

JOB PLACEMENT MANUAL



The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

Philosophy

We recognize and respect the contribution of all individuals as a necessary and vital part of a productive society.

Mission

The Mission of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence.

Values

We value the rights, merit, and dignity of all persons with disabilities and the opportunity to pursue employment as an important aspect of a full and meaningful life.

We value all staff, their individual talents, unique abilities, and contributions to the agency's mission.

We value collaborative efforts and partnerships which support the agency's mission.

To all Job Placement Specialists:

This manual is meant to be a useful tool for all job placement specialists but especially for the new specialists just starting out. This manual is a place to begin, but the material in it can be adapted to fit the individual style of the particular specialist or the needs of a particular district. This manual and the information contained in it should also be adapted to fit each consumer and their disability and limitations. For example, when it comes to filling out applications and doing interviews, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder may need to have some of the information concerning those topics adapted to fit their particular needs and limitations. Of course, anything that is done with a consumer should

fit with the philosophy, mission, and values of OVR in compliance with all policies and procedures of OVR.

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Role of a Job Placement Specialist

Job Placement Specialists provide services to employers, consumers, and counseling staff, with the goal of assisting the eligible, job-ready consumer in finding suitable employment. The Job Placement Specialist utilizes a marketing approach, which is designed to increase the quantity and quality of placements. Marketing is an on-going continuous approach that enables OVR to determine the needs of employers and how we can best assist them in meeting those needs. The goal is to develop long-term employer relationships and improve employer satisfaction, resulting in increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

A referral to the Job Placement Specialist for job placement assistance, Pace services, and other appropriate services should be considered in most cases. Consumers nearing completion of academic or vocational/technical training programs should be referred for employment assistance in advance of their completion date. Counselors are encouraged to refer all job ready consumers to the Job Placement (JP) staff in order for them to develop and maintain a qualified applicant pool, which will assist in the timely referral of applicants for job openings.

Counselors are to complete a job placement referral form, enclosing pertinent information related to individual's skills, interests, and abilities. Also include any pertinent medical or vocational testing information that would assist the JP staff in exploring appropriate employment opportunities. Upon receipt of the referral, the JP staff will contact the job ready consumer for an assessment of job seeking skills.



**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
JOB CLASS SPECIFICATION**

VOC REHAB PROGRAM SPECIALIST I

Job

Number: 20001039

Job Code: 47150V000101

Job Group: 4700 - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Job Established: 08/16/2005

Job Revised: 05/16/2008

Grade: 12 Salary (MIN - MID):

\$14,938-\$19,789 - Hourly

\$2,427.44-\$3,215.72 - 37.5 Hr. Monthly

Salary

\$2,589.26-\$3,430.10 - 40 Hr. Monthly Salary

Special Entrance Rate:

NONE

NONE

NONE

PROBATIONARY PERIOD:

This job has an initial and promotional probationary period of 6 months. For additional information refer to: <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/kar/101/001/325.htm>.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOB: *Characteristics of a job are general statements indicating the level of responsibility and discretion of positions in that job classification. These are not intended to be an exhaustive list.*

Under supervision, gains skills to perform professional level vocational rehabilitation functions such as vocational or technology assessments, rehabilitation technology, rehabilitation instruction, personal adjustment, job development and job placement functions, basic public relations functions, supported employment and/or vocational evaluation; OR Under supervision performs as a novice counselor, providing basic vocational rehabilitation caseload duties such as collecting information and making recommendations for determining eligibility, plan development and implementation; and performs other duties as required.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION:

Graduate of a college or university with a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, rehabilitation teaching or therapy, guidance and/or counseling, psychology, sociology, orientation and mobility, social work, special education, education with emphasis in vocational counseling or a related field.

EXPERIENCE:

NONE

Substitute EDUCATION for EXPERIENCE:

NONE

Substitute EXPERIENCE for EDUCATION:

NONE

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS (AGE, LICENSURE, REGULATION, ETC.):

NONE

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES OR RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JOB CLASSIFICATION:

Examples of duties or responsibilities are not to be construed as describing what the duties or responsibilities of any position shall be and are not to be construed as limiting the appointing authority's ability to assign, or otherwise alter the duties and responsibilities of a position. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

At the entry level works directly with consumers to assess needs. Recommends training hours and learns to provide training in skilled areas to persons with disabilities. Learns to provide training in personal adjustment, recreation, adult basic education, Braille, Orientation and Mobility, adapting to assistive technology, etc., in a community-based environment or under a regionalized model. Becomes familiar with administering diagnostic testing and other screening devices. Provides documentation, for supervisors' approval, as to consumer's skill levels and ability to perform skills needed for rehabilitation, training or to gain independence leading to employment. Gains skills to assess consumer's readiness for employment or rehabilitation technology. Works with consumer to teach recommended skills. Coordinates services with vendors, counselors and other service providers. With guidance, develops individual plans including vocational training, technical aids and devices, transportation and other necessary vocational rehabilitation services. Gains skills so as to recommended training or employment area of interest to consumers is consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of the eligible individual. Provides expertise to business and industry. Learns to serves as a trainer so as to work with consumers individually and in group settings and provides input to rehabilitation management on program goals, objectives and accomplishments. Under close supervision of a Rehabilitation Branch Manager and/or counselor mentor, serves as a novice counselor providing beginning level counseling services such as collecting information to determine eligibility, plan development and implementation. With manager's approval, initiates services and enters data into case management system. Travels assigned area to take referrals, counsel consumers and provide vocational rehabilitation services.

UNIQUE PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS: *Incumbents in the job will typically perform their job duties under these conditions.*

Work is performed primarily in an office setting. Occasional travel will be required to coordinate services between customers and the agency.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

Upon appointment, employees in this class may be required to maintain a valid driver's license and required to drive a licensed vehicle. This status may be necessary for the length of time in this class. If this is necessary it will be listed in the specific position description for that position. Applicants and employees in this job title may be required to submit to a drug screening test and background check. Applicants and employees in positions which perform job duties that may require contact with offenders in the custody or supervision of the Department of Corrections or with youth in the care, custody, or supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice must meet qualifications pursuant to the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act, 28 C.F.R.115.17 and 115.317.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, DISABILITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, GENETIC INFORMATION OR VETERAN STATUS. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, application, testing, medical examinations, layoff/recall, assignments, evaluation, disciplinary actions, leave, and benefits. The ADA covers employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and to labor organizations. The ADA's nondiscrimination standards also apply to federal sector employees under section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and its implementing rules.

An individual with a disability is a person who:

- **Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;**
- **Has a record of such an impairment; or**
- **Is regarded as having an impairment.**

Other individuals who are protected in certain circumstances include 1) those, such as parents, who have an association with an individual known to have a disability, and 2) those who are coerced or subjected to retaliation for assisting people with disabilities in asserting their rights under the ADA.

The ADAAA of 2008 clarified the meaning of the definition of an individual with a disability. One important change that the ADAAA made is that bodily functions, such as normal cell growth, are now considered major life activities. This allows many individuals with “hidden” disabilities to benefit from protection under the ADAAA.

The ADAAA of 2008 also provides nine rules of construction to determine if the impairment “substantially limits” at least one major life function. The purpose of the rules is to ensure that individuals are assessed individually and quickly, compared to the general population, and mitigating measures are not considered. The intent of the ADAAA is to allow many more people to be identified as an individual with a disability.

Based on these concepts, the ADAAA does identify that the individualized assessment of some kinds of impairments will almost always result in a definition of disability. For example: an intellectual disability substantially limits brain function, epilepsy substantially limits neurologic function, and HIV substantially limits immune function.

The purpose in these changes was to encourage employers to move past the disability determination stage and focus on the accommodation.

A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question. Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- **Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.**
- **Job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position;**
- **Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters.**

An employer is required to make a reasonable accommodation to the known disability of a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an "undue hardship" on the operation of the employer's business. Reasonable accommodations are adjustments or modifications provided by an employer to enable people with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Accommodations vary depending upon the needs of the individual applicant or employee. Not all people with disabilities (or even all people with the same disability) will require the same accommodation. For example:

- **A deaf applicant may need a sign language interpreter during the job interview.**
- **An employee with diabetes may need regularly scheduled breaks during the workday to eat properly and monitor blood sugar and insulin levels.**
- **A blind employee may need someone to read information posted on a bulletin board.**
- **An employee with cancer may need leave to have radiation or chemotherapy treatments.**

An employer does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation if it imposes an "undue hardship."

