vocational outcome for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency is now in an order of selection, serving all priority categories of services. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will be able to provide supported employment services through approved vendors and/or individual providers.

These services include:

1. Development of a Person-Centered Employment Plan (PCEP). Vocational Profile, or Career Profile with recommendations for job- development.

2. Individually designed job development services, including assistance with customization, job carving, reasonable accommodation, technology and/or other support strategies.
3. Intensive on-the-job skills training and other support services provided by supported employment specialists and/or co-workers and employers.
4. Time-unlimited follow-up services (including regular contact with employer, trainee, parent, guardian, or others deemed appropriate).
5. Other services needed to support the individual, such as travel, training, employment advocacy, non-employment advocacy, and counseling.
6. Development of a Long-Term Support Plan, which includes an outline of the extended services to be provided, and a plan for review and update. The amount, frequency and type of services will be based on the needs of each individual once eligibility is established for supported employment. If off-job-site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, the monitoring, at a minimum, will consist of two meetings per month with the individual and one meeting each month with the employer. Extended services for individuals not considered as youth will be the responsibility of other relevant state agencies, private organizations, and other sources of funding. These services will be considered and planned for prior to an individual receiving the services listed above. Vendor status is not approved unless assurance is made of the availability of extended services. If extended services are not fully assured at the onset of the IPE, the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and the OVR CRP Branch staff will participate with the provider in making arrangements for these services before the Vocational Rehabilitation case is closed.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation conducted a statewide survey of field counselors to explore the need and availability of Customized Supported Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. It was expected, due to Section 511 of WIOA, that there would be an increase in the need and demand for Customized Supported Employment Services. Fifty-two percent (52%) stated that there are Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers in their area that provide CSE. However, 62% also stated that it's not readily available due to limited staff or oversized caseloads. Around 93% of the counselor's state that only 3 or fewer of their individuals have been able to utilize this service due to lack of availability. When asked if there was a need for CSE in their area, overwhelmingly, 85% stated that there was a need. Over 46% stated that they have at least 4 or more consumers on their caseloads that could benefit from CSE. Over 17% state that they have at least 8 or more consumers that need this service.

As a result, the OVR is exploring possible contract scenarios to assist in making this service readily available to individuals with the most significant disabilities in the areas of the state that need it most. This need continues to grow, as indicated from the data retrieved from a recent survey. OVR is also exploring the implementation of a customized employment fidelity scale.

The CRP Branch within the OVR is making this a main priority to ensure the needs of the individuals being served are met, which will assist them in accomplishing their vocational goals and dreams.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

Transition from Title VI, Part B funds to various other individually determined funding sources begins 90-days post-placement in the job. The transition to extended services funding is completed

(generally) after 90 days on the job. Monitoring of services continues for a minimum of 90 additional days to assure that the job is stable. Extended services then continue by the provider indefinitely using funds other than Title VI, Part B. The VR case is closed when the supported employment provider, the VR counselor, and the consumer determine that stabilization has been achieved. Stabilization is measured for each individual by considering all circumstances including support needs, consumer choice and satisfaction regarding services, and employer feedback. Extended services are funded and made available without delay for youth with the most significant disabilities.

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Extended Services are those services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, which may include youth with the most significant disabilities. Services may be provided by the State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer or any other appropriate resource when the individual no longer receives support services from the agency. OVR will determine the need for and fund services on a case-by case basis dependent upon each individual's need for services. OVR will reserve and expend half (50%) of the State's allotment for the provision of supported employment services and extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

Extended services will be available for youth without delay for a period not to exceed four years or until the youth no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability. OVR will work with providers to ensure another source of extended services to youth are available so there will be no interruption of services for individuals with significant disabilities.