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GOVERNOR

## EDUCATION AND LABOR CABINET

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
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SECRETARY

### SERVICE FEE MEMORANDUM

### Inclusive Circles Autism Program

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**TO:** Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Staff  
Client Assistance Program Administrator

**FROM:** Executive Director  
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

**THROUGH:** Field Services Division Director  
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

**DATE:** Effective: June 7, 2024

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### Introduction

Puzzle Pieces Autism Services has created ***Inclusive Circles***, a program that offers six areas of assistance specifically designed to address the challenges faced by students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and to increase their success on Owensboro Community Technical College (OCTC) campus. The six pillars of support within the Inclusive Circles Program include:

- Study tables
- Mentoring
- Socials
- Mental Health Counseling

- Weekly Advisor Meetings
- Social skills Curriculum

The theoretical framework for Inclusive Circles is Social Information Processing Theory and Executive Functioning Skill Development. Inclusive Circles will be a multifaceted and comprehensive program developed to support the holistic needs of degree-seeking OCTC students on the Autism Spectrum. All students within Puzzle Pieces Autism Services Inclusive Circles are degree seeking students at Owensboro Community Technical College. Puzzle Pieces is the only provider of these types of services in the Owensboro area and is excited to extend our growth to other local campuses as we build a foundation.

The theoretical framework for Inclusive Circles is Social Information Processing Theory and Executive Functioning Skill Development. The six pillars of support within the Inclusive Circles Program: study tables, mentoring, socials, mental health counseling, weekly advisor meetings and social skills curriculum.

### **Pillar One: Study Tables**

Inclusive Circles students will attend 3-hour study table sessions four days a week. During these sessions, Puzzle Pieces staff members will provide support with executive functioning skills as well as tutoring. Students would be able to accomplish many homework tasks during the required sessions, which would help to ensure a focus on coursework remains a priority.

### **Pillar Two: Socials**

Inclusive Circles participants would be encouraged, though not required, to participate in organized social activities, such as video game nights, restaurant outings, and volunteerism. These activities would be provided at least twice monthly, and students would have the opportunity to assist with planning.

### **Pillar Three: Weekly Advisor Meetings**

Every student in the Inclusive Circles will be assigned an adviser that meets with them on a weekly basis. Advisers would be full-time staff members of Puzzle Pieces. Students can discuss specific concerns such as academic challenges, social questions, and extracurricular organizational concerns. These advisers would go over student schedules and act as a liaison with professors.

## **Pillar Four: Mentoring**

The mentoring support program would provide each student with a mentor to meet with on a weekly basis in a small group setting. Mentors will help students get acclimated and involved in various clubs and organizations on OCTC's campus as well as foster relationships among peers. These mentors would be current OCTC students and would be hired for their role in the Inclusive Circles program.

## **Pillar Five: Mental Health Counseling**

Inclusive Circles participants will have access to Puzzle Pieces' full time mental health counselor. The counselor will offer both private and group counseling to students in the Inclusive Circles program. Students may see the counselor on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis.

## **Pillar Six: Social Skills Curriculum**

This is a credit-bearing course with a fully established curriculum with a letter grade attached. This curriculum is made up of two, yearlong courses dedicated to the development of the social skills needed to navigate through a college career. Each subsequent year builds on the skills developed the previous year. The curriculum is written and structured based on the latest research in the field.

## **Requirements**

The cost of the program is \$5,000.00 per semester. Puzzle Pieces agrees to only seek reimbursement for OVR consumers involved in the Inclusive Circles Program. Puzzle Pieces will provide a monthly report to the OVR Counselor regarding services provided skill enhancement.

## **Vendor Information:**

Puzzle Pieces: KY0044055