Undue hardship is defined as an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as an employer's size, financial resources, and the nature and structure of its operation. There is not a precise definition of "undue hardship" in the law, it is determined on a case-by-case basis.

An employer is not required to lower quality or production standards to make an accommodation; nor is an employer obligated to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.

An employer generally does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation unless an individual with a disability has asked for one. If an employer believes that a medical condition is causing a performance or conduct problem, it may ask the employee how to solve the problem and if the employee needs a reasonable accommodation. Once a reasonable accommodation is requested, the employer and the individual should discuss the individual's needs and identify the appropriate reasonable accommodation. Where more than one accommodation would work, the employer may choose the one that is less costly or that is easier to provide.

The ADA (and ADAAA) are enforced by bringing lawsuits against employers. There is not an inspection or a fine that is levied when the rules are not followed. There is no required reporting of ADA data.

Title I of the ADA also covers:

- **Medical Examinations and Inquiries**
Employers may not ask job applicants about the existence, nature, or severity of a disability. Applicants may be asked about their ability to perform specific job functions. A job offer may be conditioned on the results of a medical examination, but only if the examination is required for all entering employees in similar jobs. Medical examinations of employees must be job related and consistent with the employer's business needs. Medical records are confidential. The basic rule is that with limited exceptions, employers must keep confidential any medical information they learn about an applicant or employee. Information can be confidential even if it contains no medical diagnosis or treatment course and even if it is not generated

by a health care professional. For example, an employee's request for a reasonable accommodation would be considered medical information subject to the ADA's confidentiality requirements.

- **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

Employees and applicants currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs are not covered by the ADA when an employer acts on the basis of such use. Tests for illegal drugs are not subject to the ADA's restrictions on medical examinations. Employers may hold illegal drug users and alcoholics to the same performance standards as other employees. However, people who have been rehabilitated and do not currently use drugs illegally, or who are in the process of completing a rehabilitation program may be protected by the ADA.

Actions which Constitute Discrimination

The ADA specifies types of actions that may constitute discrimination. These include: limiting, segregating, or classifying a job applicant or employee in a way that adversely affects employment opportunities for the applicant or employee because of his or her disability, denying employment opportunities to a qualified individual because s/he has a relationship or association with a person with a disability, refusing to make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability, unless the accommodation would pose an undue hardship on the business, using qualification standards, employment tests, or other selection criteria that screen out or tend to screen out an individual with a disability unless they are job-related and necessary for the business, failing to use employment tests in the most effective manner to measure actual abilities, (Tests must accurately reflect the skills, aptitude, or other factors being measured, and not the impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills of an employee or applicant with a disability unless those are the skills the test is designed to measure), and denying an employment opportunity to a qualified individual because s/he has a relationship or association with an individual with a disability. It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on disability or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under the ADA.

- **Federal Tax Incentives to Encourage the Employment of People with Disabilities and to Promote the Accessibility of Public Accommodations**

The Internal Revenue Code includes several provisions aimed at making businesses more accessible to people with disabilities. The following provides general - non-legal - information about three of the most significant tax incentives. (Employers should check with their accountants or tax advisors to determine eligibility for these incentives or visit the Internal Revenue Service's website, www.irs.gov, for more information. Similar state and local tax incentives may be available.)

- **Small Business Tax Credit (Internal Revenue Code Section 44: Disabled Access Credit)**

Small businesses with either \$1,000,000 or less in revenue or 30 or fewer full-time employees may take a tax credit of up to \$5,000 annually for the cost of providing reasonable accommodations such as sign language interpreters, readers, materials in alternative format (such as Braille or large print), the purchase of adaptive equipment, the modification of existing equipment, or the removal of architectural barriers.

- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (Internal Revenue Code Section 51)**

Employers who hire certain targeted low-income groups, including individuals referred from vocational rehabilitation agencies and individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be eligible for an annual tax credit of up to \$2,400 for each qualifying employee who works at least 400 hours during the tax year. Additionally, a maximum credit of \$1,200 may be available for each qualifying summer youth

employee.

- **Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction (Internal Revenue Code Section 190 Barrier Removal):** This annual deduction of up to \$15,000 is available to businesses of any size for the costs of removing barriers for people with disabilities, including the following: providing accessible parking spaces, ramps, and curb cuts; providing wheelchair-accessible telephones, water fountains, and restrooms; making walkways at least 48 inches wide; and making entrances accessible.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, <http://askjan.org>

Referral Form

Date of Referral _____

Consumer's Name _____

Counselor _____

Primary Disability _____

Secondary Disability _____

Vocational Goal _____

Please Select

- Direct Job Placement
- PACE Site Placement
- Resume' and/or Cover Letter Writing
- Mock Interviews
- Other Please Explain: _____

Comments and/or Concerns: _____

Please include the following information with the referral form

OVR-2 Eligibility Worksheet IPE OVR-15b

Background Check (if applicable) Resume' (if client has an existing resume')

First page of Career Scope that charts interests and abilities

Vocational/Psychological Evaluation

PETS

SGA

Return Referral Form and additional information: _____

Intake Meeting

1. On the day of the intake meeting the Job Placement Specialist should:

- Ask Questions to verify work history, about disability and limitations on the individual, about their employment goal, substance abuse history (if that is part of their disability) Example: “If you were to take a drug test today, would you be able to pass it?”(See other questions below that you might consider asking)
- Get Information-a signed copy of the consumer confidentiality form
- Give the consumer resources/folder of information
- Go over what is given to them with them and expectations-ideas, plans for job placement support of consumer job search, working toward a vocational goal
- Listen to/answer and concerns or questions.
- Get a copy of the resume if they have one or begin gathering information for the resume
- Should require a background check from the counselor or from the assistant of the counselor if the counselor didn't provide one originally
- Schedule the next appointment, mock interview, etc.
- Put information in CMS

2. The consumer should:

- Dress for the intake as if it was an interview with an employer-the consumer does not need to buy anything but just needs to use clothes already owned (some job placement specialists may not require this)
- Allow for 1-2 hours
- Bring a resume if one exists or the information that goes into a resume specifically the completed packet that the job placement person mailed to them.

Intake Meeting Potential Questions

Do you require childcare/adult care?

Do you have adequate housing?

Do you speak, read, write, and understand English?

Do you have limited work experience or gaps in your employment?

Do you have a history of substance abuse?

Are you willing to seek skills and career changes?

Have you had a job interview since your last employer? If so, how did it go?

Are you willing to volunteer/intern?

Do you have professional dress for a job interview? (No jeans, tennis shoes, etc.)

What services do you feel will help you in obtaining/retaining gainful employment?

Do you want to upgrade your skills before reemployment?

What are your short/long term career goals?

Can you walk me through a typical day for you?

Case Management System (CMS)

How to enter information into CMS:

- **Search**-name, social security number, case number
- **Work with Staff Provided Services**-record all contact with consumers
- **“NEW”**-under task menu
- **Service Type**-Can choose General VR services, Pre-ETS services, or SGA services if in the treatment group
- **Subtask**-Job Placement-Intake (last one)
- **Staff Title**-Job Placement Specialist
- **Begin Date**-enter a begin date and an end date (when service is finished) (The end date will be required eventually) Comment afterward needs to be as detailed as possible.
- **Staff**-will prefill with whoever is logged in but can be changed if someone else is entering data
- **Current Profile:** Staff Provided Services (Print for records) CMS doesn't show the complete note; can be printed and emailed to the counselor for their case

The following services should be entered into the CMS case records:

- **Job Readiness Training**-Training to prepare an individual for the world of work:
 - Appropriate work behaviors
 - Getting to work on time
 - Appropriate dress and grooming
 - Increasing productivity
 - Resume preparation
 - Developing interview skills
- **Job Search Assistance**- Activities which support and assist in a consumer's search for an appropriate job:
 - Identifying appropriate job opportunities
 - Making contacts with employers
 - Follow-ups
- **Job Placement Assistance**- Referral to a specific job resulting in an interview
- **Documentation by Job Placement staff should reflect the following elements:**
 - Can run reports daily, weekly, monthly, etc.-don't have to copy, paste, and print notes
 - Counselor referral information
 - Signed Release
 - Initial staffing and progress notes regarding all on-going contacts
 - Job seeking classes
 - Resource Lab participation
 - Job development contacts with employers
 - Employment info including start date, place of employment, job title, wages and benefits
 - Follow-up contacts at 30, 60, 90 days, notification of employment and 90 days to counselor

