

Supporting Participants in Making a Request for Supported Employment Exception Review

Exception Review Request for Supported Employment Services

In order for a participant to access additional budget dollars to pay for Supported Employment services, you will need to submit an exception review request with an annual plan of service or with an addendum.

The Department –approved form includes these areas:

1. Complete Demographic Information including:
 - Participant Name
 - Proposed Start Date
 - Supported Employment Agency
 - Request Submitted By
 - Job Title
 - Frequency of additional SE being requested
 - Additional budget dollars requested
2. Requirements for a Supported Employment Service Recommendation
3. Requirements for a comprehensive review of the plan, including
 - A supported employment goal
 - Ensuring the combination of supports and services support employment
4. Requirement for acknowledging additional budget dollars cannot be reallocated

Supported Employment Service Recommendation

The service Recommendation must be completed by the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) when transitioning from vocational rehabilitation services or by the Supported Employment Agency (Community Rehabilitation Provider) identified on the plan or addendum. Documentation must include:

- Amount of Service
- Level of Support Needed
- Employment Goals
- Transition Plan

IDVR provides funding for job development services and initial job coaching through a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) agency. The length of time needed for job development varies depending on the individual. As soon as the person has become employed, it is critical to work quickly to ensure there is no gap in the individual’s job coaching support in the workplace. The CRP will communicate to the Service Coordinator/plan developer that the participant has been hired so planning for transition to Medicaid-funded Supported Employment services can begin.

An **Employment Agency Recommendation form** has been developed to help with the transition process. It includes information from the CRP agency about the participant, their job tasks in the workplace, and a recommended level of service needed by the participant. This information will be used by the plan developer to complete an addendum to the ISP. A **transition meeting** should be called by the Service Coordinator/plan developer to ensure all parties understand the shift to Medicaid waiver services and any needed signatures can be gathered.

Comprehensive Review of the Plan

Employment Conversation with Planning Team

A Person-Centered Planning (PCP) team should include people who have been invited by the participant (focus person) that know the person well and can contribute to a discussion about the supports and services needed to help the individual reach their goals. Examples include: family members, friends, neighbors, support staff, and others that are part of the person's life and understand their needs and believe in their goals. For more information about person-centered planning related to transition and employment visit the Center Disability and Human Development website at: <http://moodle.idahocdh.org> Once online, self-register to access the training.

Discussion: Everyone Can Work and There Is Work for Everyone. One of the biggest barriers preventing the employment of individuals with developmental disabilities is low expectations for themselves and the attitude of those around them. Most, if not all, people with disabilities are able to be successfully employed in the community with the right supports. The key is helping the individual, their family, and others in their support circle believe this is possible.

Examples of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities working successfully in the community can be found on the following websites:

Real People, Real Jobs: Stories from the Front Line - <http://www.realworkstories.org/>
Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts, Boston

GO WISE - <http://gowise.org/Wise-Videos>
Washington Initiative for Supported Employment

What Can You Do? - <http://whatcanyoudocampaign.org>
The Campaign for Disability Employment

Encourage the individual to consider employment, if they haven't already, and find out about their career interests. Help team members believe the individual is able to work and can develop employment skills.

Setting a Supported Employment Goal

Start where the individual is at the moment. What are their current abilities and work-related skills? What is the person's desired job or career area? The best way to find out about the individual's current skills is to observe the person doing things in a variety of natural environments: cooking a meal at home, cleaning the house, painting a room, biking to the store, scheduling time with friends, mowing and lawn care, using a computer, washing and putting gas in the car, walking a dog, etc. Each of these activities can be broken down into tasks/skills with which the person has competence and could use in the workplace.

Example: Jill loves to cook for her family and friends. She shows that she knows how to plan and cook a meal: make a shopping list, shop for ingredients at the store, pay for the goods and receive change, take the goods home, unpack the goods and put away, follow a recipe, prepare ingredients for the meal by rinsing and chopping, cook meal by using the oven and/or stove. These tasks show that Jill has competence in variety of areas: reading, writing, finding items in a store, using money, carrying, using a knife, measuring, using a cooking appliance, and more. These skills could be used in a variety of work settings like a restaurant, grocery store, deli, and others.

Example: John loves animals and especially dogs. He has cared for his family's two dogs for several years: feeding, bathing, grooming, and walking them on a daily basis. Recently he has volunteered to walk two different neighbor's dogs as well and they are very pleased with this service. John knows that the local pet store hires people to care for animals for sale and it also provides a dog grooming and boarding service. He would like to get a job where he can use his love of animals and skills in caring for dogs.

