

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

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Introduction

Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) will provide Supported Employment (SE) services to an eligible individual with who has been identified as Most Significant Disability (MSD) and for whom competitive integrated employment has not historically achieved, or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and who because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services and extended services in order to obtain and maintain employment. MSD is categorized by identifying three or more of the seven functional limitations on an individual's eligibility that seriously impacts the functional capacities of the eligible individual.

IDB receives authority and funding for its supported employment (SE) service through Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). SE is an individualized program of services designed to achieve competitive integrated employment.

Definition

Supported Employment means ongoing support services, including customized employment, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in competitive integrated employment, that-

- are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment, that is individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of MSD individuals.
- services are ongoing support services, including customized employment needed to support and maintain an individual with the most significant disability in competitive integrated employment. These services are also available to youth with the most significant disabilities who need ongoing support services, which may include natural supports, to maintain employment and community inclusion.

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

Supported employment is distinguished by the availability and delivery of individualized supports in the workplace. Learning occurs on the job rather than in pre-training.

A basic premise of supported employment is the belief that individuals with the most significant disabilities can, with availability of extended ongoing support services, maintain competitive integrated employment in the community in an environment where they interact with employees who are not disabled and/or the general public. Wages must be commensurate with those paid to other workers with similar job functions.

Eligibility

Supported employment will be available for individuals found eligible with the most significant disabilities. The decision to use the supported employment services should be based on findings from the comprehensive assessment and in consultation with the client. The individual must meet the following conditions to be considered for supported employment:

- (1) Competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; *or*
- (2) Competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; *and*
- (3) Who, because of the nature and severity of the disability, needs intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition from support provided by IDB to perform the work.

The eligible individual, the counselor, and when appropriate, other extended

service providers, will jointly plan supported employment services. Extended supported employment services shall be provided by other agencies, organizations, employers, or other available sources with whom cooperative arrangements are made. Comparable services and benefits shall be used to the maximum extent appropriate. Services shall be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's informed choice.

Scope of services

They are services identified based on an individual's need as specified in the IPE, and that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment. This includes on-the-job supports (job coaching) and supports such as identifying and assisting with workplace accommodations, identifying alternative/nonvisual techniques to accomplish a task, or providing orientation and mobility training. Ongoing services are furnished by IDB, using funds under the Supported Employment program and/or the VR program, from the time of job placement until the transition to extended services.

On-going support services may consist of:

- a. assessment(s) needed to supplement the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs including assessments for job accommodations.
- b. skilled job trainers (employment specialists) who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site.
- c. job analysis to make modifications / changes to the individual's job after placement.
- d. Social skills training;
- e. Regular observation or supervision of the individual.
- f. Follow-up services such as regular contact with the employers, the individual, parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individual, and other professionals, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement.
- g. Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite.

An individual can work on a short-term basis and not receive competitive wages if they are working towards competitive integrated employment (CIE) and expected to attain competitive wages within six months. In limited circumstances based on the needs of the individual and demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings, the period may be extended up to an additional six months (not to exceed 12 months).

1. Within six months of achieving a supported employment outcome or
2. In limited circumstances, within a period not to exceed 12 months from the achievement of the supported employment outcome, if a longer period is needed based on the needs of the individual, and the individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information contained in the service record.

These services will be provided for a period of time that will not exceed twenty-four (24) months, except for special circumstances when the counselor and the eligible individual jointly agrees to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE.

IDB will provide or contract to provide intensive supported employment services and extended services after transition, as well as transitional employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Supported employment services may include an assessment of the need for supported employment, the provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site, job development and placement, social skills training, regular observation or supervision of the individual, follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement, facilitation of natural supports at the work site, and any other service necessary to achieve an employment outcome.

Job coaches

Federal regulations authorize a variety of persons as job coaches to provide necessary training to the client during employment. IDB utilizes community rehabilitation provider (CRP) job coaches and employment specialists to serve as job coaches for clients.

The employment specialists or job coach typically provides the client with job skill training on a one-to-one basis. This support is designed to gradually reduce or fade as the individual becomes more proficient and stable on the job.

Documentation

When a client is determined eligible for SE services the following information must be in the case record:

- Copies of all assessments
- IPE development narrative including the rationale for providing SE services.
- Documentation of the SE goal and support.
 - Including placement in an integrated setting for the desired number of hours
- Copy of the IPE signed by both the client (and guardian, if appropriate) and the VR counselor
- Specify the SE services provided by the VR counselor.
- Specify the extended services needed and the provider(s)
- Copy of the completed SE service referral form signed by the counselor and the provider of extended support services.
- Copy of the completed SE client profile report completed by the provider after completing situational assessments with the client.
- Copy of the completed SE Job Preparation and Development Report completed by the provider. This must be completed each month until the client is employed.
- Copy of the job coaching report completed by the provider each month.
- Copy of a signed release of information to any supported employment providers.

The counselor will ensure follow up occurs at least once a month with the client and SE provider to monitor progress. The counselor will also ensure follow up occurs after the client is hired to obtain the individual's satisfaction with services and the job placement. The counselor or other identified IDB staff will make at least one face to face visit to the job site.