Resumes

- 1) Name, address, phone number and email address at top center (although it doesn't have to be necessarily) *Make sure this is a current working phone number and email as many employers use one or both as the primary contact to applicants. It seems that consumer addresses and phone numbers change often so stay on top of this information and make changes to the resume as needed. A Curricula Vitae or personal summary may be included after this to give an overview of the individual's experience or personal qualifications. This may be the employer's first impression of the applicant when they read the resume.
- 2) An objective can be put next, often depending upon the type of employment that is being searched for. For example, employers for unskilled jobs usually seek applicants with specific work experience or just a HS diploma or GED while a skilled job often requires experience plus college / vocational / technical school or certifications. For unskilled jobs, an objective is not usually needed on a resume.
- 3) Work experience should be the third section and components are generally: Company Name, City / State, Job Title, Dates worked (month/year to and from), and a brief list of primary job duties. It is important to tailor this section to the specific employers / jobs that are being applied for. For example, a person may have several years of production labor experience but the person just became a CNA and is applying to a nurse assistant position. The employer will not want every little detail of the work in the factory setting so the descriptive words should be chosen carefully and applied to similar work in the CNA field, such as listing experience multi-tasking, communication skills, problem solving and so on. Resumes can be written chronologically, functionally, or as a combination of the two styles. It may depend on the individual consumer and their particular work history.
- 4) The fourth section is usually education. Again, this should be employer specific. If the job being applied for requires only a HS diploma or GED, there is no need to list college degrees, certifications, etc. unless it applies to this specific job. There could also be a place to put licenses and maybe even languages the individual speaks if that information is applicable to the job. It is best to leave off the year of graduation if it is greater than 10 years even though it will be on your official application, the employer will probably look at the resume first. Sometimes little facts like that stick in an employer's mind so that it clouds other standout points on a resume.
- 5) The fifth section is volunteer work, community activities, hobbies, etc. that you feel specifically relate to the job for which you are applying or that will make the individual stand out to the employer. If nothing applies, leave this section off the resume.
- 6) The sixth and final section is for references. Do not put "references available upon request". Employers do not have time to call people just to supply references. References should always be on the resume and application. Avoid putting family or former supervisors as many employers specifically ask you not to use them. People that are aware of work habits and skills should be listed. Those individuals can attest to the type of worker an individual is – even if they have only done volunteer work, such as housecleaning or mowing a yard. It is still a work reference in a volunteer sense.

*Encourage consumers to learn about the company and job before filling out an application or making edits to a resume. The individual can bring up something during an interview to let the employer know the sincerity of his or her intentions. Look at the specific qualifications and skills listed on the job description. Pay attention to key words in the company's introduction page if they have a website. These are the things a business is looking for with their employees.

FOCUS

FOCUS is an online system that assists a job seeker who is accessing the Kentucky Career Center website with resume building and job matching with the job seeker's skills and transferrable abilities. It is recommended that you have EKOS to complement FOCUS because job leads may show up on EKOS that don't appear on FOCUS.

For the Jobseeker-can self-enroll

The consumer should put their information into focus for the purpose of matching the individual to job leads within the system.

Features allow the applicant to:

- Find job leads instantly that match skills and transferable abilities.
- Schedule job alerts daily or weekly to an inbox.
- Explore career options and paths to reach education and employment goals.
- Build a professional resume easily, using the interview wizard.

Whether building your first resume or updating a previous one, Focus|Career™ offers an easy-to-use resume builder that virtually writes the resume for you. With required and optional sections, the system gives you flexibility in designing a resume that reflects your skills, knowledge and abilities. The job placement specialist may want to make changes, but FOCUS does have six different formats. For example, a consumer can have FOCUS make a chronological resume if they prefer that format. There are tabs on Focus Assist where the specialist can add information to a profile, such as notes, employers, or a new phone number or contact person. The specialist may also be able to look up employers.

Set up to five job alerts to search for specific types of positions. These alerts are delivered to an inbox daily or weekly. Focus|Career™ uses artificial intelligence to match skills to jobs and rank them with 1 to 5 stars, showing how well the individual qualifies for a position.

To access **Focus|Career™** please visit: Focuscareer.ky.gov.

If you need immediate assistance, contact: KentuckyCareerCenterSupport@ky.gov or call (502) 564-0871, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am -4:30 pm EST.

A list of jobs can be printed out from the employment office each day.

Modified from the Kentucky Career Center website

Checklist for Focus/Career Job Seekers

RESUME BUILDER

- Are all previous jobs listed in the Work History? If unemployed, at least three jobs or 10 years of experience are required to be listed, provided that much experience is available.
- Does each job in the Work History have a detailed description? The job matching function works better when as much detail as possible is listed.
- Is all education listed? If the highest level of education is high school graduate or GED, make sure it is listed on the Education tab in the Education Details section.
- Should a Summary or Objective be used? If the work history is long, a Summary can be useful. Otherwise, an Objective, which explains how a potential employer can be helped, would be more successful and more beneficial.
- Does the resume include any of the additional sections listed under the Options tab? This can help the resume stand out.
- If a person is in the military, list the experience on the Profile tab. Also, include the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), since that information is used to help match the experience to civilian jobs.
- The first question on the Preferences tab should be answered yes to ensure that employers can search and view the resume.
- Check that the geographic availability for searches is set wide enough to find jobs in nearby cities, or farther if the individual is willing to relocate.
- On the My Resume tab, make sure the individual isn't hiding too much information, or it will be difficult for employers to make contact about a potential job.

JOB SEARCH

- Make sure job alerts are turned on by clicking Organizer in the Searches and Alerts section. The e-mail address must be valid to receive alerts.
- If the search results are poor, the search radius may need to be increased and/or the requirements lowered. Change the star rating for jobs matching the resume to a lower number if necessary.
- Click the My Referrals section and enter a date range of at least the last month. If few referrals are listed, more jobs need to be applied for.
- Even if a person is not a high-star match to a job, if a person feels they qualify for the job, they can apply by clicking "Show Me How to Apply".
- Some jobs require additional screening by Kentucky Career Center staff, but this generally takes only one to two business days.

INSIGHT

- Click the "people" icon to the right of a job posting to open the Insight page. The Insight page gives more information about what kind of education, experience and skills are needed to obtain a particular job.
- View the long-term Insight page by clicking the Insight link at the top of the Focus/Career page. This page can give you some examples of potential career paths based on resumes

Modified from the Kentucky Career Center website

The Talent Acquisition Portal® (TAP) and the NET

The **Talent Acquisition Portal® (TAP)** is led by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and The National Employment Team (NET) in partnership with disABLEDperson, Inc. TAP is an online system which includes both a national talent pool of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) candidates looking for employment and a job posting system for businesses looking to hire individuals with disabilities.

TAP offers business the opportunity to post jobs, search candidate resumes based on skill sets and geographic availability, capture job metrics, generate compliance reports, interview candidates, have online job fairs, and have their jobs seen by individuals with disabilities across the country. Business will also benefit from VR Counselors and qualified candidates searching the available opportunities. Small, medium, and large businesses all have the opportunity to receive all the benefits TAP offers through flexible job posting packages, and outreach opportunities. TAP is supported by the NET which includes VR Business Consultants in every state, the territories and D.C. who can partner and can provide support services to your business at the national, state and local level.

Tips for using TAP:

- Objective on the resume should reflect job titles and/or occupational series
- Salary History should be included on the resume for federal jobs
- Work Experience
- Volunteer Experience-counts as work experience on a federal job resume
- Update Regularly-even upon getting a job

For more information about TAP, visit: <https://tapability.org/>.

The **National Employment Team (NET)** offers a one company approach to serving business through the national network of the 80 publicly funded Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs across the country. The **NET** is supported by 80 VR Business Consultants providing no-cost services to business customers at the national, state, and local level.

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act New Rules: Fact Sheet

([Printer-friendly PDF version](#) | 313 KB)

On March 24, 2014, new rules for Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act (RA) took effect, covering employers who are federal contractors or subcontractors. These new rules strengthen the enforcement of the ADA and put into place new employer requirements around recruiting, hiring and accommodating individuals with disabilities. Section 503 new regulations can be found on [this Department of Labor Section 503 page \(link is external\)](#). (Please note: New rules for the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) were announced in tandem with RA Section 503. For more information on VEVRAA, go to the [Fact Sheet on the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act](#)).