Define the goal as placement in a job in the community. Identify job tasks and things the person will need to know to fit into the environment of the workplace. Align with current skills and abilities to see where any skills might need to be developed. Supportive services will help fill the gaps where the individual may need to develop a skill or need on-going support in a specific task required in the workplace.

Examples:

Goal: Jill will have paid employment in the local deli/restaurant.

Her job tasks include: unpacking food deliveries into the walk-in cooler, taking inventory of all food products and supplies, preparing sandwich ingredients for counter, making sandwiches according to customer orders. Jill will need support to: learn how to unpack deliveries and place items in the appropriate area of the cooler; understand the inventory form, recognize and count items; learn the employer's preferred preparation of ingredients and sandwiches; reading orders from the cash register receipt, learn how to use the bus schedule to accommodate a changing work schedule.

Goal: John will maintain his employment at the Pets Plus store.

His job tasks include: taking pets from customers at reception desk of the boarding/day camp area; putting dogs/cats into kennels for boarding; feeding dogs according to pet information sheet; taking dogs out of kennels and into day camp play area; play and supervise groups of dogs 3 times each day; take pets identified for grooming to grooming room; return groomed pets to kennels; retrieve pets and return to customers. John has learned how to greet customers appropriately and handle dogs/cats through the intake/delivery process. John will continue to need support to: read pet information sheets, stay on task in delivering animals to grooming area, and keep track of time for each dog play period. Job coach will explore assistive technology to help with timing tasks and work with supervisor to simplify feeding instructions for John.

Combination of Services – Supporting Employment

Review services available on the individual's current service plan. Can some of the services listed be used to build work skills and/or provide support to find and be successful in the workplace? Developmental therapy and other services can be focused on learning skills related to employment: getting ready for work, appropriate appearance, getting to work, being on time, and communication in the workplace.

Supported employment services are used to provide one-to-one support in the workplace called job coaching. It is important to identify the specific tasks of the job coach related to building the individual's independence in the workplace such as communication with a supervisor and between co-workers. Create a transition plan for fading the level of support overtime as the individual learns how to do the job, gains more independence in the workplace, and natural supports are engaged.

Consider and list natural supports both at home, in the community, and in the workplace including the employer and co-workers. Some examples include: training provided by the employer; co-workers who provide support to learn tasks and understand informal workplace practices; family members provide a ride to and from work.

Also think about assistive technology (like a daily schedule/list or iPod) that could be used to keep track of work tasks and schedules; modifications to work station, equipment, and instructions; and other accommodations that can be requested that might help the individual to be more independent on the job with less need for support staff to be present.

Considerations

Are there related needs? Does the individual have adequate housing, food, transportation, assistive technology, etc. that need to be in place to support successful employment. Can they apply for additional assistance in any of these areas?

Benefits Planning: How will working and earning wages impact the individual’s current benefits? There are ways an individual can work and keep some of their benefits. If your client has concerns about working and benefits, there are people who can help them understand how the income they earn may affect their benefits, like SSDI and Medicaid. Schedule an appointment with a work incentives coordinator from Disability Rights Idaho to learn more about work and benefits at 1-866-262-3462. Some community rehabilitation providers have trained benefits planners on staff to serve their clients.

Additional Information

Timeframes

Processes that have not changed:

- Plan submission through Information Coordinator
- Time Frames for plan/ addendum review are the same.
 - 30 days for Plans and 15 days for Addendums.
- Authorization and plan distribution is the same

Because the timeframe to complete an addendum to the Individual Service Plan is still 15 days, it is important to act quickly if the individual will need extended VR-funded job coaching support to allow for this timeframe. A request for the extension of VR services needs to be confirmed with Vocational Rehabilitation staff prior to the end of VR services.

Linkages

Referral to IDVR Services: As the individual develops an employment goal for their service plan, they need to apply for services from the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation if they have not already done so. To find out more about IDVR services and local offices go to this website: <http://www.vr.idaho.gov/index.shtml>

A great place to start to find information about finding a job, working with a disability, and the resources available in Idaho is the **Able to Work** website: <http://www.abletowork.idaho.gov/> In addition to information on key employment topics, this website includes links to state agencies and other organizations in Idaho.

The Idaho Dept. of Labor provides a variety of services and resources to all Idaho job seekers including: job search data bases, workshops, and local job listings. To find out more about IDOL and local offices go to this website: <http://www.labor.idaho.gov/dnn/Default.aspx?alias=www.labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl>

Need Help?

Contact the participant’s Bureau of Developmental Disability (BDDS) Care Manager if you have questions about the exception review process.

Regional Care Manager Contacts

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