The aim of the Section 503 new rules

Despite nearly 25 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities continue to face barriers to equal opportunity in employment. In 2012, the overall employment rate of adults with disabilities was 33.5%, as compared to 76.3% for others. Further, the full-time/full-year employment rate for people with disabilities was 20.9%, as compared with 56.4% for others (1). The revised Section 503 Regulations aim to change these statistics by requiring employers who are federal contractors or subcontractors to set affirmative action goals and to report progress toward meeting these goals.

Coverage and enforcement

RA Section 503 new rules are enforced by the U.S. Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Employers with U.S. federal government contracts or subcontracts of \$10,000 or more are covered by the new rules. Also, covered employers with at least 50 employees and a federal contract/subcontract of at least \$50,000 must have in place an affirmative action program for hiring individuals with disabilities. However, federal contractors who already had a written affirmative action program in place on March 24, 2014 may have additional time to comply with this requirement.

A new benchmark

The new rules require federal contractors and subcontractors to aspire to, and track progress toward, employing individuals with disabilities. Though RA Section 503 has been in effect since 1973, there has not been a specific benchmark defining what the percent of individuals with disabilities are to be in the workforce of covered employers. Section 503 new rules now provide this benchmark. Called an aspirational goal, covered employers must now attain, or show progress toward attaining, a workforce that consists of at least seven percent of people with disabilities.

Overview of Section 503 new rules

The seven percent workforce goal

Called a utilization or aspirational goal, this requirement is not a quota, but a way to ensure that federal contractors include disability in their strategies around recruitment and hiring. The seven percent goal will apply to each job group in the workplace or to the entire workforce if there are fewer than 100 employees.

Invitation for voluntary self-identification

At both the job-application stage and after a job offer has been made, the employer should invite applicants to voluntarily self-identify as a person with a disability. Current employees should be invited to self-identify at least once every five years. It is important to note that this invitation to self-identify does not conflict with the ADA. Title I of the ADA (which focuses on employment) has always allowed employers to collect certain disability information from applicants and employees when specific guidelines are followed. Those who choose not to self-identify should not be penalized. All self-identification information must be kept separate from other personnel records and cannot be available or used for any employment decision that could lead to adverse impact (such as hiring or performance review). Prescribed language must be used to invite applicants and employees to self-identify. A form for voluntary self-identification can be found at the [OFCCP website \(link is external\)](#). For more information on self-identification and disclosure, go to [this document by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(link is external\)](#).

Create partnerships to recruit individuals with disabilities

Create partnerships with disability organizations to assist in finding and recruiting qualified job applicants with disabilities. All outreach, partnerships, and recruitment efforts should be documented and records should be kept for three years. To find a list of potential disability organizations for these partnerships, go to the [Employment Resource Referral Directory \(link is external\)](#).

Data collection and tracking

Collect data about the number of applicants and employees who self-identify as having disabilities in order to demonstrate progress toward achieving the seven percent aspirational goal.

- Applicants: Document the percent of job applicants who have voluntarily self-identified as having a disability as a percentage of the total applicant pool.
- Job openings: Document the total number of job openings.
- Hiring: Document the total number of jobs offered to and the total number filled by those who have self-identified as individuals with disabilities.
- Current workforce: Document the number of current employees who have self-identified as individuals with disabilities once during the first year of coverage under RA Section 503 and at least once every five years thereafter.

Equal opportunity clause

Certain language is required when prime contractors communicate with subcontractors and when contractors collect voluntary disability self-identification data from applicants and employees.

To find out more, go to [Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs \(OFCCP\), Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act: New Regulations to Improve Job Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities \(link is external\)](#) and scroll down to “Technical Assistance.”

Participate in OFCCP compliance reviews

Upon request, employers must be able to inform OFCCP of formats used to collect this data.

Apply the American with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)

Passed in 2008, the ADAAA has expanded the definition of disability, thereby including more individuals with disabilities under its protections against discrimination in the workplace and other settings. Section 503 calls for employers to review their policies and practices to ensure they are aligned with the ADAAA. For more information about the ADAAA, go to [Questions and Answers on the Final Rule Implementing the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 \(link is external\)](#).

8 Common Cover Letter Mistakes to Avoid

Modified from: Elkins, K. (2015). Business Insider. & JAN: Job Accommodation Network

1) **Not Having One at All**

A cover letter should be included with every resume sent out to potential employers. It is the first opportunity to make an impression and market to an employer. 50% of recruiters believe a cover letter is essential.

2) **Using a Generic Template**

Customize the cover letter to each job. Each job is different and will require a different approach. An applicant needs to stand out.

3) **Opening with “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam”**

Personalize the cover letter to the specific person in charge of hiring, if possible. Know to whom and where the cover letter is going before sending it.

4) **Not Carefully Proofreading**

Make sure the letter is thoroughly proofread before sending it out into the hiring world. Do not rely on “spell check”.

5) **It’s All About You**

Focus on why the individual is uniquely qualified for the position and set of skills that match the employers’ specific needs. Why is this person interested?

6) **Worshipping the Company**

Although the individual should be familiar with the company from which he or she is trying to obtain employment from before applying for a position, the individual should avoid saying he or she “loves” the company. Discuss the value that is shared.

7) **It’s Too Long**

Short and sweet. Clear and concise. It’s important to get to the point, since most employers only spend about 6 seconds scanning a resume. Don’t rehash job history, but reiterate qualifications and skillset. Keep it to a page.

8) **There’s No “Call to Action”**

Show interest and enthusiasm not just by asking the employer to reach out with any questions, but by initiating the follow-up process.

Cover Letter Checklist

Modified from: Elkins, K. (2015). Business Insider. & JAN: Job Accommodation Network

- 1 Is it addressed to a specific person? Is it the hiring authority?
- 2 Is the salutation followed by a colon rather than a comma?
- 3 Has the employer be told exactly what position is being applied for?
- 4 Has why a person is interested in the position and the organization been stated?
- 5 Have the employer been told what the individual can do for the organization rather than what it can do for the individual?
- 6 Were specific examples used to sell the skills and market the individual?
- 7 Is the sentence structure varied, or are the same words being used over and over again? Is it repetitive?
- 8 Limit the use of the words "I" and "My" to begin sentences.
- 9 Has action been requested, mentioning a phone call, or availability to be contacted for an interview?
- 10 Was appreciation expressed for the employer considering your application?
- 11 Is it an original letter rather than a mass-produced copy?
- 12 Is it neat and attractive?
- 13 Is it free of typographical and grammatical errors?
- 14 Does the whole letter fit on only one page?
- 15 Is it laser-printed on high-quality paper that matches the resume?
- 16 Is it signed? Preferably in black ink!

Finding Job Leads

Some consumers and community members are under the assumption that we as Job Placement Specialists have jobs tucked away in a box, ready to give them to consumers. In an ideal world, that would happen however, in reality that is not the case. Job Placement Specialists and consumers alike are responsible for finding and generating job leads. Job leads can come from a variety of different areas. A few of those are:

- Job search engines i.e. Indeed, Career Builder, Monster, etc.
- Focus/Career on the Kentucky Career Center website
- Newspaper listings
- Job Fairs
- Consumers
- Display in store/business window
- Word of mouth
- Social Media

New regulations regarding Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require 7% of Federal Contractors employees to be persons with a disability, which in turn, may lead them to contact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for qualified candidates.

Visiting current and potential employers is a great tool that can be used for our advantage. We, as Job Placement Specialist, have the freedom to network with employers within the communities we serve. Building a foundation with employers and referring qualified candidates for their open positions will enhance the employer/Job Placement Specialist relationship which could lead to additional job leads.

By Alison Doyle, About.com Guide

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/onlinecareernetworking/tp/socialmediajobsearch.htm>

Tips – Filling Out Paper Applications

- Tell the consumer to have the resume and guide sheet handy so all the information is already written down.
 - It is important that the same basic information is put on each application! The job placement specialist may utilize the state application as a way to see if there are any issues with filling out an application that need to be discussed, aids with resume building, and informs the job placement specialist of the area in which the consumer wishes to look for employment and if they need to expand their radius of search.
- If possible, encourage the consumer to take the application home to take more time filling it out or schedule an appointment with the job placement specialist for assistance.
- Always encourage them to use blue or black ink.
- Tell them to apply for a specific position, never write “any”, “open”, or “all” when applying for a job. If they are unsure what the position titles are, ask them to look at the company website or ask the job placement specialist. It is best practice for the individual to know before applying!
- Ask them to print answers clearly or attach an extra sheet for more space if needed.
- Tell them not leave blank spaces! They can write “N/A” if something doesn’t apply.
- Under salary desired, have them list whatever the job posting states when possible. If salary is not listed, the best case scenario is to research similar jobs in the area and use that base salary. Don’t over or under sell!
- If it applies- under criminal background, encourage them to read the directions carefully and make sure they have a current copy of the background check so the correct information can be recorded.
- Ask them to check your application a second and third time before turning it in!
- Have the consumer attach the resume to the application. Also, ask them to attach a cover letter even when it seems optional. The job placement specialist should be available for questions.

Tips – Filling Out Online Applications

- There is almost always an option to upload a resume and possibly a cover letter. Make sure these are saved on the computer or phone of the consumer before the individual starts the application.
- Same rules apply as for paper applications (see other form) as far as filling in the information.
- Many online applications have an assessment afterward or possibly a live scenario of the job that must be taken before completing the application process. Make sure the consumer knows to finish this and get confirmation before assuming the application is complete!
- Remind the consumer to write down the login and password for any online application that requires creation of a free account. This is the only way it can be accessed or reapplied for after applying the first time!
- Ask them to log back into the website often to see the status of the application and if the job(s) is still open. Have them read to see how long the application will be considered so they can reapply if needed for a future opening.
- If the individual has difficulty with online applications or does not have computer access, encourage them to contact the job placement specialist for assistance.

**All applications usually ask for the same basic information. Make sure a current address and phone number is provided. The job placement specialist can assist the individual to create a guide sheet that lists former employers, their address and phone, supervisor name, job title, job duties, start / end date, reason for leaving and salary. It is important that this information is written the same on each application! Companies often own more than one store or chain of stores so putting down slightly different information on two applications could seem like fraud! Stress to them to be careful and check the application a second and third time before submitting it!

Interview Preparation

**Modified from Vivian Giang. (2015). Business Insider.*

Grooming

First and foremost, look like you take care of yourself. This means paying attention to fingernails, hair, teeth, and makeup. Fingernails should be clean and trimmed/filed or nicely manicured, as well as toenails if they will be seen. If a consumer wears makeup, it should not draw attention to itself, but used to highlight features. For a man who has facial hair, the facial hair needs to be kept trim and tidy to maintain a clean, professional appearance. Teeth should be brushed and flossed before going out the door.

Clothing

Whatever is worn should be appropriate for the industry and mindful of company dress codes. According to 2,100 hiring managers and human resource professionals who participated in a CareerBuilder survey, blue and black are the best colors to wear to a job interview, and orange is the worst. Conservative colors, such as black, blue, gray, and brown, seem to be the safest bet when meeting someone for the first time in a professional setting.

Jewelry

Jewelry is meant to be an accessory and make a statement, not an exclamation. The individual should be mindful of wearing jewelry that makes noise, whether it's while making hand gestures or simply placing hands on the table. Also, the individual should avoid wearing so much jewelry that it takes the focus off the individual and on to it (i.e., too many rings, earrings, bracelets, etc.).

Posture

A good, straight posture conveys confidence and that one is worthy of attention. An individual should learn to sit in the front half of the seat with both feet on the floor, back straight, and shoulders back. A person should not cross their legs or let their legs bounce up and down. See "Gesturing" about the fidget factor.

Gesturing

It's OK to talk with the hands — it actually brings a message alive. However, an individual should not lace the fingers together and play with any rings. The individual should try to avoid fidgeting of all kinds (i.e., playing with hair, kicking feet, bouncing the leg, touching the face, biting the nails, etc.).

Facial expression

A person should make sure their face is pleasant by smiling often and maintaining eye contact at appropriate times. When smiling, the individual should make sure that they are giving off a genuine smile. Fake smiles can be awkward for everyone, as well as frowning or looking overly anxious. Self-monitoring is key!

Handshake

The person shouldn't do anything out of the ordinary when it comes to the handshake. The individual should simply grasp the other person's hand firmly, make eye contact, smile warmly, and say something like "It's very nice to meet you."

Mistakes to Avoid at Interviews

Being Unprepared

- Lacking knowledge of what the company does, their history, values, mission and industry
- Being unsure of what the job and responsibilities are of the position that has been applied for

Being Dishonest

- Be honest about previous employment
- Be truthful when asked about criminal background; take responsibility for actions and show how you are different than when crimes were committed.

Lacking Interest/Enthusiasm

- Asking no questions
- Being unable to communicate the reason for having an interest in the job

Inappropriate Dress

- Dressing too casually
- Wearing too much perfume, cologne or makeup

Poor Body Language-Assess this on a case by case basis/Disability-related limitations can cause these things to be issues for some of our consumers.

- No eye contact/facial expressions
- Leaning on chair/desk/table
- Fidgeting
- Weak handshake

Lack of Resume' Knowledge

- Inability to articulate accomplishments/provide specific examples
- Overstated/incorrect/ or lying on work history

Lack of Punctuality

- Being late without reason
- Arriving too early
- Rule of thumb: Arrive 10-15 minutes before scheduled interview time

Unprofessional

- Talking negatively about past company/manager/employees
- Chewing gum
- Using inappropriate language
- Touching/rearranging objects on interviewer's desk

Rambling Answers

- Talking so much that the question is not answered
- Bragging/displaying arrogance rather than confidence
- Rule of thumb: Keep answers concise- 2-3 minutes

Ringling Cell Phone

- Leave your cell phone at home or in the car during the interview

Mock Interviewing

Mock Interviewing is an essential step in the job placement process. Although a consumer may look great on paper, if they don't have good interviewing skills, it is unlikely they will land the job.

When meeting for a mock interview, the consumer should come dressed as if this was not a practice interview. During the interview it is important for you as the "potential employer" to remain professional throughout the interview, write down information on things they did well, things that needs improvement, and give feedback as needed.

Mock interviews are good to critique the consumer's answers but it is also a good idea to give praise for good/appropriate answers. Discussing good answers can boost self-confidence and eliminate defensiveness which may allow consumers to be open to your critique.

Important topics that should be discussed during the mock interview appointment are how to explain a criminal background (if applicable) and if a disability should be revealed during an interview. Although most consumers agree to have a mock interview, there may be some who feel the mock interview in unnecessary and refuse to have one. In that situation, you, as a job placement specialist can explain the benefits, offer to have a mock interview, and ultimately let the consumer make the decision.

Employer Contacts/Services

The Job Placement Specialists offer an array of services to employers. As representatives of the Office, the JP staff often acts as a liaison between other OVR staff and employers to coordinate necessary services. This coordination insures that the employer's needs are met. When working with an employer, a job placement specialist will refer to the consumer as the client or candidate. Within the agency, the individual is referred to as the consumer. OVR itself can be referred to as a “sister agency” to the Office of Employment and Training and (OET) and the Office for the Blind (OFB).

Services Provided to Employers by Job Placement Specialists:

- Assist in arranging accessibility surveys and job analysis to be provided by appropriate OVR staff when requested by the employers.
- Assist in the area of reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation is an adjustment made to a job or work environment that enables a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position. This may include referral and coordination with rehabilitation technology staff for appropriate job modification and job restructuring.
- Provide information and technical assistance with regard to the [Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\)](#) program and other employment incentives. WOTC is an elective federal tax credit available to employers that hire individuals with disabilities. The Job Placement Specialist can assist with completing and processing the required documentation for WOTC certification, but it may be advisable to refer the employer to their tax advisor for guidance on the finer points of the WOTC, especially the time limits on documents.
- Provide disability awareness training upon request. A video is available for use in this task, but it should be used in conjunction with a prepared speaker. Practice and training in this area should be utilized and taken advantage of when provided. The purpose of disability awareness training is to increase the public understanding of limitations imposed on the hiring and advancement of persons with disabilities due to a lack of knowledge, misinformation, and myths that have developed with regard to persons with disabilities.
- Assist employers in the retention of their valued employees who become disabled within the scope of employment. This may include vocational assessment or reasonable accommodation assistance.
- Prescreening of applicants based on the essential functions of the job. Employers are encouraged to contact the Job Placement Specialist or Rehabilitation staff for qualified applicants who have undergone extensive vocational assessment and screening processes.
- In conjunction with the counselor provide on-site job coach and support services including follow-up services. However, job coaching can get into the area of supported employment. If the consumer requires more job coaching, the job placement specialist should discuss this with the counselor and the counselor should discuss this with the consumer.
- Provide technical assistance and resources in reference to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

WOTC – Work Opportunity Tax Credit

What is WOTC?

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain veterans and individuals from other target groups with significant barriers to employment that has been extended until 2021. Employers claim about \$1 billion in tax credits each year under the WOTC program. There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to qualify to claim the tax credit, and there are a few simple steps to follow to apply for WOTC. **All of our consumers qualify for up to a \$2400 WOTC as part of Target Group E.**

How does WOTC Work?

The tax credit employers can claim depends upon the target group of the individual hired, the wages paid to that individual in the first year of employment, and the number of hours that individual worked. There is also a maximum tax credit that can be earned.

For the long-term Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) target group only, the credit is available to employers who hire members of this group for up to a two-year period.

- In the first year, the employer may claim a tax credit equal to 40% of the first-year wages, up to the maximum tax credit, if the individual works at least 400 hours.
- In the second year, the employer may claim a tax credit equal to 50% of the second-year wages, up to the maximum tax credit, if the individual works at least 400 hours.

For all other target groups, the credit is available to employers who hire members of these groups, based on the individual's hours worked and wages earned in the first year.

- If the individual works at least 120 hours, the employer may claim a tax credit equal to 25% of the individual's first year wages, up to the maximum tax credit.
- If the individual works at least 400 hours, the employer may claim a tax credit equal to 40% of the individual's first year wages, up to the maximum tax credit.

Who can be hired?

- Veterans
- TANF Recipients
- SNAP (Food Stamp) Recipients
- Designated Community Residents (living in Empowerment Zones or Rural Renewal Counties)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referral
- Ex-felons
- Supplemental Security Income Recipients
- Summer Youth Employee (living in Empowerment Zones)

How do You Apply?

Employers should follow the following steps to apply for the certification to receive the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

1. Complete [IRS Form 8850](#) by the day the job offer is made.
2. Complete [ETA Form 9061](#) or [ETA Form 9062](#) if the employee has been conditionally certified as belonging to a WOTC target group by a state workforce agency, Vocational Rehabilitation agency, or another participating agency.

Submit the completed and signed IRS and ETA forms to your [state workforce agency](#). **Forms must be submitted within 28 calendar days of the employee's start date.** Be very aware and cognizant of this deadline. There is a conditional certification letter on CMS that is in place at referral, which may help some with staying on top of the deadline.

<http://www.ovr.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/1C12BA04-E50C-4591-B21D-7C4422D3697F/0/policiesmanual.pdf>

States may accept applications via mail, fax, or e-mail or may have an automated WOTC process that accepts electronic submissions. In Kentucky, the Office of Employment and Training (OET) does recommend that the best practice for employers is the online application. If you are not sure how your state accepts applications, contact your [state WOTC coordinator](#), or view our chart on [state submission processes](#).

Spanish Language Forms

Please note that **ONLY** English forms may be submitted to your state workforce agency. Spanish language forms are only intended as an aid to Spanish speakers.

[IRS Form 8850 - Spanish](#)

[ETA Form 9061 - Spanish](#)

States may accept applications via mail, fax, or e-mail or may have an automated WOTC process that accepts electronic submissions. If you are not sure how your state accepts applications, contact your state WOTC coordinator, or view our chart on state submission methods.

U.S. Department of Labor Website

The PACE Program

The consumer will be placed in a site in the community for work adjustment. The individual makes \$6.25 per hour tax-free and the program lasts a total of 95 hours. After being placed in a PACE site, their performance will be evaluated weekly by that site and the counselor will receive a weekly copy of that evaluation accompanied by their weekly timesheet. The evaluation sheets are essential for the job placement specialist to learn what kind of employee the consumer will be. It allows for opportunities to discuss work habits that could be good or require improvement. Praising the good habits can help the consumer gain confidence and correcting the habits that require improvement can keep the consumer from doing them on an actual place of employment.

1. Does my consumer have to claim or report income from PACE?

No, unless the consumer works over **95 hours**. When the consumer stays at 95 hours, PACE is considered a training stipend (not to be declared as income on any forms). However, that stipend becomes taxable income and reportable through our program at \$600.00 (96 hours). If the consumer goes over their hours in the program, the income will become taxable and needs to be reported as such.

2. Who is a good fit for PACE?

Any competitive client who hasn't worked in a while and needs to re-adjust to the work setting, has limited or no work experience, has a gap in work history, or has any questionable motivation to work would be a good fit for PACE. Education level doesn't matter (people with varying levels of education have all benefited from the program); however, the consumer is responsible for understanding PACE rules and completing their own timesheets. The individual can gain documented experience and show an employer how good of an employee they can be.

3. What sites are available?

Before looking at a site, the job placement specialist should go over the evaluation form with the consumer so they are aware of what is expected. The consumer should also understand clearly that this may or may not lead to a permanent job, but he or she needs to treat it that way. PACE site availability fluctuates from month-to-month, but the job placement specialist should try to find the closest fit for each consumer based on what sites are available for the given month. We are always looking to add quality PACE sites and are completely open to searching for something specific to fit a specific consumer. Typically, private-owned companies are more willing to participate in the PACE Program. Larger companies seem less willing due to regulations that must be followed in regards to safety and policies of HR. PACE can be called a "try before you buy" type of program for employers. They see if they would like to hire the individual, and they can do that at no cost to the company. The job placement specialist should meet with the employer without the consumer to explain the program completely. A good thing to point out to the employer is that any work-related injury is covered by OVRs accident/insurance policy. The job placement specialist should also meet with the employer and the consumer at the site to go over the details of the program together. The job placement specialist should give time to discuss possible work schedules, getting

the timesheet and evaluation to the specialist, and the type of contact that will be maintained among everyone and the expectations.

5. What happens during and after PACE?

The timesheet and the evaluation sheet should be reviewed weekly. If there are any issues and concerns, the consumer should be contacted immediately, so the job placement specialist can discuss the concerns with the consumer. The job placement specialist should stay in contact with the employer to make sure things are going well and build a relationship for future PACE placements. The job placement specialist can also take the time to talk with the employer about the benefits of working with OVR to find qualified candidates for any future job openings.

With 20 hours or less remaining in PACE, the job placement specialist should call the consumer and set up an appointment for job placement services unless directed to do otherwise or unless PACE has shown that the consumer may need more supports in the workplace. At that point, the consumer's case will transition to regular job placement services.

6. What if my consumer doesn't show for a PACE site?

The job placement specialist should notify the counselor and hold their file until the counselor re-refers them or tells the specialist to close their file. A person can be referred to PACE as many times as the counselor deems appropriate. Once the consumer attends and starts working at a PACE site, however, they can only do it once per calendar year (unless they are willing for it to become taxable by completing it a second time) pending counselor approval and approval of the Job Placement Administrator.

For more information about the PACE Program, please visit the following link:

[*Job Placement Program*](#)

[*PACE Acknowledgement Form*](#)

[*PACE Acknowledgement Form Spanish Version*](#)

[*PACE Timesheet Evaluation*](#)

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

This does require branch manager approval, and it has to be on the IPE or an amendment.

1. It is a good tool to utilize to possibly secure employment for an individual and can be used after the completion of PACE if the job placement specialist believes that a consumer needs additional training.
2. The documents were updated recently to be more user-friendly.
3. If a job placement specialist is working with an employer and discussing utilizing OJT, the job placement specialist would need to receive a written job description of the position.
4. At this point, the job placement specialist would provide it to the counselor, and the counselor and job placement specialist would review the information. The counselor will make the determination on how long the OJT will be written for at that time. (This will vary per individual as some individuals may be able to execute the job in 1 month while others may need 2 months, etc.) The maximum is six months unless an extension above the six months is granted by the Job Placement Program Administrator.
5. The job placement specialist will then need to complete the fill-in agreement for OJT and sign off on it.
6. A fill-in evaluation for OJT will provided to the employer. The specifications of how often the evaluation must be submitted by the employer will be listed in the agreement. The suggested time is at least one or two times a month so that the job placement specialist is aware of what is going in at the worksite in case something needs to be addressed.
7. In regard to the wages, we can pay the minimum wage of \$7.25. If the employer usually pays the rate of \$10/hour, they would be responsible for the remaining \$2.75/per hour. This differs from the PACE Program, which has a training stipend, and the employer is not responsible to hire or for any financial compensation.
8. In regard to insurance, the employer is responsible for covering them under workman's compensation as the agency does not cover consumers under liability as we do in PACE.
9. Once the consumer working, the agency is responsible for obtaining invoices for hours worked in accordance with the OJT contract (signed by the employer, counselor, and branch manager) and the evaluations from the employer. These are then turned into the counselor who submits them or submits the information to the office manager for the authorization to be completed.

For more information about on the job training, please visit the following link:

[Job Placement Program](#)

[Agreement for On the Job Training Services](#)

Counselor Communication

Our goal in job placement is to provide the best possible service to the consumer while helping them achieve their employment goals. We view the entire process as a team concept, so we welcome any suggestions or ideas that you might have to assist the consumer in reaching their goals and to further improve the process. We feel that the more we can communicate with each other regarding cases, the better quality services that we are able to provide to the consumer. There will be times that consumers disclose vital information (that has not been shared with the counselor) to you that could affect their employment outcome. Because you are having regular contact with the consumer, they may feel more comfortable giving you information that was not given to the counselor. It is your responsibility as the job placement specialist to share this information with the counselor. It is expected that the counselor should also share vital employment related information with you as well.

It is really up to the individual job placement specialist how you communicate with each counselor. You can utilize email, in-person/verbal updates, or CMS. Verbal communication can often be the “extra” communication that is helpful for developing a good working relationship with the counselor. Sensitive and confidential information should be documented and communicated in person or through encrypted email. As far as how often the job placement person and the counselor should communicate is concerned, it can be weekly or monthly. However, if something is going on in the case that really requires the counselor’s immediate attention, communication may need to be sooner.

Time Management

- Be Proactive
 - Make a To-Do list and cross things off as you do them
 - Set goals and deadlines
 - Plan ahead/Prioritize-what is urgent
 - Expect and leave time for the unexpected
 - How will you handle unscheduled walk-ins?
 - Will you have a catch up day with no meetings or phone calls?
 - Will you have a certain time of day to do phone calls/call backs?
- Organize
 - Determine whether you are more productive in the morning or afternoon
 - Consolidate similar tasks
 - Get started on the most difficult and most important tasks right away

Information from Uzma Batool, HR/CSR Officer, Ferozsons Pvt. Ltd.

Job Placement Documentation

Documentation provided by the Job Placement staff is an essential element of the case file. It is very important for the counselor to keep the case up to date while the individual is receiving job placement services. The documentation provided by the job placement staff to the counselor facilitates the teamwork required for the consumer to have the maximum benefit of all the services available.

Progress notes should include a summary of contacts, indicate services rendered, denote problem areas, collaboration with other professionals, agencies, etc.

An entry in the progress notes and in CMS will give the job placement staff credit for the many services rendered. Without this documentation, much hard work and effort will not be reflected in the case. The Office measures job placement services and individual performance by reviewing the job placement data entered into CMS.

Maintaining job placement case records

Most of the documentation that is kept in a Pace/Job Placement file should be a duplicate as Counselors are being sent copies of all records kept by Pace/Job Placement staff on a regular basis. It is best practice for the Pace/Job Placement staff to maintain their records for a minimum of one year after closure from Pace/Job Placement. The file should then be turned over to the Counselor so that these documents can be made part of the permanent case record and handled in accordance with the Office record retention policy which is mandated for all case files.

Dealing with Conflict

Governmental Services Center-Frankfort, Kentucky

- **Listen**
 - without onlookers but with one other person
 - for content, feelings, and emotions
 - with empathy to help find a solution
 - attentively and without judgment
 - for the issues themselves
 - nonverbally in a way that encourages the other person to continue
 - with non-threatening body language/posture and good eye contact
 - without overreacting with your eyes or body language
- **Speak**
 - using a calm tone of voice
 - with validation of the other person's perspective
 - showing positive regard and respect for the other person
 - positive and helpful statements
 - ask questions
 - give feedback
 - using phrases like "I sense that you" or "It sounds like you"
 - using I statements and avoiding you statements, such as "You are wrong"
 - reflecting back what you think you heard to show you are listening
 - to clarify what you don't understand or are unsure about
 - to encourage further discussion
- **Resolve**
 - recognize their side of the story as well as your own
 - ask to tell your side of the story
 - separate the person and the behavior
 - focus on job-related items
 - get agreement on the problem
 - ask for commitment
 - follow-up
- **Don't**
 - prejudge/minimize their feelings or perspective
 - criticize or threaten
 - name-call
 - get into a power struggle or argue with them/order them to do things

No Shows/Lack of Follow Through

What if my consumer doesn't show up or follow through with services?

- **No shows**

If the consumer doesn't show up for their initial appointment, we will e-mail the counselor and inform them. If the consumer contacts us, we will immediately reschedule them. If they do not, we will then attempt to contact them again (usually monthly). We will repeat the process until they either show or until we are advised to close them out.

- **Not Following Through**

We attempt to contact these consumers monthly to get them reengaged in the process. If we are contacted by the consumer, we immediately resume services.

- **Medical Hold and No Contact**

If a person needs to be placed on hold for medical reasons or if they don't have a working phone number, we are happy to hold their case and will resume services when we are contacted by either the consumer or the counselor.

In some cases, when there is no contact from the consumer, it may be necessary to send out a 14 day letter informing the consumer that if they do not contact the job placement specialist within 14 days, the case will be closed.

Working with Consumers with a Criminal History

Individuals with disabilities who are also ex-offenders face a multitude of barriers to employment. However, with proper support, guidance and preparation, these individuals can be successful in competitive employment.

Assessment

In order to fully implement effective job search strategies, there must be a complete and comprehensive understanding of the individual's unique circumstances. One of the first steps should be to obtain a criminal background check and go over it with them. Once a criminal background is requested, the consumer will also receive a copy. Consumers are often unaware of the information in their file. They are very surprised to learn that all of their charges are on their record, whether they were convicted or not. It is important to discuss with the consumer how to answer questions regarding their Criminal Background Check.

The following factors must be taken into consideration:

- The type of conviction: felony, misdemeanor, drug charges, or violent offenses.
- Is the consumer on a diversion program, such as: probation, parole, in drug court, or family court?
- What are their restrictions?
- Are there court dates pending?
- How do the consumer's charges affect their driver's license, living situation, or child custody issues?
- Knowing these answers is important because they may directly impact the job search and the type of position an individual can legally hold.

Employers

One of the main barriers facing ex-offenders in gaining employment is identifying employers who are willing to take a risk. It can be scary for employers to hire an ex-offender, and often companies have rules and policies which restrict the employment of individuals with specific criminal backgrounds. This does not mean that individuals with a criminal background will not be able to find employment, but it makes it harder and may take more time and incentives to be successful in the job market.

Employers usually screen out individuals with drug charges and sex crimes for positions as caregivers, particularly with children and the elderly. Individuals with felony convictions may have restrictions in positions that require bonding or working in the criminal justice system, as well as jobs requiring licensing. If there is doubt about the requirements of a position, the consumer can gather information from relevant sources such as licensing boards, employers, and

schools. Instructors in specialty fields will generally know what the criminal record status must be for applicants in their fields.

Training

The type of criminal charge is particularly important if the consumer wants to participate in training. They could be wasting time being trained for a position that will be closed to them due to their criminal record. Some drug convictions can even negate their ability to secure financial aid.

Work Adjustment

Completion of work adjustment training, such as PACE, will be helpful in assisting an ex-offender to secure employment. Employers will view the success in a transition program as a gauge of successful rehabilitation. This can be a selling tool for placement efforts by the rehabilitation professional.

Work Ethics and Job Skills Training

Employers are more welcoming of potential candidates if they have good work ethics and some job skills which reduce training time. The consumer with a criminal background may require assistance with resume writing, soft skills, identifying transferable skills, and exploring additional specific skill training. Employers express the desire to have job candidates who show up on time, follow instructions, and who are personable and friendly. These traits will assist a consumer with a criminal background to have a better chance at securing employment.

Felony Diversion

Often a judge will put someone on “felony diversion”. This is a legal status that will show up on a criminal record as “pending”. Recently, the Supreme Court ruled that felony diversion is a felony conviction until it is lifted, usually after one year if the person has not committed another crime – then, they are no longer a “convicted felon”. The only other way a person can “undo” a felony is by obtaining a pardon from the governor.

Restoration of Rights

The convicted felon can apply for a “Restoration of Civil Rights” (voting, etc.) by filing a paper through the Department of Corrections and paying a small fee; however, they are still considered a convicted felon. This form can be obtained either from the Department of Corrections in Frankfort or the local Probation/Parole Office. The form goes to the Department of Corrections and is reviewed and then sent to the Governor, who can either approve or deny the request.

Probation and Parole

Another factor to consider is the type of court supervision the consumer has been assigned. Parole is a status that means the consumer was convicted of a crime and sent to prison. They were released early because the parole board felt the person was not a threat, and they are ready

to return to society. If they fail to comply with the parole officer's rules, they can be sent back to prison to serve out the rest of their original sentence.

Probation means they were either sent to jail for a short time, or put on probation by the judge. A Probation Officer will supervise the individual. If they fail to comply with their restrictions, they will go before the judge again and the judge will make a decision.

Some of the things both probation and parole officers might require are:

- Random drug screenings
- Curfews
- Restrictions to the county
- Reports to officers on a regular schedule (can be daily, but is usually once a month)

A release of information must be signed in order for VR staff to speak to the consumer's Probation and Parole Officer. Probation and Parole Officers are usually happy to have someone else providing job search assistance for their client. They can be a great ally to the VR staff. After understanding the goals of VR, they are usually happy to work on modifying curfews, etc. for employment. The Probation and Parole Officers' goal is for the person to be employed too. They also may know employers who will hire felons and can be a great resource for job leads.

Drug Court

Consumers who attend Drug Court face extra challenges, such as attending drug screenings, individual sessions with staff, weekly appearances in court (this differs based on the phase they are in), sanctions to be served, and other drug court activities. They also have to attend NA and AA meetings as a part of their program along with completing hours of community service. These items can be a factor in work schedule, attending meetings with VR staff, and maintaining time for job search. The individual in Drug Court must also let the employer know that they are in Drug Court, but they can also let the employer know that they are being drug tested weekly, which may be a plus for the employer to consider. It is recommended that VR staff coordinate and maintain a good working relationship with Drug Court staff. Good communication between VR staff and Drug Court staff may help everyone be aware of any concerns, commitments, and activities that could be helpful to the individual's overall success in each program and the job market.

Supports and Guidance

Consumers who are ex-offenders often require assistance in the following areas:

- Following through on referrals
- Assembling necessary documents (social security cards and school transcripts)
- Locating GED classes
- Budgeting
- Identifying occupations and employers who do not bar ex-offenders
- Developing realistic goals
- Cleaning up official criminal histories ("rap sheets")

- Knowing when to disclose information about a criminal record
- Learning to see their employment situation from the perspective of potential employers

Another challenge is in helping the ex-offender deal with the interview in a positive manner. They need to prepare and practice a statement that acknowledges a criminal history and offers evidence of rehabilitation; a statement explaining their interest; a statement about the positive aspects of their backgrounds; and a method of responding to illegal questions such as “Have you ever been arrested?” It can be very challenging to put some things in a positive light. An honest and well thought out response will go a long way in helping the consumer face this part of the job search.

Expungement

Expungement is the removal of police and court records (misdemeanor or a violation) which are available for viewing by the public. It may be worthwhile and assist with successful job placement to seek expungement of an eligible charge.

<http://courts.ky.gov/expungement/Pages/default.aspx>

For additional information see “Expungement” in the Job Placement Manual.

Job Screening & Retention Services

Employers value programs whose services offer job screening, background checks, assistance with job training, and assistance once the person has been hired. VR staff should develop quality job support services, including follow-up, to create a positive impact for success. Ex-offenders will require lots of supports on and off the job. Employers do not have the time, or a requirement, to monitor the employee. Therefore, they will be more likely to offer the consumer an opportunity when they see that coaching, support and follow-up are being provided for the ex-offender, and VR staff become key resources for businesses.

Modified from the OVR Website

Pre-Employment Transition Services

All students with disabilities must now be offered pre-employment transition services prior to exiting high school. Services are provided to all students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for OVR services and may be offered in a group setting. Pre-employment transition services must be provided in the most integrated setting possible. The student with a disability is in high school and between the ages of 14 and 21 at the time of the provision of services. They must be eligible for and receiving special education services under part B of IDEA or is an individual with a disability, for purposes of Section 504.

KEY POINTS

- Pre-employment transition services include:
 - Job exploration counseling;
 - Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
 - Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs;
 - Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
 - Instruction on self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.
- Each staff person must document specific time spent on these services using the templates provided.
- Each staff person must keep a record of their time using a handwritten log, the staff provided services tab in CMS, or their outlook calendar.
- The record must be kept for 5 years

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Discuss Pre-ETS with an experienced counselor
- Look at and discuss examples of each of the Pre-ETS services
- Go over documentation of timesheets step by step
- Provide examples of timesheet documentation as a guide

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [WIOA](#)
- CMS
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Training
- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)
- CBWTP
- Project SEARCH

Staff Resources

[American Association of Retired Persons WorkSearch](#)

[Ability One](#)-specific release needed, has to have a disability, cannot currently be working

[Americorps](#)

[Assistance.ky.gov](#)

[Disability.gov](#)

[Experience Works](#)-55 and older can work for a non-profit organization. This is with the employment office.

[Federal Jobs](#)

[GCFlearnfree](#)-free computer tutorial

[Indeed.com](#)

[Job Accommodation Network](#)

[Kentucky Career Center](#)

[Kentucky State Jobs](#)

[Kentucky Office of Employment and Training](#)



OJT-FactSheet.docx

[Schedule A Certification Letter Template for VR Staff.docx](#)-keep as generic as possible, if you have a CRC, put it after your name

[Schedule A hiring information.pptx](#)

[Social Security Administration Work Site](#)



State Application.pdf

[Typingtest.com](#)-take 3 typing tests

[United States Office of Personnel Management](#)

[USAjobs.gov](#)

[Workforce Kentucky - Labor Market Information](#)

Consumer Resources

[Kentucky Client Assistance Program](#)

[Kentucky Assistive Technology - KATS Network | Home](#)

[Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation Welcome!](#)

[Protection and Advocacy](#)

[Kentucky Career Center](#)

[KEWES - Kentucky's Electronic Workplace for Employment Services](#)



09 How to Use
Social Media for Jobs

Networking and Marketing

Job placement specialists are encouraged to be actively involved with local high schools and surrounding communities for activities such as Job Fairs, Transition Fairs, and Career Fairs.

Membership in organizations such as the local Chamber of Commerce or Kentucky Human Resource Managers organizations can be very useful tools for networking with employers to find a contact person, hand out your business card, and get invited to do a presentation about the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR may even be invited to set up a table at an event. This often leads to the job placement staff becoming the point of contact for employers to announce their job openings.

The offices of the Office of Employment and Training work with OVR during Rapid Response meetings, which are held when an employer has a large layoff or shuts down. The two agencies work together to do short presentations and provide a description of available services and the process needed to apply. The members of the staff of the OVR are often invited to be part of Business Service Team (BST) meetings with OET as well.

While we cannot possibly attend every meeting or event, it is vital to the job placement staff to participate as much as possible in these kinds of activities. (Paid memberships must be approved by your Branch Manager).

Business Service Teams

Kentucky Skills Network local business service teams are designed to provide a primary point of contact for employer customers. The partner with the best/most established relationship with an employer should maintain responsibility and communication with the customer and engage other partners in order to provide streamlined solutions-based business services plans. The structure of the KSN business services teams is comprised of three levels, each of which may act as a point of entry for contact with companies. Level one consists of the State team. The State team includes one representative from each of the core partners, including the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

The other partners are:

- Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development
- KCTCS
- Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
- Kentucky Labor Cabinet

As a part of this team, the job placement specialist is a representative of OVR. The meetings of the Business Service Team (BST) are typically once a month, and the specialist may participate in collaborative events, such as openings or ribbon cuttings of new businesses, fundraising, and outreach to businesses where the specialist may discuss OVR and its services. These individuals work together to ensure that companies receive unified and coordinated information and services related to their workforce development needs. The KSN allows for the bringing together of the workforce and economic development programs and resources, thus providing a variety of ways to build workforce skills and ease training costs for employers. Through such options as reimbursable grants and tax credits for classroom training, on-the-job training, tuition and certification training, train-the-trainer travel, and entry level and skills upgrade training; Kentucky has resources that allow flexible and customizable training specific to company needs.

Checklist for New Job Placement Specialists

	‘X’	Initials
Role of a Job Placement Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Referral Form Example/Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Intake Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Case Management System (CMS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Resumes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
FOCUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) and NET	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 503 Fact Sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cover Letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Finding job leads	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Filling out a job application	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Interview preparation/Mock Interviewing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Employer Contacts	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PACE	<input type="checkbox"/>	
On-the-Job Training (OJT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Counselor Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Time Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dealing with Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No shows/lack of follow through	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Working with consumers with a criminal background	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pre-ETS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Resources-Staff/Consumer	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Business Service Teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Networking and Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Signature of Supervisor/Mentor